

Action Speaks Louder

Front-Line Media Activism for Social Change

GET INFORMED . . . RESIST!



Damming a People's Right
Cafeteria Prison Connection
OCAP: June 15th

What is Fair Trade?

U.S. Navy Out of Vieques!

Cycling for a Cleaner Future

Canadian Sweatshops

The Innu Struggle

Resist the Church of Biotechnology

Race and Police Violence

Acto-scope

READ it!

CUNTS Unite!

And More...



Action Speaks Louder

the voice of OPIRG-Toronto

Newsletter Collective

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Action Speaks Louder is the volunteer publication of the Ontario Public Interest Research Group - Toronto, published three times annually. We welcome submissions from both student and community-based sources. Through its newsletters, OPIRG attempts to responsibly reflect, in content as well as outreach, its enduring commitment to fighting systemic disempowerment both locally and on a global level.

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ASL would like to indicate that Paul Salvatori and Sonia Singh were the authors of "Students Against Sweatshops Fight for UofT Code" in the Winter 2000 issue of the Newsletter. We apologize for this omission and thank the authors for their contribution.

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What is OPIRG anyway?

OPIRG stands for the Ontario Public Interest Research Group. We are a student-funded, volunteer-based organization at the University of Toronto that promotes and engages in action, education and research on a wide range of social justice and environmental issues. We offer the opportunity to build a wide range of skills while working for meaningful social change. OPIRG Toronto is part of a Canada-wide network of PIRGs based on university and college campuses.

In addition to our many Action Groups, radio show and newsletter, we also run a small resource centre open to campus and community with publications on a wide range of environmental and social justice issues. OPIRG sponsors and supervises student placement programs and research-for-credit courses that allow students to engage in academic projects that are relevant and useful to community organizations.

THE AMERICAN WAY

BY ASIF GHAYOOR

Since the end of WWII the United States of America has been the dominant power of the world. It claims to be based on democracy and freedom of speech. On the surface, these values seem to be a great step forward for humanity, when compared to colonial and imperialist times and the resulting oppressed minorities. However, when one digs deeper and examines how America maintains its power there are interesting results.

Looking back over the last three centuries the dominant world power at the time used military force to socially oppress other cultures for their own benefit. After WWII when the Americans became the world power they generously gave "aid" to many countries to help and rebuild from the aftermath of war. However, this aid came with a few strings. Any country that accepted American money could not spend it on social programs or assistance. They had to spend according to American rules. This meant massive cutting of social programs, financial assistance to the poor and any other government spending deemed anti-capitalistic. This plan was called the Marshall plan. In essence it created a situation that was perfect for America. America had a booming economy and was the only industrial power left undamaged by the war.

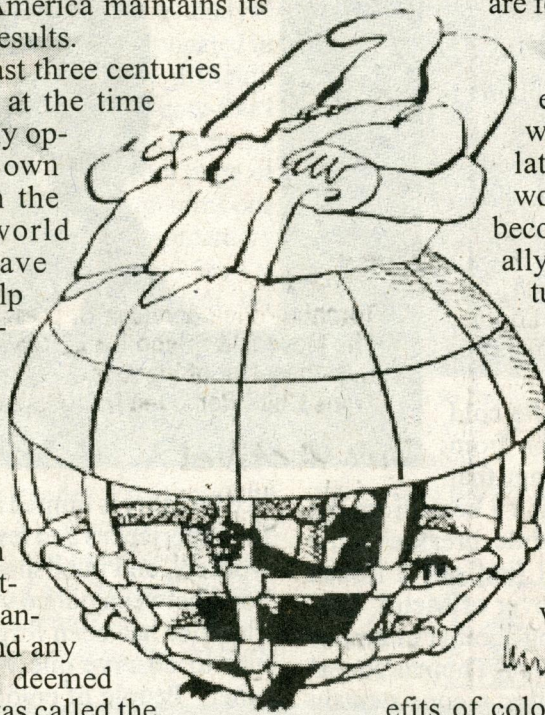
This set the stage for American power to flourish. The American industrial machine was in full gear supplying virtually the entire world. During this time many institutions were setup that to this day help the "American way of life" flourish. Eco-

nomie institutions such as the World bank, the world trade organization (WTO), and the International monetary fund (IMF) "guide" developing countries into the industrial mold. This is a primary cause of poor working conditions of the third world. Workers and even entire societies are kept in line with hopes of the American dream. They

are fed visions of cars, washing machines, and all the "modern comforts" that hard work will eventually bring. However, when examining the true trade relations between the developing world and the industrial world, it becomes clear that nothing has really changed over the last two centuries. Third world countries primarily

export raw materials and low value goods to the industrial world. Value is then added in the form of manufacturing and the now high value goods are exported from the industrial countries to the third world. With this continuing cycle, the third world countries have no hope of escape. In essence the American

have achieved the benefits of colonialism and imperialism without the expenses of an occupying military force. In the past oppressed workers could lash out against the oppressing military force. With American colonialism there is no visible presence to lash out against. Thus, many cultures are being systematically destroyed and readjusted to benefit the United States. The more things seem to change the more they stay the same.



COMMITMENT TO ANTI-OPPRESSION

OPIRG recognises and protects the right of all OPIRG members, staff, volunteers and visitors to work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and any harassment based on race, gender, sexual orientation, gender orientation, age, ability, culture religion or class. OPIRG will provide opportunities for people to develop the abilities and attitudes which will contribute to maintaining this environment, and volunteers are expected to make use of these opportunities wherever possible. The Board of Directors has made a commitment to challenging all forms of oppression both within and outside this organisation; with a focus on white privilege.

Thomas Jones: A Quick Comment on Race and Police Violence

By Renée Ferguson

These are treacherous times to be living under the skin of a Black man. It's times like these that to exist as a man with dark skin can easily award you the status of rapist, thief, murderer and general problem to society. Those sworn to protect you have got you mixed up with another Black man or because your skin colour seems to fit the stereotype of the rapist, thief, murderer, and so on. These are treacherous times to be living in the skin of a black man. Mothers, hide your sons; wives lock your doors, and sisters, beware because Pharaoh is out to slaughter the boys again.

A Black man pressed on to the cold concrete ground with no protection from the violent horde of police is an image that we are used to seeing in media. Like a beast from the sea: it resurfaces every once in a while, breathes some air, and goes back under. When I first saw a frozen image of Thomas Jones, on the cover of *Metro*, I assumed that it was an article recalling another infamous beating of a Black man by L.A police. Thomas Jones' story does not stray from the patterns consistent in police brutality: Philadelphia police officers identified him as a suspect in a crime, believed he was resisting arrest and felt the situation was 'appropriate' to beat his body bloody. I want to make use of Jones' situation to address several issues and concerns on police brutality, specifically in relation to race and public reaction. I admit that my own experience with po-



Thomas Jones



lice brutality is limited and therefore I am working from the experiences and testimonies of friends, family, co-workers, and published literature on the subject. The bond between police violence and marginalized communities has been forged. We rarely get the opportunity to observe one without taking into account the other. People of colour, people from the psychiatric community, the homeless, gay, lesbian and transgendered communities, and those who organize around these communities are often harassed or subjected to excessive force by police forces. In November of last year, homeless and anti-poverty activists from Toronto, Kingston and Montreal, natives from Tyendinaga, Akwesasne and Gananoque gathered on Parliament Hill to demand action on the issue of homelessness. The group was attacked by dogs and pepper sprayed. Last summer in California a SWAT team entered the home of a family of Mexican descent in search of narcotics only to shoot dead an elderly man, Mario Paz. No narcotics were discovered, and a different name than that of the family was on the search warrant. The frustration in Jones' case is that there is a discourse that attempts to rule out racism as a factor in his beating. Reports that there were black police officers present among those who delivered 59 kicks and punches have de-racialised the beating - turning it into a situation in which a man who just happened to be

Black just happened have the shit kicked out of him by police officers. To engage in such discourse takes away from the fact that we live in an all-encompassing patriarchal, racist, classist, and heterosexist society. All of us who live, breathe and die in this type of regime subsist under its rules, eat its food, breathe its air, go to its schools and so on. With the fluidity of this patriarchal, racist, classist, and heterosexist disorder spilling into our veins, is it not possible for all of us - even those of us from marginalized communities - to inherit or adopt some of its principals of self hatred and hatred of others? To note that a Black 'crime suspect' + police officers + violence = racism is elementary, but to attempt to analyse the means and methods in which we are all implicated in these forms of racism becomes a little more difficult. Elian Gonzalez coughs and we have in-depth-twenty-four-hour-coverage-on-CNN. Brittany Spears goes shopping downtown and we get 'the scoop' on the front page of the Toronto Star the next day. The Queen Mum turns one hundred and we see some serious social commentary going down for the occasion. Yet another Black man is beaten to a pulp by police officers sworn to protect 'the people' and there is nothing more than a soft murmur from the general public. How is it that human flesh, bloodied and batted by black boots, receives limited public attention? My suggestion is that there is a specific and narrow definition of who makes an appropriate victim of police violence, who can render sensitivity and outrage, and what kind of action and response is appropriate from the public. This victim can be a child or adult, female, white, heterosexual and is not 'tainted' in any-way - meaning that she has had no criminal or moral record that we, the audience, can see as her doing. The problem

with this definition of this victim in regards to police brutality. If this is the only type of person who can stir our compassion, a person who is not a part of group traditionally affected by police brutality, then we will not see it as a problem. In other words - if its not happening to the 'right' people, it's not a problem - or not worthy of coverage. Picturing the image of Thomas Jones as say, as white woman - mother of five sprawled out on the floor as ten police officers throw punches and kicks at her defenceless body would have made North Americans sick - and it should. The sound and sight of a black police boot ripping in dark flesh again and again should alarm us with as much intensity. The use of excessive force against the people by police officers is an important issue to organize around. Excessive police force has been used against members of marginalized groups and those of us who stand in solidarity with them. We must be thunderous. We must make a protest. We must make noise on the issue. Let the public know what those who are supposed to be protecting us are doing. Put up posters. Create webpages and information on police brutality to awaken anyone's consciousness. Talk. Talk. Talk. Attend the demonstrations. Be a safe haven for victims of police violence. Know your rights. There are no easy band-aids to the situation - but we cannot solve a problem if no one is doing anything about it - *action speaks louder than words.*



Women's Centre

563 Spadina Ave., Room 100. 978-8201, Hours: Mon-Thurs 1-5pm

A welcoming space that provides referrals and a place for people who are interested in political activism to meet, socialize, and organize. Programs and groups include the Food Bank, Coming Out/Questioning Your Sexuality support group, Women of Colour group, Committee in Support of Dr. Chun, and a variety of workshops. Social activities are planned regularly. The Women's Centre focuses on issues such as sexism, racism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, classism, ageism, and disability. Collective meets weekly. All women are welcome. Wheelchair accessible through rear entrance.



The Edge

I have seen
The victim.

I have seen
The murder.

I have seen
The thought.

I have seen
The action.

I have seen
The witnesses.

The eyes have heard.
The ears saw.

The tongues lied
And the law upheld.

I have been there.

Have you ever been there...
On the edge of violence?

By Rudyard Fearon

OCAP: JUNE 15TH

by Sue Collis

OCAP organized June 15th based on the real and legitimate grievances that poor people in this province hold against the Harris Government. A request for a delagation to address the legislature was denied on the excuse that it was contrary to the traditions of British Parliamentary rule. For people who must send their kids to bed hungry at night because they cannot afford to feed them, for homeless people watching their sisters and brothers on the street murdered out of sheer prejudice and hatred, and for OCAP, an organization that represents these people, such an excuse is not acceptable.

What transpired on June 15th shifted the terrain of resistance. People suffered concussions, broken limbs, lost employment, were criminally charged and some detained in custody until trial. That people held their ground in the face of police lines that were clearly on the offensive (not to mention fully galloping horse charges), demonstrates a will to resist a Government equally determined to maintain its own repressive agenda.

As just one further example of this agenda, the Province is presently moving to force workfare on First Nations communities, contrary to court order. A court determined that First Nations bands are exempt from forced compliance with the workfare component of Ontario Works. It ruled that the Provincial Government did not have the moral or legal right to intrude on the way First Nations communities determined to

deliver their determining social service policy on reserves, it left open the possibility of privatisation. Taking full advantage of that, the Province has issued an ultimatum that communities implement workfare within three months, or the service will be cut entirely and run by a private body off reserve where workfare participation can and will be made mandatory. The Federal Government finances 94% of welfare for Indian communities while the province is only responsible for 6%. This is an example now of a Government that is affecting legislation not based on fiscal responsibility, but rather prejudicial and discriminatory policies aimed at the further marginalization of the poorest in society.

Similar 'principled' legislation is planned for labour, that will result in further workplace instability and unemployment. Students who struggle with increased tuition face entry level jobs, once secure on the basis of union strength, now tenuous at best. The Government expects longer hours on the job, limited pay and contract work as a prerequisite to gaining stable employment. Clearly this is a long term agenda that is designed to serve and benefit big business and its continued exploitation of the working class.

On June 15th, OCAP made its position clear. The State for its part, made its position equally clear. The current political climate dictates that the time for a common struggle is now. A strong alliance of OCAP, its allies and supporters, Indian Nations and labour makes the successful transition towards a just and dignified society possible.

FYI: There have now been 34 arrests.



Artwork by Kikoo Lee



" AS SEEN ON T.V. "

COMES IN ROSE
TINTED AND NON-
ROSE TINTED
OPTIONS

JUST SCARY ENOUGH TO BE
MISUNDERSTOOD

ARE YOU
WEARING
YOUR SEXY
PROTEST
UNIFORM
TODAY?

FUN, FUN,
FUN!!!

GUARANTEES
YOU A SPOT ON
THE 6 O'CLOCK
NEWS

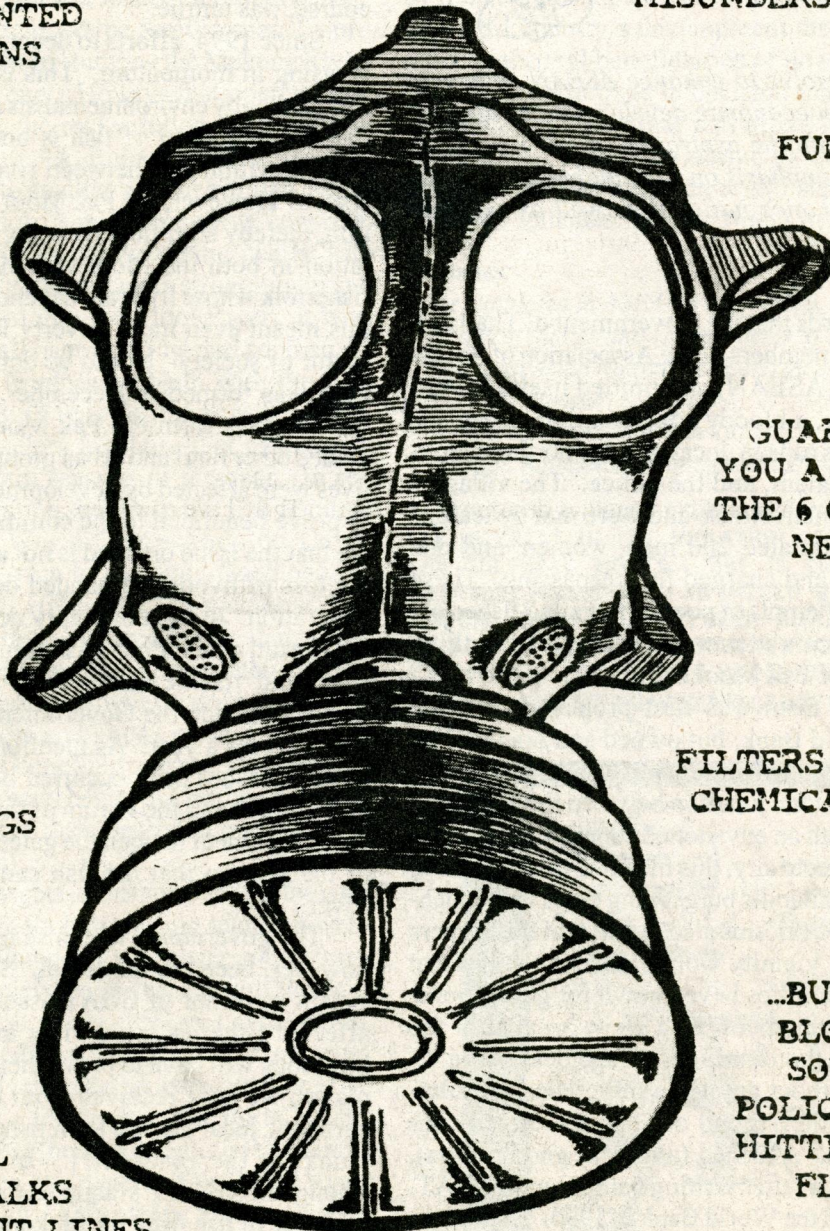
GAIN A
WHOLE NEW
PERSPECTIVE
ON YOUR
SURROUNDINGS

FILTERS OUT
CHEMICALS...

SEEKING
LIKEMINDED
INDIVIDUAL
FOR LONG WALKS
ON THE FRONT LINES
AND CLOSE ENCOUNTERS
WITH AIRBORNE
TOXINS...

...BUT WON'T
BLOCK THE
SOUND OF
POLICE BATONS
HITTING YOUR
FLESH

...POTENTIAL THREESOME
WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT.





DAMMING A PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO LIVELIHOOD:

The Story of the Pak Mool Dam in Ubon Ratchatani, Thailand

By: Fritzie A. Chavez



We reiterate our resolve to enhance ASEAN economic cooperation through economic development strategies, which are in line with the aspiration of our respective peoples, which put emphasis on sustainable and equitable growth, and enhance national as well as regional resilience.¹



These are strong words that the Government of Thailand, one of the founding members of the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN), committed itself to. And yet on 16-17 of July, a bloody confrontation took place between the villagers of Isan, located in the northern province of Ubon Ratchatani, and the police. The villagers entered the Government House and were met by teargas and batons. An estimated 200 men, women, and one child were arrested and charged for trespassing. These were the desperate attempts of poor farmers and fisherfolk to call the government's attention to the loss of their livelihood caused by the Pak Mool Dam.

The Pak Mool Dam was first proposed in 1985. Funded by the World Bank, but owned and operated by the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT), it was to be located at the junction between the Mool and Mekong Rivers. With an envisioned capacity to generate 136 megawatts of electricity, this meant it would be a big help in providing Thailand's burgeoning cities with much-needed power. However, this also meant that the farmers and fisherfolk in its vicinity would lose the only form of livelihood their families have known for generations. In 1987, an explosion shook Hua Hew, an area in the Mool River, killing thousands of fish and destroying vital ecosystems. Without any form of popular consultation, this was how they found out that the dam's construction had begun. Alarmed (and with good reason), the villagers started a letter writing campaign to EGAT, the Government, and the World Bank in 1990. Their pleas were ignored, and the Pak Mool dam was completed in 1994. The government paid a compensation package of Bt 30,000 to each family that lost the right to fish and Bt 35,000 for every rai of land that a farmer owned. However, many villagers are not landowners and simply farm the land of other people. This meant they did not receive any compensation at all. The government also misled them by saying that despite the construction of the dam,

their fishing livelihood would not be affected. This, of course, was untrue.

Since 1994, efforts to decommission the dam are increasing in momentum. This is largely due to the fact that studies by environmentalists and ecologists now show that the migration of fish is both upstream and downstream, within and between rivers in order to feed and spawn. However, the Pak Mool Dam blocks this migration, thereby significantly bringing down the fish population in both the Mool and Mekong Rivers. For the fisherfolk whose lives are dependent on a bountiful catch, this meant even more poverty for an already neglected sector of society. Not to be defeated, the Forum of the Poor was formed in December 1995. Spearheaded by the villagers from the Pak Mool Dam area, it also included other rural and urban groups and individuals whose lives were affected by development projects that have yet to prove beneficial to the common people. They reiterate that the issue on hand is not about money, but rather, the loss of livelihood handed down from generation to generation. In light of empty nets and loss of farmland, the Forum of the Poor has mobilized itself to take action, and its members have now been camped outside the Government House in Bangkok for a year. As mentioned earlier, bloody clashes have occurred between the government and the Forum of the Poor. They would like the government to open the gates of the dam for a portion of the year so that the fish can migrate into the Mool River.



The government response to the people's plight has however, been one of denial. Supin Panyamak, the assistant governor of EGAT asserts that the dam has not affected fisheries in the river and that before anything else, they will have to prove their claim. From the information we have received from the Royal Fisheries Department, local income from fisheries has increased [from stocking the reservoir]. In addition, Theeraphat Thongkam, EGAT's aquatic biologist also denies any evidence of fish from the Mekong River migrating to feed and spawn in the Mool. (Ironically, the government cannot explain why EGAT built a fish ladder at the dam site to assist any fish in its migration.) He is quoted as saying that, the only change since the dam's construction has been



continued...

in the structure of the fish population in the Mool River. This is because the dam created a reservoir, which changed the river's condition from flowing to still.

These statements from the government exacerbate the negative impression that other Thais have of the villagers. They are unjustly accused of as being troublemakers, and even blamed for the drop in foreign investment in Thailand. In truth however, there is a real impingement on their economic right to a form of livelihood. Dr. Tyson R. Robert, a researcher at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute has been studying the Mekong River basin for more than 20 years. He says that opening the gates is not the solution, the real solution for the Mool River is to remove the dam. Dr. Robert adds that the fish ladder is only conducive to smaller varieties of fish, since the bigger ones are cannot fit into the narrow concrete ladder. True to his words, a fish weighing nearly 100 kilogrammes was found by the villagers struggling to get past the concrete dam and into the Mool River. It was later found with bruises all over its body, and soon after, died from exhaustion. Another problem with the fish ladder is in its design. Built only for the variety of fish that go upstream, it is useless for those that need to go downstream during certain seasons of the year. In response to EGAT's allegation that only the fish population has changed, The World Commission on Dams (which the World Bank, true to its Janus-faced nature, established) reported that 169 out of 265 species of fish in the Mool River have been affected by the dam. Unfortunately, 56 of the species have completely disappeared. Moreover, the problem will no doubt spillover to countries like Cambodia and Laos - since Thailand is not the only country that benefits from the Mekong and its fish stock. This has already begun in Cambodia, where the fish market has almost disappeared due to the construction of the Pak Mool.

Although the human rights issues surrounding the dam may not be reason enough for bottom-line technocrats to decommission it, its efficiency as a power source certainly is. Although officials claim that closing the dam would mean blackouts and power shortages in the northern provinces, a recent study has shown that due to a gross miscalculation, the dam generates an average of only 40 megawatts of electricity, a far cry from the initially estimated 136 megawatts. Furthermore, during the months of August and September, the waters of the Mool River are even with the Mekong. This means that there is no headwater to run the turbines and hardly any electricity is generated at all.

The plight of the villagers is far from over. Although it would be highly improbable to return the Mool River (and subsequently, the Mekong as well) into its original state, the government has failed to undertake the necessary efforts to preserve what is left of it for its people.

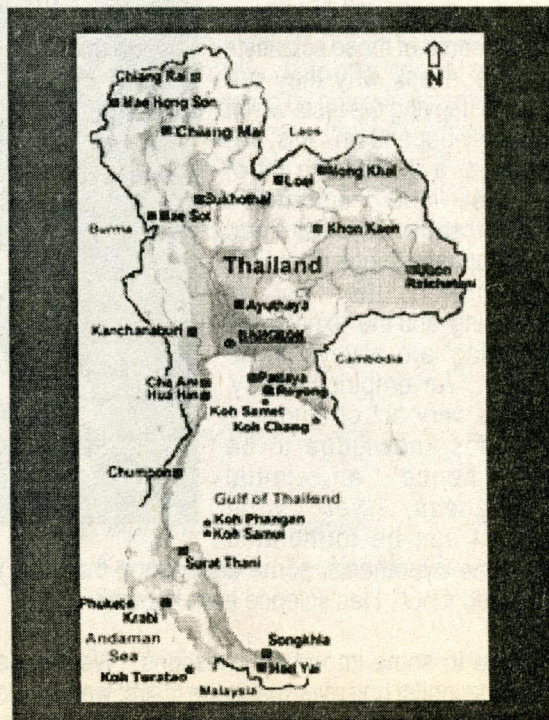
The case being as such, as many as 174 members of the Forum of the Poor are on hunger strike as of writing this. They are hoping that this bold move will finally bring them justice.

The Pak Mool Dam is only one of many examples that highlight the exclusion of the common people from their own government's development agenda. One cannot help but agree with the Pak Mool Declaration drafted by members of the Forum of the Poor. The people must set up the country's development direction. The people must be the real beneficiaries of development. And the poor must participate in decision making involving development projects that will affect them². If the Thai government is serious about its commitment to the ASEAN 2020 vision, then it will stand up and take notice of its villagers' plight. But as of yet, this remains to

Footnotes:

1. As stipulated in ASEAN Vision 2020, a declaration by the Heads of States and Governments of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on 14-16 December 1997 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
2. As delivered on December 14, 1995 at the Dan Kao village in Ubon Rachatani, Khongchiam District, Thailand.

* FRITZIE IS A HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST WITH A PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THE VIOLATION OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL RIGHTS. SHE IS CURRENTLY BASED IN BANGKOK, THAILAND AS AN INTERN WITH THE ASIAN FORUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (FORUM-ASIA). OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS INCLUDE CANADIAN MINING ACTIVITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, YOU CAN REACH HER AT: FRITZIE.CHAVEZ@UTORONTO.CA



Resist the Church of Biotechnology

by ramsey affii

Much of the behaviour we see in the field of biotechnology stems from a widespread belief in an only partially complete framework. It's the confidence that a biotechnist has in her understanding of genetics that makes her most frightening feature frightening: she confidently recombines DNA. To deny that great advances in 'knowledge' in this field have been made would be sickening - but it is more sickening still to consider how much knowledge has been lost at the expense of this new framework. The geneticist says: *"it is tempting to believe that I am doing the right thing, I have had some successes. I have had predictive success with some of my hypotheses - I must be on the right track. What do you want from me? I am merely attempting to 'unweave the rainbow', uncover hidden mysteries and hidden gifts. Besides, any scientist knows that the universe is stranger than it appears, how else can we uncover its beauty but through empirical testing? Every genetic recombination is an experiment. From it we either confirm past hypothesis or gain data with which to formulate new ones."*

Although I understand and feel the beauty that some of these scientists 'experience', I ask why they are erroneously denying the facts which they implicitly depend on. It is, like many things, a depressing bit of irony that the scientist's experimentation implies two precisely opposite things about the experimenter: the 'act of understanding' and the 'experience of unknowing' are always in the same step. An empirical study, through the very act of studying, presupposes knowledge to be gained, hence an initial unknowingness, yet what experiment can be formulated without some hypothesis, some confidence that 'this time we've figured it out'. Has science ever known?

Now I come to some important questions. We can safely say that no scientist has ever made the claim: we completely understand genetic structures. If this is the case, then what

is the basis for making a value judgement between using and not using 'genetic engineering'? It is measuring weights on an imaginary scale.

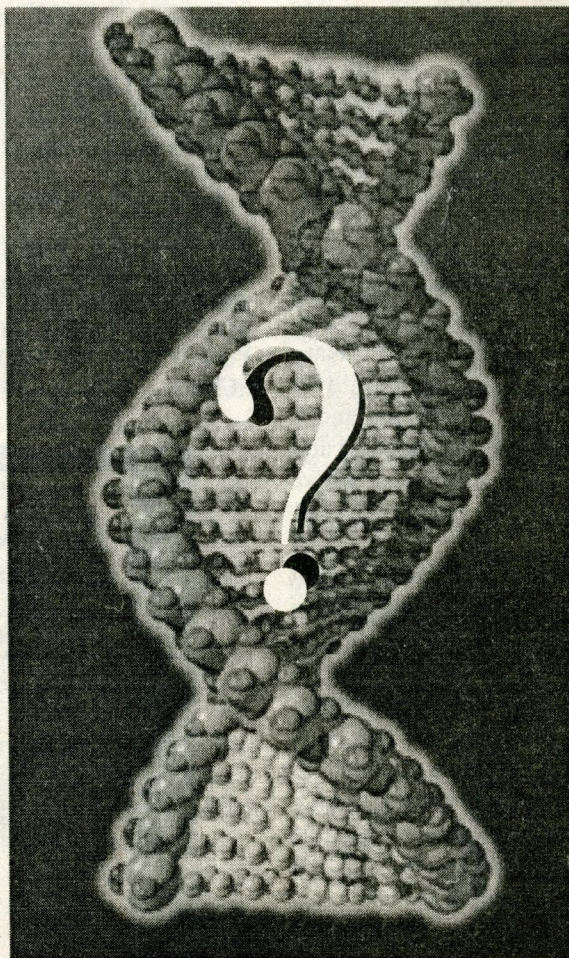
Most geneticists feel that there are going to be mistakes but the benefits will vastly out way them. How was this judgement possibly made?

This judgement was made. This means that a geneticist, who admits he doesn't fully understand, implicitly assumes he knows how much he doesn't understand! He is equipped with trust in the notion that the increase in knowledge in doing the very experiment is of greater worth than the number of mistakes made through the process. This idea is very common and very useful in certain circumstances. Of course

a child decides that the benefits of bipedalism out weigh the bruises of learning. But is this always the case? We must be wary of such overgeneralizations. Why would there be a necessary law that this type of experimentation should be equally healthy in every situation? Do we have any reason to believe that mistakes made in creating new life forms would carry the same risks as learning how to walk? How was the judgement made that we can safely redirect the course of evolution, the very process that created us in the first place? It is unacceptable that this judgement was made without considering the expanse of ignorance with which our current models of the genome are founded. Consider- can we predict through genetic analysis a single pleiotropic effect? Pleiotropic effects are the unintended interactions of a gene with surrounding genes. Our predictive capability of such phenomena is nearly

zero; the information we gain about pleiotropy is merely in hindsight. But by then the creature has already been created.

I am going to suggest an insight here since technology desperately needs some normative guidance. It may seem almost tautological so it frightens me how it is consistently





ignored. Here it goes: the accuracy of our risk assessment is equal to the amount of information we have about the phenomena under question. Granted that we understand things on different levels, some larger some smaller, and granted that we are clearly given the most amount of information on the level of direct perceptual consciousness -we must

be forced to concede that we will never ever be able to understand the world 'better' through macroscopic and microscopic frameworks and their accompanying riddles. In fact, if we attempt to see more value in some atomistic interpretation of reality we are doing more harm to understanding than good. We must recognize that atomism is merely a perspective, partially truthful; yet completely wrong if we see it as any 'more real' than the perspective of the universe we are given through direct consciousness. We are right dab in the middle of the mind-boggling vastness of the universe. I tell the geneticist: be careful in over believing your mental constructions of faraway lands.

Is it arbitrary that the universe should appear simultaneously most complex and most convincing on the same level that we are designed to see it? We try to attain simplicity through the telescope or microscope and forget we are looking through a lens. Look at the universe: billions of light-years across- do you know how much that is? And we only see it get simpler. As we travel from galaxies to clusters of galaxies and superclusters; our grasp lessens. Gravity reigns, there is no 'meanings' or 'subtle interactions', none of the complexity here on earth and here in our minds, the universe seems on higher levels much less complicated. Sure there is always phenomena we don't understand. But look how trivial and one-dimensional the problems in astrophysics are! Now look inwards, through the billions of molecules to the hundred odd atoms to the handful of subatomic particles- even our ignorance on these levels is simple. There is simply no complexity in our understanding. Why do problems on our level of direct perceptual consciousness seem most complicated? Because we have more information here, because our bodies have evolved to see the world on this level.

Now- is this a property of the universe or our perceptions? Maybe it is a property of the universe that it should be concave in complexity, tapering in either direction, with us miraculously in the most complicated region? You must be joking! This is a logical error. The complexity of atoms must be at least as complicated as the complexity of life and of superclusters, because they are all the same thing. A tree isn't any less a tree if you walk a couple paces away. Our brain, with all of the hundreds of billions of neurons that comprise it, is part of our galaxy, the Milky Way. The universe at large is what it is through a microscope. There is as far as we can tell, only one universe- why do people act as if there were many?

Idealism never died. It was just found inconvenient. The

universe, presumably one thing, appears to us in many ways on each level we look at it, with many incompatible... philosophy of science is psychology.

The argument between 'reductionism' and 'holism' is absolutely ridiculous. How small or large do things have to be before being considered a fundamental unit? Ecosystem, gene... Neither direction has meaning; we have no reason to believe the universe is finitely large or small. And if it were, it would make no difference. And besides, what about the abundance of feedback loops between higher and lower levels? Is an organism a genes' way of making more gene, -or is a gene an ecosystems' way of making more ecosystem?

Those who desperately want to alleviate themselves of freedom, those industrious gene seekers- Do you understand that you can't deny the primacy of your consciousness because everything that you can and ever have experienced, including your so called 'gene theory', you have experienced through it? Sorry to say, you do have freedom. If you mess up the world through your genetic experiments it is you that are held accountable, not your genes!

'Yeah, but science is the best we got. And there's something valuable in our attempt to try.' -Why should I have faith in this humanist desire?

Sorry. There are too many unanswered questions, and besides I love life. I love its behaving naturally and freely. I don't like seeing slaves. I love looking at a rock and seeing a tiny little spider crawl over it. I love not knowing what The Function of this behaviour is. I love things with unimposed utility. The experiment isn't safe because it isn't based on any epistemological foundation, but it's fucking ugly because it is the 'factorization' of life. Darwin's 'central message' has been created and recreated by many interpreters, so let me venture my own: we now know that all life forms are equal. Genes are not recombinable- we have neither the right nor the ability to 'improve' other life forms-What is wrong with my criticism? I don't know maybe it's a 'genetic thing'-

*the only war that counts
the only war that counts
the only war that counts
is the war against the imagination*

Chinese migrants and Canadian Sweatshops

by David Shiga

Introduction

Between late July and early September of 1999, four dilapidated boats arrived on the B.C. coast, carrying a total of about 600 immigrants from China. They had no documentation, and were immediately branded as "illegals" by the mainstream press. The uproar would ultimately result in harsh changes to Canada's immigration laws.

The media were unanimous in their condemnation of the illegal immigration. The story soon turned into a sensation, with the Reform Party and racist groups helping to stir up public outrage. Diane Francis, editor of the *Financial Post*, wrote columns attacking immigrants: "These refugees and immigrants can be deadly: An adequate medical screening process doesn't exist", read one headline.¹ More recently, she has called for a moratorium on immigration.

The four ships did not warrant more than a story or two buried in the back pages, but were nonetheless treated as a national crisis, with all the major newspapers writing editorials on the issue.

Although the 600 immigrants were not a national crisis, the recent efforts of people to enter Canada from impoverished countries around the world is a signal of the utmost importance. It signals changes in the institutions that govern our lives—corporations, and their larger incarnation, the state. These changes, and the problems to which they give rise, are inextricably rooted in both race and class.

Debunking the media story

Many people called for the immediate deportation of the migrants, without even a trial, because the people had entered the country illegally. In fact, as everyone familiar with refugees knows, this is the normal mode of arrival of refugees. "Legitimate" refugees are very often fleeing the persecution of their country's own government, and under the circumstances, there is often no way for a refugee to gain the appropriate travel papers. Although it should hardly have been necessary to point this out, several groups did, such as the Canadian Council on Refugees and the Chinese National Council.²

Perhaps more importantly, the level of acceptance of refugees into Canada should be put into perspective. The 600 people who landed in Canada on the four boats constitute one five hundredth of one percent of Canada's population. Even the annual total of immigrants to Canada, which has fluctuated around 200 000 for the past ten years, is less than one percent of Canada's population. The notion that Canada accepts a dispro-

portionate number of refugees is without foundation. Canada has roughly fifty thousand displaced people living on its soil. Many other countries have over a quarter of a million displaced people within their borders, including Pakistan, the United States, Ethiopia, Sudan, Iran, China, and Lebanon. This is not really a fair comparison, because Canada is far more capable of absorbing refugees and immigrants than most of these countries, because of its enormous land area—Lebanon's land area is much less than one percent of Canada's—and extreme wealth compared to other countries.

As usual, the corporate media studiously avoided any hint of context. Coverage was overwhelmingly focused on questions of law enforcement, without pausing to examine why the migrants were coming and what was drawing them here. Although the media did make references to the poverty of the migrants, and the fact that they might end up working in North American sweatshops, they were scattered, and never pursued, while typical headlines read "Latest arrivals reignite refugee debate; MP to propose tighter laws for asylum-seekers", and "Chinese migrant kids get care; B.C. government must legally assume guardianship."³

In his 1997 book, *Forbidden Workers*, Peter Kwong suggests that the issue should be examined with ideas of supply and demand in mind. There is a supply of potential immigrants because of problems in China, including economic and political inequality and the deterioration of working conditions by American-owned business in China. What might be surprising to some is that there is actually a demand, on the part of big, brand name retailers and manufacturers, for illegal immigrants to do this sort of work.

Furthermore, the resurgence of Canadian and American sweatshops is part of a larger, and important trend which threatens all of us: a renewed campaign which has already allowed corporations to erode labour rights, wages, and working conditions, not only in the Third World, but here in Canada as well.

The Subcontracting system

The past few decades has seen sharp declines in union membership. In 1980, almost 44 percent of workers in the Canadian clothing, textile, and knitting industries belonged to unions. In 1992, the figure was less than 28 percent.⁴ In Quebec, the decline was even more marked, dropping from more than 50 percent, to less than 30 percent. In the United States, union membership has fallen from 35 percent of the workforce in 1955 to 11 per-

cent in 1995.⁵

Why such dramatic figures? There are surely a number of factors, but there is little doubt that the increasingly prevalent practice of "contracting out", or subcontracting has been one major cause. Subcontracting is actually restructuring the economy for the benefit of business elites and to the detriment of everyone else. This is not a marginal phenomenon. The biggest retailers and manufacturers are involved.

The purpose is to destroy the gains made by unions in the industrialized countries on wages, hours of work, benefits, labour laws, and so on. Large factories in North America are relatively vulnerable to unionization, and as mentioned, unions had been relatively successful in organizing the workforce in the past. A company that starts subcontracting solves this problem by simply firing its workforce, wiping out the established domestic unions, and relocating the jobs to smaller shops working on contract. The subcontractors themselves specialize in supplying a marginalized, isolated, and powerless workforce, through a variety of means. Often this is simply a matter of locating the factories in countries like Haiti, where repressive regimes are carefully maintained, largely through US power, and can be counted on to fire, jail or murder those who dare to try to organize.

Although it's easier to get away with this sort of thing in vulnerable third world countries, the big labels maintain sweatshops here in Canada and the US where conditions allow it.

A rapidly growing section of New York City's Chinatown, for example, provides ideal conditions for exploitation. It is home to illegal immigrants from China's Fujian province. Several factors, including the labour unions' historical exclusion of the Chinese, have imposed a measure of isolation on many residents of Chinatown. The new immigrants from Fujian, however, are isolated even further because of their illegal status, their inability to speak English, and because they speak a different dialect than the established populations of Chinatown. Called the "Fuzhounese" after the capital city of Fujian, they cannot call on the authorities to enforce the labour laws for fear of being deported. In addition, the big labour unions are often uninterested in helping the smaller shops, full of illegal Chinese immigrants to organize.

Together, these features have allowed a reversion, in some places, to nineteenth-century-like conditions. Peter Kwong gives detailed accounts of the conditions the Fuzhounese endure in the United States in *Forbidden Workers*. He describes a married couple, Mr. and Mrs. Lin, for example, who are both illegal immigrants from Fujian province, China:

Mrs. Lin's husband, whom she now rarely sees, could only find a job in a Chinese restaurant in New Haven, where he works twelve hour shifts and sleeps on the kitchen floor at night. Mrs. Lin lives in a one-room apartment in Chinatown with her in-laws. She puts in fourteen hours of work a day as a seamstress at home. She

Stop Sweatshops

an education/action kit

The Maquila Solidarity Network presents a brand new education/action kit for teachers, students, union members and church groups interested in getting involved in campaigns to Stop Sweatshops. \$12.50 per kit (includes postage and handling). Bulk rates available.

Maquila Solidarity Network
606 Shaw Street, Toronto, ON, M6G 3L6.
Tel: (416) 532-8584 • Fax (416) 532-7688
e-mail: perg@web.net • www.web.net/~msn

would work more if the in-laws didn't complain about the noise after midnight.⁶

Kwong describes another man who works two jobs, for a total of sixteen hours a day:

...he shares a windowless, one-room apartment on Allen Street with nineteen other male bachelors. A kitchen—rather, a hot plate on a wooden table—is located in one corner of the tiny bathroom. The small, 300-square-foot space is jammed with triple-decker bunk beds... His bunk costs him \$90 per month. Some of his roommates rent their bunks out for a portion of the day to cut down the cost.⁷

Canada, too, has its own populations of legal and illegal immigrants, ripe for exploitation. In 1999, Roxanna Ng, a professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, released a report on conditions of homeworkers in Toronto's garment industry. The report found that "most, if not all" employers of homeworkers "violate provincial labour standards legislation" by denying workers vacation and overtime pay, among other things.⁸ And many of the violations of the Ontario Employment Standards Act "have been committed by contractors producing for major labels, including Braemar/Dylex, Club Monaco, Eaton's The Bay, Cotton Ginny, Sears, Alfred Sung, and the Woolworth Northern Group", according to a 1993 International Ladies' Garment Workers Union study on homeworkers in Toronto.⁹

The "Women and Work" initiative of the Canadian Labour Congress gathered testimony from women on their working conditions, including from this Toronto garment worker:

continued on pg 16...

Toronto Police Services Opression

by Bernie Munich

I was watching a TV show called *Traders* the other day. It glamorizes the lives of greedy investment bankers. It gives them these glorious and dynamic personalities. It soaks them in the sham sexuality and glitz of Hollywood. The characters are always talking about 'the word on the street.' It gives us the impression that these people rely on some sort of access to the street to conduct their business and live their lives. The phrase draws pictures of over-fed White men in business suits, huddling in circles in alleyways, swapping business and stock tips. So when Mel Lastman or Mike Harris speak of cleaning up the streets and targeted policing, who's being targeted and cleaned off the street?

The Committee to Stop Targeted Policing recently released its report on Community Action Policing (CAP). It's called *Who's the Target? An Evaluation of Community Action Policing* and it's available at OPIRG. CAP is the City of Toronto's version of a New York City program that allotted extra money to police overtime budgets in order to have more police targeting certain people in 'problem areas.' The report reads:

It is assumed that a visible police presence creates the perception that an area is safe, while at the same time deterring crime. The effect on public perception, however, is to demonize particular groups of people, especially street-involved people (those living and/or working on the streets) and people of colour. The dehumanizing of these groups incites or reinforces public fear in order to justify the use of heavy-handed policing against them.

Problem areas are neighbourhoods where these people live, hang out, and sometimes do business. Police provide the extra boot heel to the foot of economic oppression that already applies itself to their necks. They discourage the natural congregation and self-determination of people already targeted by media as delinquent or degenerate. The report states:

Police do not operate in a vacuum. The policies and practices of the Toronto Police Services reflect the systemic discrimination that continues to exist in a society at large. CAP supports and helps to justify classist, racist, homophobic and discriminatory police practices that have been documented and challenged by researchers and advocates for years.

As Gabriella Pedicelli points out in her book, *When Police Kill: Police Use of Force in Montreal and Toronto* [HV 8158 .P43 1998 at Roberts and Bladen libraries], it has always been the mandate of police in Canada to serve as the hammer of systemic discrimination and oppression. The Northwest Mounted Police (now RCMP) were established to carry out the genocidal destruction of Aboriginal peoples and cultures. Contemporary policing is merely an extension of this mandate. Targeted policing is nothing new, but it blends well with current political climates created by corporate media and 'law-and-order celebrities' such as Toronto Police Chief Julian Fantino. The report says:

CAP fits into a growing package of legalisation that codifies a 'law and order' response to political, social and economic issues. In Ontario, this trend is exemplified by the recent Ontario *Safe Streets Act*. The act makes it illegal to 'aggressively' panhandle, to squeegee and to improperly dispose of needles. Individuals who are attempting to *survive* are depicted as threatening and transformed into criminals. Instead of concentrating on how to address serious health and economic concerns, governments are focusing on criminalization and enforcement.

Both Pedicelli's book and the CAP report note the extreme lack of police accountability in Canada. The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) in Ontario is under-funded and over-powered by police silence in matters of police criminality. The Ontario Civilian Commission on Police Services (OCCPS) merely hands complaints back to police so they can investigate themselves! Pedicelli notes that police usually get a paid suspension (vacation) and then a promotion or raise once the system has cleared them of any wrongdoing. The names Edmond Yu, Faraz Suleman and Otto Vass testify to this fact.

Toronto's police—under the joint leadership of Chief Julian Fantino and union boss Craig Brommell—have repeatedly shown their disregard for life and safety. But they never seem to have enough shame to stop demanding more money and more power. With Fantino tabling legislation and Brommell targeting politicians, it would seem the police state is upon us. Meanwhile, the City of Toronto has so far spent \$4.5 million on Community Action Policing. It also continues to cry broke whenever affordable housing is mentioned.

INCARCERATION INCORPORATED

Students decry cafeteria-prison connection

by Ariel Troster

What does wilting cafeteria food have to do with escaped inmates in Youngstown, Ohio Sodexho Marriott Services.

Kevin Pranis, an activist with the New York based Prison Moratorium Project wants students at Concordia to think before they stuff their faces with fries. Because he says their lunch money is funding the highly profitable private prison industry.

The connection is quite simple. In 1998, the French multinational Sodexho Alliance took over the North American operations of Marriott Management Services from the Marriott Group. The merger made the new company, Sodexho Marriott Services, the largest institutional provider of food services in North America with \$4.5 billion in annual revenues. Sodexho Marriott Services runs the food service at Concordia, as well as at over 400 universities across North America.

Sodexho Alliance owns 48 per cent of the food provider's stock. The company also owns 16 per cent of a company called Prison Realty Trust/Corrections Corporation of America making it a leading investor in the world's biggest for-profit prison company.

CCA manages 82 prisons with 73,000 beds in 26 American states, Puerto Rico, Great Britain, and Australia. The company's revenues were \$365 million during the first three quarters of 1999.

Peeved by the connection between mystery meat and CCA, the Prison Moratorium Project is spearheading a boycott campaign against Sodexho Marriott called "Not With Our Money."

The ultimate goal is to shut down the private prison industry, said Pranis in a telephone interview. But the immediate goal is to get Sodexho Alliance to divest its interest in private prisons.

While private prisons have yet to set up shop in Canada, they now control roughly 122,900 of the 2 million prison beds in the States. And Mike Harris is poised to privatize a so-called superjail in Penetanguishene, Ontario.

Pranis argues that private facilities treat prisoners badly, in an effort to cut costs.

Private prisons are terribly run, and the only way to make money is to cut corners.... You just can't cut that much fat out of the operations of a prison.

He said that, as a result, most privately-run prisons cut recreational and educational programs for pris-

oners, leaving them with little to do.

CCA VP Communications Susan Hart denied the accusation, explaining that private companies actually save taxpayers money by cutting the red tape in operating prisons. She didn't specify which services get the short shrift in CCA facilities.

Despite this, the Prison Moratorium Project is circulating a list of CCA Horror Stories, documenting cases where prisoners were harshly punished, or sexually assaulted by prison staff. Mother Jones magazine recently ran a cover story about CCA, claiming that incompetent staff allowed 20 prisoners to escape from its Youngstown, Ohio facility during broad daylight. The article claims that improperly trained staff left metal equipment everywhere, which the prisoners promptly fashioned into weapons. In its first year alone, 20 prisoners were stabbed, and two were murdered in the Youngstown facility.

The fact is that corrections facilities, whether publicly or privately managed, have things go wrong, said

Hart, responding to Pranis' claims. People die in prison, whether public or private.

Sodexho Marriott, for their part, are quick to disassociate themselves from CCA. Jeanette Jurkiewicz, a public relations officer for the company, was quick to point out that Sodexho Alliance

and Sodexho Marriott are two separate companies.

Sodexho Marriott is not in any way, shape, or form, involved in the prison industry, she said.

It's true that Sodexho-Marriott doesn't own any prisons, but it's also true that Kathie-Lee Gifford doesn't own any sweatshops, replied Pranis.

Sodexho Marriott argues that they're a separate company, but for every dollar going to Sodexho Marriott, almost 50 cents goes to Sodexho Alliance.

Rob Green, president of the Concordia Student Union, said he's willing to jump on the anti-Marriott bandwagon again. Last fall, the CSU led a campaign against Sodexho Marriott to challenge their exclusivity agreement with the University. With Marriott's contract coming up for renewal at the end of the 2000-2001 school year, Green is convinced that student pressure could help sway the negotiation process.

Michael Di Grappa, vice rector services, said that the university will invite other food service companies to compete for the contract. While Di Grappa hadn't been



...continued from pg 13

fully informed about the "Not With Our Money" Campaign, he said that the committee will take student input into account.

It's important for us to listen to what students say, but we also have to do what's in the best interest of the university, said Di Grappa, explaining that student pressure won't be the only factor in the university's decision.

Pranis on the other hand, is waiting for his first victory. While 10 American universities have joined the boycott campaign so far, none have successfully booted Sodexho Marriott from their campuses. While Pranis acknowledges that Sodexho Marriott may have no direct control over the prison industry, he's willing to exploit the connection between Sodexho Alliance and CCA:

"It wasn't as if Coca-Cola directly funded apartheid by operating in South Africa" [in the 1980s], said Pranis "I feel bad for Sodexho Marriott, but I feel worse for the prisoners [in private facilities]."

For more information, contact the "Not With Our Money" Campaign/Prison Moratorium Project c/o DSA, 180 Varick St., 12th Floor, NY, NY 10014; (212) 727-8610, ex. 23, email kpranis@igc.org.

This article was previously printed in The Link, Concordia's independent newspaper.

GRASS PEOPLE - Nicole Tanguay

Controlled by means other than my own
lim bounced back and forth
oblivion of the unfamiliar
dancing the two-step
the grass people guide
me to my own place
of greens and blues
so dark and gleaming
all I can see is the dark
so beautiful and deep
dancing to the beat of the wind
she calls me to the other place
I will not be afraid
red sparkling to my toes
I give a sigh which
gives life
for the next grass people to
play against my body
holding it secure
rocking back and forth
to the rhythm of the wind

I came to Canada in 1981 and started working as a sewing machine operator. In the mid '80s, I worked in a union shop and made over \$5.50 an hour. In 1988, my shop closed down. Now, in 1995, I worked on Spadina Ave. For 9 hours' of work, I got twelve dollars' pay. I was so disgusted that I quit.¹⁰

Another 1999 report, by members of the Maquila Solidarity Network, came to similar conclusions. The report indicates that an hourly wage of \$4.50, or 65% of the legal minimum wage, is not unusual. They also cite Avvy Go, a lawyer at the Metro Chinese and South-East Asian Legal Clinic in Toronto, who says that some employers are paying according to immigration status: "If you're a landed immigrant, you get, say \$4 an hour; if you're a refugee claimant with employment authorization, you get \$3 an hour; if you don't have any status at all, you get \$2 an hour."¹¹

Another convenient feature of the subcontracting system is that the giant retail and manufacturing corporations who purchase the clothing are not technically the employers. This means that they can avoid being charged under the Employment Standards Act. At the same time, the big labels don't have to give up any power to the subcontractors. They are clearly still at the top of the pyramid. Unlike the subcontractors, they have established markets for the clothing, deep pockets for advertising, and economic and political connections. This allows the big companies to squeeze the subcontractors for all their worth, ensuring poor working conditions, while escaping legal responsibility for workers that are not their own employees.

More recently, the subcontractors have stopped having their employees sew the labels onto the clothing, which Roxanna Ng speculates is to cover up their involvement in the sweatshops, which are coming under increasing scrutiny by community and activist organizations.

A very important contributing factor to this situation is the lack of affordable childcare: "The single most important reason given by women for homework is child care, or rather the lack of affordable child care. Since wages for garment workers are low, they cannot afford to put their children in daycare centres or to hire private care."¹²

Wide reaching effects

The wage expectations of Americans have collapsed because workers—union and nonunion, college educated and non-college educated, white collar and blue collar—have lost bargaining power with their employers during this period of economic restructuring

—Peter Kwong, *Forbidden Workers*¹³

Kwong describes the testimony of a Mrs. Tang, a former schoolteacher who testified at a 1995 US Sen-

ate hearing. Mrs. Tang "recalled that in the early eighties she worked eight hours a day and earned \$40-50 a day. Today, with competition from the Fuzhounese, she slaves twelve hours a day to make a paltry \$30."¹⁴

The effects spread well beyond Chinatown. In a story that seems all too familiar, Kwong describes what happened to Latino janitors in Los Angeles who had "secure and relatively well paid" jobs in the early eighties. "then the corporation began to replace their in-house cleaning contracts with nonunion subcontractors, often employing immigrant laborers", leading to "a continuing, massive loss of union jobs." Unlike others, however, the janitors eventually got improved contracts by regrouping to launch the "Janitors for Justice" campaign, which directly targeted the subcontracting system.¹⁵

Similar situations abound in Canada. For example, in 1995, Metro council came under pressure "from powerful private operators lobbying Metro politicians" to contract out the management of "at least one" home for the elderly "to a private operator." CUPE Local 79, fearing that "if one home was contracted out, others would soon follow", mounted a successful campaign to oppose contracting out.

Public school custodians have been a frequent target of subcontracting as well. In 1999, CUPE members led a battle to end the subcontracting of custodial jobs for The Conseil Scolaire du District Centre Sud-ouest. Maintenance work for the board is still contracted out.¹⁶

Finding a way forward

It will be a challenge for people of colour to overcome their historical exclusion from the established labour unions and to assert their power within them. The unions, in turn face the challenge of trying to help organize smaller workplaces in a different environment. It should be noted that simply forming unions is not going to solve this: most of the garment workers in New York's Chinatown, for example, are members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). Yet they still endure low wages, poor working conditions, and so on. Peter Kwong believes the union leadership is out of touch with its rank and file members, as a common complaint among garment workers in New York is that the union representatives rarely come, and when they do they talk only to management. Clearly the constant threat that employers might simply shut down and relocate to other countries tends to prevent stronger demands for better conditions as well.

For issue-based groups that are not necessarily attached to these communities, it will be important to get beyond merely "making our work more relevant to people of colour" and to instead take direction from the initiative and leadership of communities of colour. Instead of being "activists" in the sense of people who are going to initiate and lead the struggle. After all, while being an activist should be about working hard, doing work that others don't have the time, or freedom, it doesn't necessarily mean that activists should be "leading" the struggle.

The issue of the Chinese migrants falls within the mandate of many different action groups at OPIRG-Toronto, including Students Against Sweatshops, Anti-Corporate Rule, Anti-Racism Media Watch, avoiding an exclusive focus, OPIRG-Toronto is well placed to make a difference in this struggle. It will be a strong test of OPIRG-Toronto's commitment to an inclusive vision to see if we can make headway on this issue.



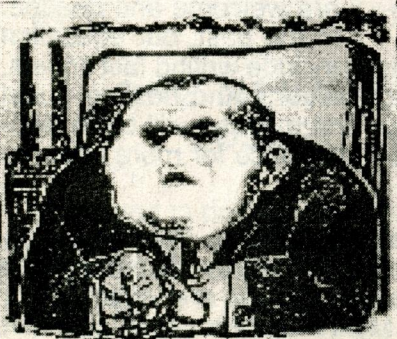
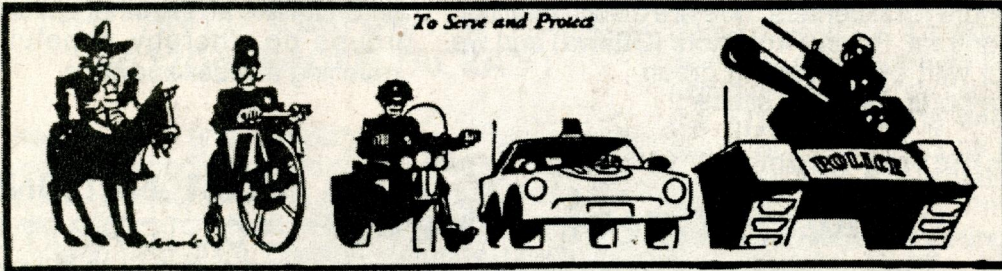
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- 2-Canadian Council for Refugees, *Facing Facts: Myths and misconceptions about refugees and immigrants in Canada*. Montreal, 1999.
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- 5-Peter Kwong, *Forbidden Workers*. New York: The New Press, 1997, p 185, citing Robert Kuttner, *Everything for Sale*, New York: Knopf, 1997.
- 6-Kwong, same as above, page 41
- 7-Kwong, same as above, page 38
- 8-Roxanna Ng, Renita Yuk-Lin Wong, Angela Choi, *Homeworking: Home Office or Home Sweatshop?* Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto, 1999.
- 9-Jan Borowy and Fanny Yuen, *ILGWU Homeworkers Study: an Investigation into Wages and Working Conditions of Chinese-Speaking Homeworkers in Metropolitan Toronto*. Toronto, 1993. Cited in Linda Yanz, same as above.
- 10-Canadian Labour Congress, <http://www.clc-ctc.ca/woman/womenwork.html>.
- 11-Linda Yanz, same as above.
- 12-Roxanna Ng, same as above.
- 13-Peter Kwong, same as above, page 187.
- 14-Peter Kwong, same as above, page 101.
- 15-Peter Kwong, same as above, page 211.
- 16-Canadian Union of Public Employees, Ontario Division, *Winning ways: Successful CUPE Campaigns to Fight Privatization*. Scarborough, 2000, pages 6-7.

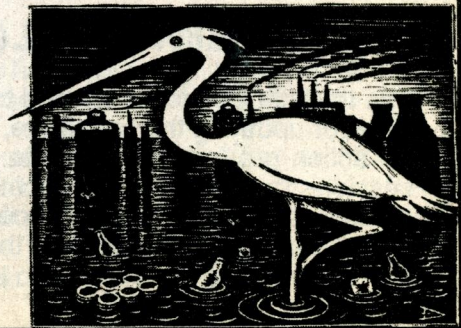
*Please note also that all information about Chinese immigrant workers in the United States is drawn from Peter Kwong's *Forbidden Workers*.

*An article in the September 17th issue of *Workers Vanguard*, published by Spartacist Publishing Co. in New York, introduced me to Kwong's book.





CONSUME!





ACTION GUIDE



PUSSY WILLOW

PussyWillow is a local pro-feminist, anti-corporate, pro-active femstrual health collective. We're a diverse collective dedicated to educating womyn (people) about their femstrual conditioning and the environmental, social and health impacts of mainstream "feminine hygiene" products. We plan to educate through workshops and distribute information on proactive femstrual awareness, the empowerment of womyn, and positive body image and sexual health by tabling, and also through writing, direct actions, music and womynrage zines. We are also producing and distributing handmade re-usable cloth femstrual pads and other alternatives, such as 100% cotton tampons, sponges, and Keepers. In addition we plan on doing outreach beyond downtown Toronto by going into the suburbs and as well attempt to network with womyn in more rural centers. We are also in coalition with Blood Sisters Montreal, Pussy Protectors (Ottawa) and we also hope to connect with other working group collectives in Canada participating in similar fronts.

Femail:

pussy_willow@chickmail.com

FRIENDS OF CUBA

What the uoft friends of cuba attempts to do is to Explain the reality facing Cuba today, particularly its youth, and to develop and strengthen ties of broad based solidarity between the Cuban and Canadian youth. We will attempt to do this by having a number of events such as runing a course with the free U, organizing discussions and speakers in addition to celebrating cultural events such as having a "Cuba day" event at Sid Smith like all the other cultural groups do, thereby hopefully reaching a wider audience.

ANTI-RACISM MEDIA WATCH

This is the tentative name for a new group which will be forming this Fall. This group will do research and education, produce media, monitor media and move with a strong anti-racist analysis. For more details or to get involved, contact the office. (see pg 4)

How do I get involved?

People interested in OPIRG's activities usually join the action groups, collectives or campaigns described here.

No experience is necessary to volunteer your time and energy, and some training is provided. To become active with OPIRG, here are a couple of things that you can do:

- *come to an OPIRG volunteer orientation session*
 - *if you know what issues you'd like to work on, attend an action group meeting. Newcomers are always welcome!*
- Call the OPIRG office to find out subsequent meeting dates.*
- *show up at one of our skills training workshops or educational events to see first hand what we do*
 - *come by and look around our office. Office Hours: Monday - Thursday, 11am to 6 pm.*

FIRST NATIONS SOLIDARITY ACTION GROUP

works toward recognition and attainment of First Nations' sovereignty and sovereign rights through public education campaigns. This group is being re-fueled this year after a year of inactivity, new people and ideas for projects are welcome and needed. In the past, our education

campaigns include writing fact sheets, organizing petitions and hosting guest speakers. Our first meeting will be in September, please call the office for more information. (see pg 24)

THE INTERNET COLLECTIVE

The Internet Collective formed to fill the needs of a growing technological activism. We are responsible for updating the web page, doning the weekly events list serve and running the discussion lists for action groups. We exist to support the activism done by the action groups and offer training sessions to empower other activists in using internet-based media. Most members of the collective come with little or no experience and we strive to make our projects accessible. We have few meetings throughout the year other than training sessions and dividing tasks up through the email list. Call the office to find out more or to join the collective.

STUDENTS AGAINST SWEATSHOPS

SAS has won a recent victory with the institution for a U of T code of conduct regarding sweatshops, the first one of its kind in Canada. However, SAS now needs all the help we can get to make sure this code is implemented effectively so that U of T is really sweat-free. Also, SAS aims to raise awareness about sweatshops and the organizing efforts of workers through high school and university educationals, events on campus, pamphleting, street activism and rallies. SAS is linked to anti-sweatshop movements in the United States, across Canada and in the Toronto community. We meet every two weeks to plan and discuss our next actions. Everyone welcome! (see pg. 12)

THE ANTI-CORPORATE RULE ACTION GROUP (ACRAG)

opposes the unequal distribution of power and wealth embodied in and maintained by corporations. Projects for this year include fighting the clearcutting on First Nations land in Northern Ontario by a giant forestry company, promoting Fair Trade Coffee (see pg 33), and fighting the operators of private prisons who also own U of T's food services (see pg 15).

THE ANTI-POVERTY ACTION GROUP

What is poverty? In this new year the anti-poverty group wishes to explore and present the different ideas and views on poverty through various forms of media (eg. art, posters, zines, displays, action). We welcome new members to come share and learn with us.

ROCKET RECYCLERS!

With all these free newspapers on the TTC system, in addition to the garbage that is contributed by regular passengers- it is not uncommon to see garbage cans overflowing! These cans are overflowing with materials that could be RECYCLED. The "Rocket Recyclers: Make the TTC Recycle Group" is a chance for you to voice your opinions, collaborate on creating new solutions, and most importantly create positive change on the TTC and for the environment. There are plenty of interesting jobs to go around so don't miss out! Our first tentative meeting will be in September. Call the OPIRG Office for the finalized date. Regular meeting with times will be discussed at this meeting and be prepared to eat (cookies & juice)!

YOUTH ORGANIZING UNIONS (YOU)

is a new initiative launched by young trade union members and their supporters. Our aim is to organize the unorganized. We are targeting work sectors where there is typically little union presence and working on ways to get workers in those sectors to think about organizing. Our overwhelming focus thus far has been in retail but we are open to anyone who wants to help people organize their workplaces. The "youth" part is just to make a cool acronym. You don't have to consider yourself young.

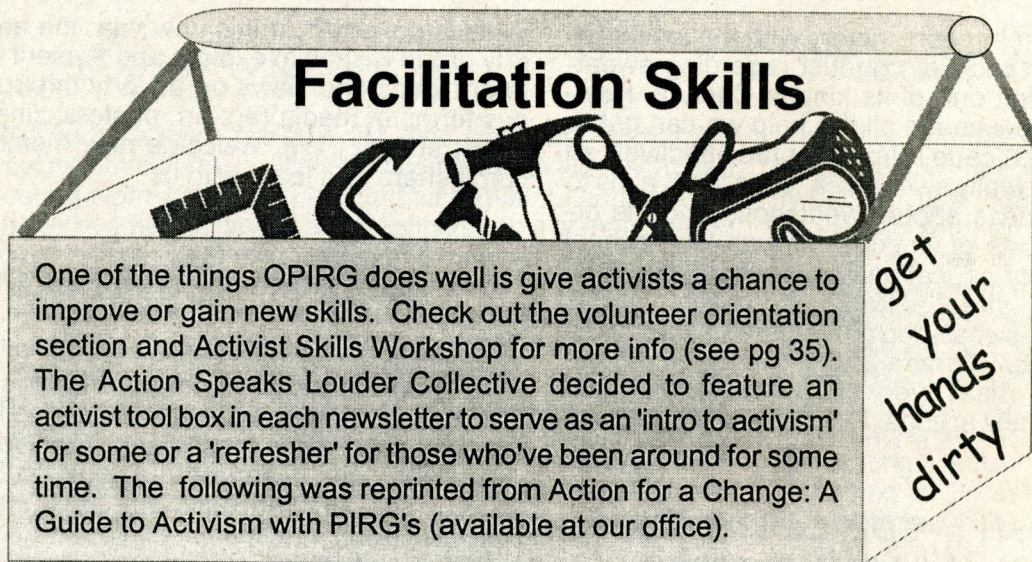
THE NEWSLETTER COLLECTIVE

Interested in doing outreach, writing, drawing, editing and producing OPIRG newsletters like this one? OPIRG puts out a few publications a year with our next one coming out in the Winter. No experience is necessary, just an interest in working on a social justice newsletter. Call the office to find out when the new collective is forming.

RADIOPIRG COLLECTIVE

broadcasts a show on 89.5FM CIUT every Wednesday at 9:00am. We have been running strong all summer producing a conscious spoken word show dealing with issues of social and environmental justice. We have a pre show meeting at 8:30am and then a general meeting after the show at 10:00am. Interested in progressive radio? No experience is necessary, training is available. We are always in need of voices, interviewers, researchers and technicians.

ACTIVIST TOOL BOX



This is the beginning of a new academic year, and if you're already involved in any groups or thinking about forming any collectives, facilitation skills may be a useful addition to help keep meetings productive.

Effective Meetings: A Facilitator's Role

1. Only directs the process, not the content, and never makes decisions for the group.
2. Make sure there is an agenda for the meeting by reviewing the previous meeting's minutes.
3. Introduce agenda items and defines the decisions that need to be made.
4. Keep discussion focused and moving.
5. If the discussion becomes repetitive, the facilitator should sum up and move the discussion forward.
6. Make sure everyone is encouraged to speak and all input is heard.
7. Indicate whose turn it is to speak and keep a speakers' list if too many people want to talk and never allow a discussion to develop and continue between two people.
8. Verbally checks for agreement (consensus) when the group is making a decision.
9. Repeat back to the group points made, decisions made, tasks identified, and who is responsible for tasks.
10. Monitor tone of the meeting (mood-minding - do people need a break?).
11. Monitor the discussion so no one individual or point of view dominates.
12. Acknowledge and address conflict and discomfort (it doesn't go away if you ignore it).
13. Ask someone else to facilitate if you're in a conflict of interest or if you're too involved in the item up for discussion.
14. Make sure new people are acknowledged and introduced.

Facilitation should change from meeting to meeting. Generally, the person who records the minutes should facilitate the next meeting (that way, they can refer back to the previous meeting when preparing the agenda). By rotating the role of facilitation, everyone develops the skill and the action/working group doesn't end up relying on (or overburdening) one person.

For large groups, contentious items/meetings, or when someone is new to facilitating, it's a good idea to have two people facilitating (one person keeps track of and sums up discussion, while the other person keeps a speakers list).

Finally, it is the responsibility of everyone at the meeting to "facilitate themselves" and/or step in and help if someone requires facilitation assistance. But also remember that at times a meeting requires/demands less structure, so keep in mind the atmosphere of the meeting and the vibe from the people. It is sometimes better to lay back and enjoy the unfettered spontaneous interaction that a more casual environment allows.

The MOVE 9 In Prison For 22 Years

by moky

August 8th, 2000 marked 22 years since the MOVE 9 have been wrongfully imprisoned.

Although there had been many confrontations between MOVE and the city of Philadelphia, August 8th, 1978 was the first full scale military attack against MOVE. Early in the morning, over 500 cops prepared for war, surrounded the MOVE headquarters in Powelton Village, blew up the front porch of the house and began inserting tear gas and smoke into the house and shot off over ten thousand rounds of ammunition into the house. **All this because MOVE wouldn't comply with an eviction notice???** During the cops' shooting frenzy, an officer James Ramp was shot and killed. The bullet entered James Ramp on a downward angle. Reports from neighbours say that the shot that killed James Ramp came from across the street from a window. MOVE showed no sign of surrendering because MOVE hadn't done anything wrong. When police stormed the house they were unable to locate any MOVE members. In fear of their lives, MOVE people had barricaded themselves in the basement (which makes it impossible to have shot a bullet from a downward angle). The police then decided to flood the basement to force MOVE out and eventually, they did come out, having no other choice but to drown. **All this over an eviction notice???** When Delbert Africa crawled out of the house unarmed with his hands in the air, he was brutally beaten by 4 cops (3 charged, all acquitted) and it was one of the first times international media had broadcasted footage of a blatant example of police brutality (later with Rodney King, more recently with Tom Jones) as the cops almost literally beat him to death. Nine MOVE members, including **Delbert, Janine, Janet, Mike, Eddie, Debbie, Merle, Phil and Chuck Africa** were sentenced to 30-

100 years in jail for the murder of officer James Ramp. **This had nothing to do with an eviction notice**, this was an attempt to put an end to the MOVE organization.



The Philadelphia police didn't give a damn about James Ramp. He had been a clerk for a captain for 10 years and they took this man from behind his desk and put him on the front line of a full scale attack plan. As well, there were three cameras, all focused on James Ramp as if they were waiting for something to happen to him and all three cameras "coincidentally" went out of focus at the exact moment he got shot. After the confrontation, the city of Philadelphia bulldozed the entire house, destroying all evidence. They didn't draw any chalk lines, they didn't get fingerprints, they didn't give forensic scientists an opportunity to ex-

amine the sight, **NONE OF THAT**. As proven with Fred Hampton's (leader of the Chicago chapter of the Black Panther Party) assassination, this kind of evidence was crucial in determining that regardless of police claims, that none of the bullets came from the house. The MOVE 9 are innocent and sure as day they did not receive a fair trial.

In 1998, Merle Africa died in prison under VERY mysterious circumstances. Merle wasn't feeling well and was kept in isolation, forced to eat food that was not part of her regular diet. Garlic, which is one of MOVE's basic medicines was declared contraband in Cambridge Springs, the prison where they locked up Merle. Merle died after being imprisoned for 20 years for a crime she did not commit. Merle's death will not be in vain. **LONG LIVE MERLE!** We must not let any more MOVE members die in the hands of this rotten system.

**FREE THE MOVE 9!
FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL!
FREE SATPAL RAM!
FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!
DOWN WITH THIS ROTTEN ASS SYSTEM!**

**For more information, contact
Friends of MOVE Toronto at
416.760.2152 or email
onamovetoronto@hotmail.com**



Merle Africa

Hey read this! It's Something you Should Know.

The Innu Struggle...

By Renée Ferguson

This is important information. We need to know this because this is a Canadian issue concerning Canadian people and Canadian history. For more than two thousand years the Innu people of Nitassinan, a region located near eastern Quebec and Labrador, have maintained a sustainable and survival-based culture. The survival of the Innu people was put to test during the mid sixties with the destruction of Patshetshunau waterfall. Patshetshunau, or "Great Stream Rising" was at one point the second largest waterfall in North America and was a familiar sight and sound for the Innu people of Nitassinan. In 1966 the premier of Newfoundland, Joey Smallwood, signed a contract with Quebec Hydro that would allow the company to dam the Churchill River upstream from Patshetshunau. There was no consultation of the Innu people. 1971 saw the first installation of the Smallwood project complete and the Innu people returned to their land to find it flooded, animals drowned, and burial grounds washed away. The Innu people received no compensation for the seizure and destruction of the land - their land - that became the Smallwood Reservoir. Today, the Smallwood Reservoir is one of the largest reservoirs in the world.

The damming of the Churchill River opened a flood of land issues for the Innu people. The Labrador Innu have never given up their land to any government by treaty or other legal means. This means that the Canadian government should be obligated to recognize their ownership of the land. Despite this fact the government continues to treat Innu land as government property until a more 'suitable' agreement is negotiated and agreed upon. Until then, the government will control the resources available on Innu land. The land that rightly belongs to the Innu people continues to be developed and exploited.

INCO is one of the companies that have been eyeing Innu territory - specifically Voisey's Bay. INCO is a nickel-mining trans-national corporation that has current interest in Indonesia. An April visit by two Indonesian activists stressed INCO's betrayal of the Sulawesi people of Indonesia and a promise that a similar situation could occur at Voisey's Bay. Social concerns over the implications of INCO's arrival have already been predicted based on the Innu experiences with other companies on Innu territory. One specific area for implications is social and family life. There are many employees from these companies who pass through Innu communities. They may stay only a few nights - just long enough to start a relationship with a woman and leave. The result is a rise in STDs, unwanted pregnancies, abortions, and rape incidents and other forms of violence against women and children, and

family break ups. Increased alcoholism is also a problem that has resulted as a consequence of the of unhappy and frustrating sentiments that many of the Innu people feel about their lack of control of these companies and their affects on their homeland. Disparity among the people not only translates into alcoholism but also into other self-destructive epidemics such as suicide and depression. In a report entitled "Canada's Tibet - The Killing of the Innu," that was prepared by a human rights group called Survival International, an advocacy group for tribal peoples. It found the Innu communities had 178 suicides per 100,000 people between 1990 and 1998. That's nearly 13 times the Canadian rate.

The jobs that were promised to the Innu people of Voisey's Bay from these companies are as reliable and abundant as predicted - especially for the women. Women have not received training for the jobs that are available in the office or for non-traditional employment such as drillers, labours or construction. The few women who do manage to enter these types of professions and land these jobs are subject to sexual harassment. The Innu people face massive amounts of developments in their territories. Large-scale river diversions, dams, extensive river flooding, and an influx of outside into their traditional territories all result in the loss of lands, culture and community. One other significant loss is loss of fish. The ability to fish and hunt is an important aspect of Innu cultural identity. It entails the valued characteristics of responsibility and spirituality for the Innu people. An analysis of some species of fish in the Smallwood Reservoir has shown high levels of methylmercury. Flooding large areas of land creates conditions in which both naturally and human produced mercury is readily available to aquatic life. This mercury takes the form of methylmercury. Once produced, methyl mercury becomes part of life in the water. Human beings are not structured like fish and therefore cannot store toxins away from the vital organs as fish do, therefore, fish is eaten and so are the toxins - and no mode of preparing the fish can rid the meat of its toxins. Methyl mercury can cause destruction of the central nervous system and birth defects in children. A 1977 study (six years after the completion of the Smallwood project) revealed mercury levels in 37 percent of the individuals surveyed. The government did nothing but send out a press release that advised people to limit their consumption of fish to 1/2 lb a week. The loss of the ability to fish as they wished, pushed the Innu people to a greater dependence on outer sources of food as well as exposed them to a greater risks for nutritional deficiencies. Big Business cannot bare all the responsibility for the invasion of Innu territory - interna-



CUNTS UNITE!

by Anh-Thi
Tang-Nguyen

So that you know where i'm coming from...let me just tell you that i'm a hard core CUNT...wet or dry...rain or shine...sleet, hail, snow...smog advisory days and high UV index days...in pants or in a dress...i'm a CUNT...that's right...i'm one of the Chicks United for Non-noxious Transportation!...and you might be a CUNT too...or you may know a CUNT...she may be your mother, sister, friend, lover, aunt, niece, daughter...and yes...even your dear grandma...

How to tell if you are a CUNT or know a CUNT?...well first of all...a CUNT is cool and sexy...want to know why?...cause you'll see her riding a bike or scooter, she may even be on blades, using the TTC or just two footing it...she'll hate cars (even if she has to drive one of those shitbuckets once in a while)...and she'll love breathing...did i forget to mention that?...she hates inhaling smog filled air and seeing a haze over her city...she'll want children to grow up without asthma...she'll dream of wider sidewalks and more trees...she'll subvert the capitalistic dreams of automophilia...she'll want to be healthy - mind, body and soul...she'll think that moving her body with her body's own power is massive sexy...and she's no longer afraid to make this 'political'...cause you know what...making your passion political is sexy too...so what could be more sexy than a CUNT?...

Want to be a CUNT or meet other CUNTS?...come to Critical Mass and bring your bike/scooter/blades...CM celebrates alternative forms of transportation and it happens around the world on the last Friday of every month...it's a non-hierarchical phenomenon that has no leaders....it just 'comes' together and though no one organizes, everyone takes credit...in Toronto, Critical Mass gathers at Temperence (between Adelaide and Richmond) and Yonge at 6pm...you'll meet all types of PUNTS (People United for Non-noxious Transportation) at Critical Mass and they'll ride around the downtown core to have fun and to demonstrate that more non-noxious transportation needs to be on the road. Imagine 30-300 (varies according to season) PUNTS pouring into Friday rush-hour, riding peacefully and collectively through the street and taking the whole lane. Remember, we don't block traffic...we are traffic!...

To all the beautiful CUNTS I know and all you up and coming CUNTS...ride on sisters...see you at Critical Mass!...



tional governments have been joining these destructive forces in the last few decades. Although we hear less about military flight training, the flights continue to thunder throughout Innu territory. The pilots even practise dropping bombs on targets throughout the region. This type of testing has been banned in several European countries because of the concern over the dangers and disturbances caused by the noise. Yet, the Canadian government has allowed several countries including British, Dutch, German, and Italian air forces to continue training on Innu land. Although strongly opposed by the Innu people, the Canadian government closing the training will jeopardise the economic security of the community that has developed around the military base.

I think that it is unfair to present the people of Nitassinan as passive victims of evil forces. I cannot write this article without pointing out the people have not been standing aside helplessly as the big bad government moved in. They have been fighting hard. The Cree and the Inuit fought the Great Whale Hydroelectric project in the James and Hudson's Bay regions of Quebec in the 1990's. On March 16th thirteen Sheshatshit people with snowshoes and toboggans headed through lakes and marshes for Minei-nipi. This was a walk of protest against the low-level flying over Nitassinan. Then there is the formation of the Innu Nation the governing body of the Innu

has been engaged in this process since 1991, and is currently negotiating an Agreement-in-Principle with the governments of Canada and Newfoundland. The Innu Nation signed a Framework Agreement, the first major step towards a land rights settlement, in March of 1997." For more information on the Innu people check out their website at: www.innu.ca.

Information for this article was obtained from several sources. There is a lot of information out there about the Innu Struggle. Check it out. Particularly useful if you want to learn more about the plight of Innu women is the Innu Nation website called, 'More to Loose Less to Gain- Women and Mining' and is written by Camille Fouillard. It can be found at: "<http://www.innu.ca/vbwomen1.html>".

Interested in supporting the Innu, or other First Nations? The First Nations Solidarity Action Group is looking for new members. Also, OPIRG is interested in starting work this fall to prevent clearcutting by forestry giant Abitibi on First Nations land in northern Ontario.

No Justice for Dr. Chun

In December 1992, Dr. Chun submitted his written complaint against UofT to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC).

Since then the OHRC appointed a succession of investigators to look into the case, the last being Mr. Roger Palacio, who was appointed in late 1998.

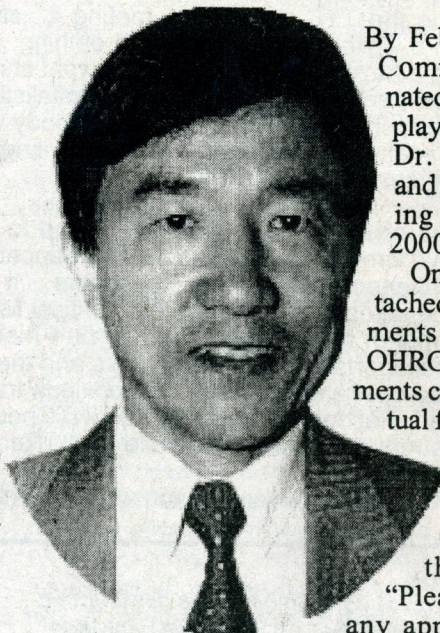
In December 1998, in a letter to Senator Vivienne Poy of the Commission stated that it expected to have all investigations into long delayed cases, including Chun's, completed by end of March 1999.

In July 1999, Mr. Palacio stated that he planned to have the investigation concluded by August but was still waiting to have some three hundred documents turned over to him by the Respondent, U of T.

On 1 February 2000, having carefully reviewed thousands of pages of documents, the OHRC released the long-awaited report, stating among others things:

- a). Records pertaining to three of the four tenured-stream competitions (1987, 1988, 1991-92, 1992) were not available to the investigator: UofT had shredded them.
- b). The evidence indicates that the competition process allows for a wide latitude of subjectivity at various stages including the culling of applications, short-listing and choice of the successful seminar presentation.
- c). The evidence indicates that the Complainant was subjected to reprisal for attempting to enforce his rights under the Code.
- d). The evidence presents a prima facie case of poisoned work environment.
- e). The power imbalance inherent in the dynamic of an "old-boys" network effectively screens out racial minority persons, as well as other minority persons who are unable to tap into this network.
- f). In conclusion, the totality of the evidence

corroborates the Complainant's allegations on a prima facie basis that his race, colour, ancestry, place of origin and ethnic origin were factors in his failure to obtain an academic appointment and that he was subjected to a series of reprisals culminating in his dismissal.



By February 16, 2000, the Commission had terminated all of those who had played a key role in the Dr. Chun investigation and the subsequent writing of the February 1, 2000 report.

On March 30, UofT attached 200 pages of documents to its response to the OHRC Report. These documents contained serious factual fabrications. The submission was made despite a February 1, 2000 letter sent to Chun's lawyer from the Commission. "Please take notice that any appendices or attachments to your submission will not

be placed before the Commission when it renders its decision," the letter reads.

On July 24 the OHRC announced its decision not to refer the matter to a board of inquiry, citing reasons all of which diametrically contradicted its own report's findings. In a CBC radio interview in late July, Chief Commissioner Keith Norton conceded that in rendering the decision, the commissioners had taken into account the U of T's submission.

Significantly, the decision to reverse the OHRC's position in the Chun case was arrived at without the presence of any key staff members, including the Coordinator of the Investigation Branch, who had investigated and recommended that the case be referred to a board of inquiry.

Dr. Chun's lawyer is currently appealing before the Commission for reversal of the decision. The written appeal cites more than a dozen procedural failures on the part of the Commission leading up to July 24, and non-disclosure of at least one incident of conflict of interest, which had seriously prejudiced the outcome of the decision.



Breakin' it Down: Routes of Resistance

queers of colour

poetry slam

targeted policing

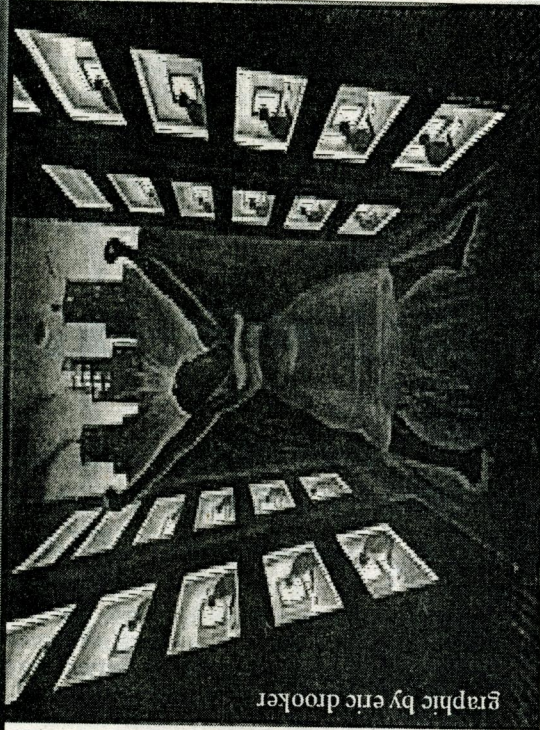
housing

social services

indigenous lands

art as revolution

mumia abu-jamal



graphic by eric drooker

cuban solidarity

sweatshop labour

anti-racism

storytelling

ableism

trans / 2-spirited

move

corporate globalization

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A Thief in the Temple

by Ian Boulton

Gentle readers, a confession- I just don't GET Christmas. Fortunately, I can evade being dubbed "Scrooge" simply by flashing the membership card of that all too exclusive club (The Alliance of Non-Christian / Non-Capitalist / Non-Carnivore / Non-Parents). While the acronym is a [pain], membership gives me a reasonable excuse. In fact, many years ago Christmas and I reached a somewhat terse understanding - it doesn't bother me, if I don't annoy it. And so, I make every effort to stay festive-free, instead simply observing and accepting the "merriment" for what it is.

However, it seems that with the sprinting years (and underused) my ability to suspend disbelief has atrophied. I apologize, but at the same time, undoubtedly the most vapid of all seasons - my BULLSHIT'O'METER TM is consistently off the scale.

So, in the milky light of Christmas morning, pausing only to sing halfhearted chorus of "Happy Birthday Dear Jesus." I pulled on my warmest wear, and with my seasonal smugness buffed to a gloss I ventured out 'sploring downtown.

Yonge Street was desolate, the iron-cold wind harassing party-bright garbage into restless tumbleweed. Not one upright soul, the hangover of Corporate-Christmas present-and an anticipation of "Christmas.com" yet to come. In occasionally sheltered spots, the glitter piles rested alongside other mounds-maybe more faded maybe more soiled-issuing breath-sign in the frost. These camouflage homes were almost indistinguishable from the abundant party detritus. I'm not proud, I didn't stop, I didn't even look too hard - blaming the bitter cold marched briskly on, hoping never to spend a winters' night outdoors- even in Toronto the good.

Now nearing the Eaton Center this sailor was hearing the siren call, "BUY MORE STUFF - BUY MORE STUFF". Remembering the infectious pre-Christmas frenzy I steeled myself and, with scarcely a shudder, ventured into the corporate temple. The vaults were silenced seemingly more hallowed than ever. Only saccharine sleigh-bells rippled the air and, devoid of the masses, empty of commerce, this cavern "seemed" bearable.

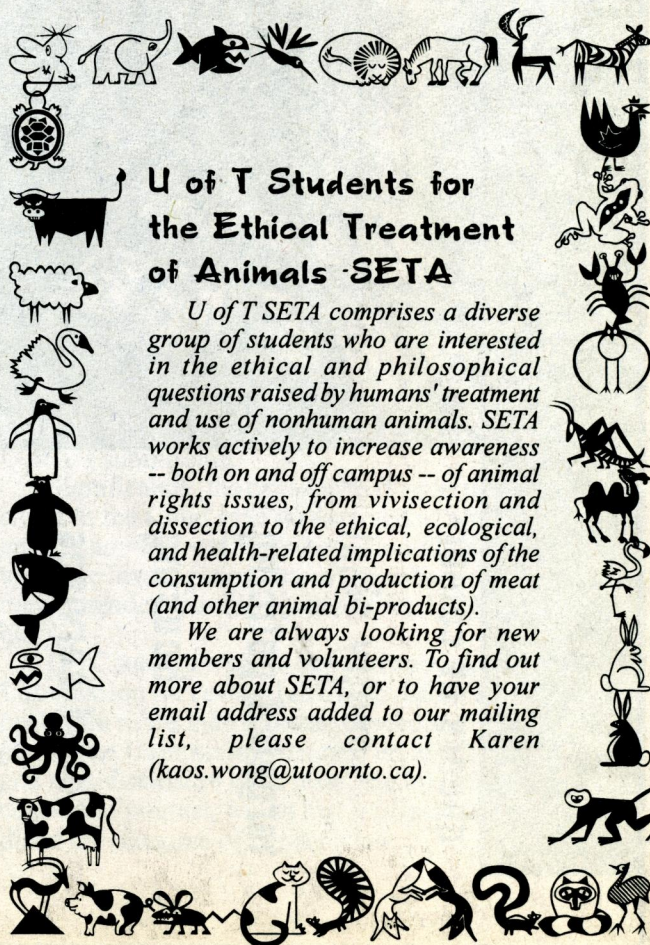
After a brief stroll, long enough to thaw my extremities, I felt a presence. Yes Gentle readers, I was not alone in this, the holiest of holies. Following, just closely enough to insist discomfort were a group of darkly clad individuals. As they drew closer I recognized the group as EATON-SECURITY, although the cuffs, pepper spray and those padded (possibly bulletproof) costumes conjured a somewhat of a disturbing image. These guys were, without doubt, SANTA'S SWAT TEAM. Their polite, if brisk questioning, was followed by a more understated (if sustained) pursuit, scuttling from radiant reindeer to the partial cover of cobweb snowscreens. Incessant radio

HISS, CLICK and CHATTER was evidence of confusion among the elves. Here was a consumer, not consuming, in fact not doing much at all - except perhaps watching, quietly. Disobeying the corporate rules has made me a bad little being, and when the little helpers report back, I expect to be scored heavily, and finally, from the big-guys' chimney list. Is this necessarily a bad thing? Well, take a moment, Enrique within (yourself) and decide - I strongly recommend it.

Too much Eye-candy, like other confections, invokes little but party nausea. The non-consumer experience was certainly filling (if very far from satisfying) and the lazy arctic wind slapped me back into awareness. As the diamond-blast door sealed behind me a thought crystallized.

A single deck of this mothership of acquisition could house hundreds if not thousands of people, and certainly those souls clinging to their lives less than a block away. I wonder, would the great and charitable Santa, the patron of the season, dim his lights for a day and rent a space heater and maybe, just maybe save a life of two.

I Wonder.....



U of T Students for the Ethical Treatment of Animals - SETA

U of T SETA comprises a diverse group of students who are interested in the ethical and philosophical questions raised by humans' treatment and use of nonhuman animals. SETA works actively to increase awareness -- both on and off campus -- of animal rights issues, from vivisection and dissection to the ethical, ecological, and health-related implications of the consumption and production of meat (and other animal bi-products).

We are always looking for new members and volunteers. To find out more about SETA, or to have your email address added to our mailing list, please contact Karen (kaos.wong@utoronto.ca).

U.S. NAVY OUT OF VIEQUES!

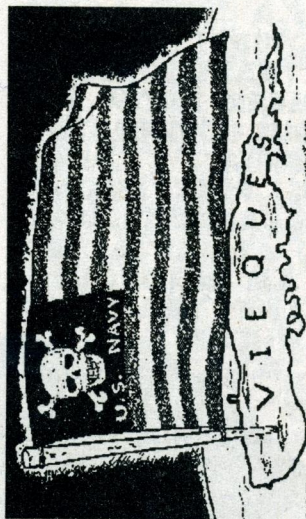
Originally named Bieque by the pre-columbines Indians, the island of Vieques is located in the Caribbean to the East of the island of Puerto Rico. After 400 years of Spanish colonial rule, Puerto Rico became a "possession" of the United States as a direct result of the Spanish-American War of 1898.

In 1938 the US Navy began using the island of Vieques for military practices. In 1941, the US Navy began to forcibly steal land, which ultimately ended in their possession of over two thirds of the island thereby displacing thousands of families and seriously jeopardizing their basic means of survival. The US Navy set the price for the stolen land giving the island residents very little say, if any, in the matter. Resistance became impossible when the Navy issued the following ultimatum: Either you accept the price set by the Navy or prepare to be evicted, by force, if necessary, within 24 hours. This caused the crunching of the entire civilian population of Vieques into a small strip in the middle of the island. The US Navy took control of over 75% (the US Navy controls 26,000 of the Island's 33,000 acres.) of this tiny island's soil for war maneuvers and bomb storage.

The immediate effects of the bombings in Vieques are the destruction of delicate ecosystems in the island, which supports hundreds of species of plants and animals that are killed instantly upon the direct impact of the projectiles during military target practices. The people of Vieques suffer from high levels of cancer and other serious health problems. An increase in extremely rare diseases, such as, Scleroderma, lupus, thyroid deficiencies, and not-so-rare ones, like asthma, which is significantly affecting Vieques' children.

On April 19, 1999, two F-18 airplanes dropped two 500 pound bombs outside their target area, killing David Sanes Rodriguez, a Vieques civilian, and injuring four others. Since April 20, 1999 civilians have established camps inside the Navy Zone. That Zone is now the Peoples' Zone once again.. The people of Vieques and Puerto Rico are speaking against the bombing of Vieques and are demanding that the US Navy leave Vieques. A march of more than 500 people took place, marching their way out of the (formerly) restricted zone. However, the US Navy has said that they could arrest those civilians and resume the bombing whenever they decide. Meanwhile, those who support the people of Vieques and recognize their basic human rights for health and peace are getting organized and planning strategies of solidarity demanding the end of the occupation of Vieques by the US Navy.

The presence of human beings inside the target zone, of which the U.S. Government is fully aware, has not been sufficient to detain the resumption of bombing of Vieques. The military began to bomb Vieques once again while they know that there are civilians right there in the bombing range. More civilians are getting back inside the target range to serve as human shields against the bombings. In the midst of all the Vieques-related news, it is important to bear in mind that every single day, every single hour there are human beings at the bombing range and, though the U.S. Navy knows this, it has kept on bombing.



REBEKA TABOBONDUNG

AHNEEN, MY NAME IS REBEKA TABOBONDUNG AND I AM HAPPY TO INTRODUCE MYSELF AS A NEW BOARD MEMBER HOLDING A FIRST NATIONS LIAISON PORTFOLIO. I TRANSFERRED TO U OF T LAST SEPTEMBER FROM THE INSTITUTE OF INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENT, IN VANCOUVER (THE FIRST INDIGENOUS, AUTONOMOUS, POST SECONDARY INSTITUTION IN CANADA) SADLY, THEY STILL ONLY GO AS FAR AS SECOND YEAR, SO HERE I AM IN TORONTO, FINALLY BACK IN THE HEART OF OJIBWAY TERRITORY WHERE MY ROOTS ORIGINATE. MY PORTFOLIO AS FIRST NATIONS LIAISON IS ONE THAT WAS RECENTLY CREATED SO I CAN EXTEND THE WORK I ALREADY DO AS A SPOKESPERSON FOR THE NATIVE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (NSA) AT U OF T. HEY, WE SHARE THE SAME BUILDING AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, MANY OF THE SAME SOCIAL JUSTICE CONCERNS AND INTERESTS. I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NSA BEING MORE CONNECTED WITH OPIRG, AND PLAYING A ROLE IN BUILDING LINKS TO ENSURE THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR STRUGGLES ONLY BECOME STRONGER.

MOOKY CHERIAN

Hey y'all, My name is Mooky, I am the Coordinator of Programming and Volunteers at OPIRG Toronto. Outside of OPIRG, I spend my time staying on the move, indulging in music and other stimulants, and trying to stay healthy. This past year at OPIRG Toronto has been somewhat of a transformation with so much change happening on all levels. It inspires me to see things moving forward. This year I hope we continue to expand our scope, to make strategic effective change, work with groups that we haven't worked with, to welcome new faces and catch up with familiar ones. Please don't hesitate to drop by during office hours to chat, sleep, tell jokes, use resources or whatever. My office hours are Mon-Thu 2-6

CHRIS RAMSAROOP

Hey wassup, I'm Chris Ramsaroop and I share the Anti-Racism Portfolio with Kathy. I'm an U of T undergraduate student in Peace and Conflict Studies, on-again/off-again executive of the ASSU (since 1995; currently off, but who knows what the future holds), founding member of the Committee in Support of Justice for Dr. Chun (since spring 1997), former President of the (1998-99), and part of the organizing committee for the U of T anti-corporate student orientation (This Way Please, Sept 1999) and the Free University of Toronto (since Dec 1999). When I'm not agitating on campus, I work for the United Farmworkers of America and agitate off-campus on issues of workers-rights, globalization & the corporate agenda, homelessness (founding member of the Allan Gardens Project, student sleep-out protest at Allan Gardens, since August 1999), and police abuse of power.

STAFF AND BOARD

OPIRG is an incorporated non-profit

organisation. We are run by a volunteer Board of

Directors comprised of eight members which operate on a consensus decision-making model. The board of directors is responsible for the direction and operations of the organisation and for the guidance of its staff (Karen & Mooky). This board is elected at our annual general meeting in late March. Board meetings are held bi-weekly during the academic year and tri-weekly in the summer session. These meetings are open, so if

you are interested in becoming a board member or just

want to know what goes on there, feel free to

contact the office for more information

KATHY NASTOVSKI

Hello! I share the res Equity Coordinator with Chris. This involves promoting OPIRG's anti-discrimination policies, anti-racism training and helping resolve individual and structural problems.

DAVID SHIGA

I am a second year physics student, and started getting involved with OPIRG last year, mostly with the Anti-Corporate Rule Action Group, which was promoting fair trade coffee, but also with Students Against Sweatshops and the Newsletter Collective. With Susan, I will be working on the **Media portfolio**. One thing that is on my mind for the coming year is reaching out to the many people who do not consider themselves activists and ensuring that information barred from the mainstream media is made available to them. I also am particularly keen on trying to lessen Canada's contributions to violence around the world, such as in Colombia, Turkey and Iraq.

KAREN THOM

hey everyone. i'm karen, and one of the things i do is coordinate administration and special projects at OPIRG-Toronto, though when people ask me what i 'do', i usually tell them that i'm a community organizer and photographer. in further describing myself, i'll use words like: dyke, middle-class, Chinese, boy-femme. don't know if these categories are much help though, if they shift and change as much for you as they do for me, that is.

i've been involved in organizing in Kingston (where i lived and studied for a few years) and Toronto that is anti-oppression focused, feminist-based and queer-positive. the aim is class collapsing, anti-racist, and focused on specific realities and material conditions that get entrenched through fucked up ideologies and are backed by money and power. i am currently focusing on organizing around policing in downtown Toronto and with the Jane-Finch community, as well as building more links with activists of colour and trying to help establish a network of Pacific Asian activists who are organizing in the Toronto area.

i'm really looking forward to this next year at OPIRG-Toronto, directed by its hardcore commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression. i'm always wanting to meet and plot with volunteers, so please do drop by the office. i'm usually in pretty early and stay around until mid afternoon, though my official office hours are Monday to Thursday, 11am - 2pm.

LIZ LEE

HEY EVERYBODY! I'M THIS YEAR'S CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH CO-ORDINATOR. OPIRG U OF T OFFERS MANY LEVELS OF SUPPORT (EG. SPACE BOOKINGS, DONATIONS, CO-SPONSORSHIPS) TO COMMUNITY AND OTHER CAMPUS GROUPS, OR INDIVIDUALS WHO WISH TO ORGANISE EVENTS OR PROJECTS. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO DROP-BY OR CONTACT THE OFFICE FOR MORE INFORMATION. ASIDE FROM REGULAR BOARD DUTIES, I ALSO WORK ON THIS AWESOME (HEE HEE) NEWSLETTER AND VOLUNTEER WITH THE ANTI-POVERTY GROUP. I'M ALSO VERY INTERESTED IN WORKING IN AN ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP (ENVIRONMENTALISM IS NOT DEAD...AT LEAST IT SHOULDN'T BE!). I FIND OPIRG TORONTO TO BE A VERY COMFORTABLE SPACE TO WORK IN. I URGE (UGH!...DAMN THAT SHAMPOO COMMERCIAL) ANYONE, WHO WANTS TO DO ANYTHING AROUND ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES TO COME AND SHARE THEIR IDEAS.

SUSAN KEENAN

THIS IS MY FIRST YEAR ON THE OPIRG BOARD, BUT I WAS INVOLVED IN STUDENTS AGAINST SWEATSHOPS LAST YEAR, AND I HOPE TO USE MY SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE GAINED FROM THESE GROUPS TO MAKE OPIRG AN EVEN BETTER PLACE TO MEET, WORK, PLAN AND ACT!! I AM THE MEDIA CO-ORDINATOR, SO I WILL BE GETTING OUR MESSAGE OUT TO THE COMMUNITY BY HELPING OUT THE NEWSLETTER COLLECTIVE, RADIO OPIRG AND WORKING WITH CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY MEDIA. I AM REALLY EXCITED ABOUT THE UPCOMING YEAR, AND I WOULD LOVE TO HEAR YOUR IDEAS, QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS. E-MAIL ME AT SUSAN.KEENAN@UTORONTO.CA OR LEAVE A MESSAGE IN MY OPIRG MAILBOX AT THE OFFICE.

Sangeeta Kerai

Hello! My portfolio is the volunteer coordinator. My responsibilities include helping Mooky in the recruitment, orientation and training of new volunteers. So if you have any questions about volunteering at OPIRG contact me or Mooky. See ya!

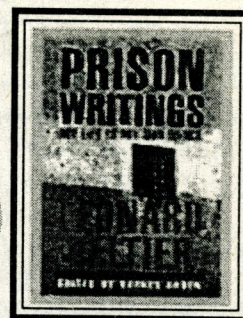
PAUL TSANG

(Finance Supervisor)

Hey gang! This is Paul Tsang. How are y'all doing? I am a grad student in the Physiology dept. I hope to complete my Phd studies in the next couple of years. Until that happens, I'll be keeping myself busy by sticking it TO THE MAN! Cool! I've been involved with many organisations and activities since I got political back in the day. These include president of the GSU, student rep on the council of student services (talk about good times), on the academic board of governing council (even more good times). I got so sick of the corporatising of U of T, I hope to organise U of T's first ever, Anti-Corporate orientation - "This Way Please", and its successor event, "the Free University of Toronto". Does racism, discrimination and lack of physical accessibility get you down? Well it gets me down! And that's why I've been fighting for the Justice of Dr. Chun for the last 3 years as well as demanding structural changes to the campus in order that U of T is accessible to students with disabilities. I love stirring it up, especially when we started up groups like the Anti-cuts coalition and the Student Action Crew. We know how to throw a good party. Anyway, it's enough about me, I'm outta here, I gotta go. P.S. APUS, here I come.

READ IT!

A Review of...
Leonard Peltier's
**PRISON WRITINGS:
MY LIFE IS MY SUN DANCE**
by Andrew Pershad Reddin



In 1999, the much-anticipated book by Leonard Peltier, called *PRISON WRITINGS: MY LIFE IS MY SUN DANCE*, hit distribution. The book, edited by longtime Peltier supporter Harvey Arden, shares Peltier's first-person accounts of his life as a political prisoner, and his continued work for the liberation and self-determination of his people. Peltier's commentaries, journals and poetry explode off the page, each word questioning and speaking out against the colonial past and present of white supremacist persecution of indigenous peoples and people of colour. Leonard Peltier fought against all obstacles, at great personal risk, to share his words, and it is our responsibility to think about and act upon what he has to say.

Leonard Peltier, a member of the American Indian Movement (AIM) since the early 1970s, was falsely convicted of murdering two FBI officers during an FBI invasion of the Pine Lodge Reservation, which is territory of the Oglala Nation. The invasion happened on June 26, 1975, immediately after AIM members came to Pine Lodge to set up a protected area. In the midst of the shootings between the invading FBI forces and indigenous peoples who were trying to defend themselves, two FBI agents were killed, and AIM members were instantly assumed to have killed them.

Several months later, Leonard Peltier was found hiding out in British Columbia, and then extradited using false testimonies back to the United States for trial by an all-white jury in Fargo. "I was the last Indian left to railroad for the deaths of their two agents. If the feds couldn't get the real killer, they were damn sure going to get me. And they did." Peltier was convicted of murder and given two consecutive life sentences (on top of which seven years would later be added for an escape attempt in 1978).

Throughout the eighties and nineties, FBI documents were found that included, for instance, the forensic evidence exonerating Peltier, as well as information that pointed to the premeditated nature of the invasion of Oglala lands. The original prosecutor in the trial that convicted Peltier has since stated publicly that the FBI has no idea who fired the weapon that killed the two agents. Peltier remains in prison, slated for release in 2041, assuming he is still living by then.

Peltier's writing makes it clear that the struggle for his freedom must go hand in hand with attacking and dismantling the structures of the prison-industrial complex, the court system and the web of state-sanctioned brutalization known as

"law enforcement." Peltier links these systems to the physical and economic genocide that First Nations communities have experienced on this continent since 1492. "Our sovereignty, our nation-hood, our very identity- along with our sacred lands- have been stolen from us in one of the greatest thefts of human history. And I am referring not just to the thefts of previous centuries but to the great thefts that are still being perpetrated upon us today, at this very moment."

Peltier also questions the hypocrisy of the United States' claim to uphold "democratic freedom." If democracy excludes the voices of First Nations peoples and people of colour, if a democratic government feels entitled to inflict all possible levels of violence upon non-white people, then aren't we living in a state of white tyranny? Peltier argues that a just world would respect rather than repress difference, and would work to end the oppression of all peoples: "Never cease to fight for peace, justice, and equality for all people. Be persistent in all that you do and don't allow anyone to sway you from your conscience."

Peltier also talks about the capitalist assault on nature, and how white capitalists "justify" the seizure of indigenous land: "They callously pushed us onto remote reservations on what they thought was worthless wasteland, trying to sweep us under the rug of history. But today, that so-called wasteland has surprisingly become enormously valuable as the relentless technology of white society continues its determined assault on Mother Earth. White society would now like to terminate us as peoples and push us off our reservations so they can steal our remaining mineral and oil resources. It's nothing new for them to steal from nonwhite peoples."

Leonard Peltier has been a political prisoner for a quarter century. And he is in jail because he is indigenous, because he refuses to be silent, because the white supremacist state wants to kill him slowly. But Leonard Peltier is living and struggling still, and his words echo off centuries of history, mobilize us in the present, and give us direction for the future. "Out of death comes life. Out of pain comes hope. This I have learned these long years of loss. Loss, but never despair. I have never lost hope or an absolute belief in the rightness of my cause, which is my People's survival."

Contact the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee at:
Leonard Peltier Defense Committee
P.O. Box 583, Lawrence KS 66044
785.842.5774

lpdc@idir.net



WHAT IS FAIR TRADE?

At the last IFAT Annual General Meeting held in May 1999, the following definition of Fair Trade was agreed upon as a working text: "Fair Trade is an alternative approach to conventional international trade. It is a trading partnership which aims at sustainable development for excluded and disadvantaged producers. It seeks to do this by providing better trading conditions, by awareness raising and by campaigning."

The goals of Fair Trade are:

1. To improve the livelihoods and well-being of producers by improving market access, strengthening producer organisations, paying a better price and providing continuity in the trading relationship.
2. To promote development opportunities for disadvantaged producers, specially women and indigenous people, and to protect children from exploitation in the production process.
3. To raise awareness among consumers of the negative effects on producers of international trade so that they exercise their purchasing power positively
4. To set an example of partnership in trade through dialogue, transparency and respect.
5. To campaign for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade.
6. To protect human rights by promoting social justice, sound environmental practices and economic security.

YOU CAN SUPPORT FAIR TRADE AT THESE TORONTO SHOPS:

ALTERNATIVE GROUNDS

333 Roncesvalles Ave.,
534-6335

THE BIG CARROT

343 Danforth Avenue,
466-2129

CAWTHRA SQUARE CAFE

519 Church Street
392-6878

CITRON

813 Queen Street W.,
504-2647

DIABLO'S COFFEE BAR

University College
University of Toronto

ETERNAL ABUNDANCE

(organic coffee only)
3066 Bloor Street, W.,
234-5258

NATURAL VALLEY FOODS

960 College Street,
516-9729

RICCO'S

1112 Avenue Road, #103
707-7426

TORONTO ORGANICS

34 Doncaster Road
691-9709

WRAP N' ROLL

192 Bloor Street, W. 323-3212
325 Queen Street, W. 340-1322
100 Wellington St. W., 861-1472
450 Yonge St., 922-5339

WHO'S EMMA

69 Nassau St.,
598-3354

BRIDGEHEAD STORE

18 Roy's Square
975-8788 / (800) 565-8563

CHOCOLATTO

1009 Yonge Street,
922-4011

COUNTER CULTURE

York University
511 Bloor St. W.,
536-3293

52 INC.

394 College St.
960-0034

KARMA CO-OPERATIVE

739 Palmerston Ave.
534-1470

REVENUE CINEMA SNACK BAR

400 Roncesvalles Ave.,

RIVER RESTAURANT

413 Roncesvalles Ave.,
535-0857

TRINITY SQUARE CAFE

10 Trinity Square
599-9315 / 598-2010

YORK UNIVERSITY GRADUATE LOUNGE

York University

VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT

2849 Dundas St. W.,
762-1204

THE VEGETARIUM CAFE

33 St. George St.,
Phone: c/o OPIRG Toronto 979-7770
E-mail: kennedy@cs.toronto.edu
<http://vegcafe.sa.utoronto.ca>

This list is by no means complete. If you know of other places in Toronto that provide fair trade goods, please contact Opirg so that we may update this directory.



Alternative Transportation: Cycling for a Cleaner Future

by Nick Syperek

Several years ago, the Kyoto summit on climate change produced a protocol for reducing greenhouse gas emissions which our government, a signatory, has admittedly no chance of meeting. Canada has in fact gone in the opposite direction, increasing emissions steadily ever since. Although power stations, industry, and large scale farming all do their share of polluting, transportation is one of the largest and pretty much the only source we can all do something about.

Transportation in Canada today is almost synonymous with car use, but in cities, where an ever growing majority of Canadians live, cars are not necessary rarely the most sensible choice. Short, single occupant trips with little or no cargo are the main use cars are put toward in an urban environment, and this is exactly the type of transport cars are least suitable for. The average car sold in Canada has been growing larger and less fuel efficient thanks to the mounting craze for minivans and SUVs.



Besides being big polluters, these hulking vehicles are more dangerous to other road users because their larger size, weight, and higher center of balance provide more blind spots, take more room, and cause them to take much longer to come to a stop.

What can be done? Gasoline

engines are slowly becoming more efficient and plans are underway to supplement and even replace them with electric fuel cells over the next two decades but this is a long term band-aid solution to a real, deadly problem we face now. First off, these battery cells will be charged by the gas motor or by a fossil fuel burning or nuclear power station. Secondly, they are large and very heavy so that the size and weight problems conventional motor vehicles have will persist while the increased weight will mean even more power consumption. Clearly the dominant vehicle type must change if our roads are to become safer and cleaner, but with private industry designing and promoting all of the available transportation options, safety, environmental and quality of life interests will continue to take a back seat.

We all still have our personal choices to make and until a government is elected that is progressive in more than name, individual action will be the only source of progress. City dwellers have the greatest array of options for transport, with public transportation, however flawed, becoming a feasible alternative for more of us as the density of communities increases. Greater benefits still are available to those willing and able to make use of human powered vehicles, the most efficient and popular form of which is the bicycle. Self propelled people get valuable exercise while saving money and experiencing the sights and sounds of their community directly. Bicycles produce no emissions, do not leak toxins, damage roads, block vision, noise pollute, heat the air, take up only a fraction of road and parking space, and rarely travel above posted speed limits. The biggest problem with bicycles is the roads available to riders.

Indifferent is the kindest word I can find for the attitude of our leaders towards the fun-loving and generous souls who brave our streets on two wheels. North American car worship has created an environment in which speeding is commonplace and where speed limits are rarely enforced by our public servants. The few lanes that are dedicated to bikes across this city are rarely connected to one another or even continuous through intersections. They become completely useless when police officers refuse to ticket those parking and driving in them. Between the lack of official support and racing-porn car ads, drivers in the city often see bicyclists as a nuisance or obstacle rather than as citizens engaged in responsible and environmental road use. Perhaps it is a myopic association of bicycles with youth or poverty but according to the law, and to common sense, it is both wrong and dangerous for cars to illegally park in bike lanes. Bicyclists and motorists alike need to have their rights and responsibilities spelled out and enforced evenly for a cleaner future. Many "closeted" cyclists will come out of hiding once they can feel safe and respected on the streets they help pay for. Other forms of non-motorized personal transportation, like rollerblades and foot propelled scooters, have not yet received any legal recognition, but developments on that front will be interesting to monitor.

Canada and especially Toronto needs clean transportation to take over quickly or we will be facing many times the current thousands of annual premature deaths from poor air quality. In Toronto we get air advisories recommending that the young, the old, those with respiratory problems and those wishing to exercise should stay indoors. That leaves only the healthy and lazy free to go outside, presumably to drive somewhere or use their gas-

powered lawnmowers, leafblowers and recreational vehicles (remember avoid exercise). The invisible hand of market economics has not lifted one invisible finger on this problem. This is absurd; we need government intervention.

Emissions reducing alternatives must be tax free and promoted heavily, perhaps even subsidized where possible. As the only affordable and practical means of emissions free transportation currently existing, bicycles must be a central part of a national greening strategy, because al-

though they are most useful in urban environments, they still provide an affordable, non-polluting personal transportation alternative and exercise in suburban and semi-rural areas. Regulations must come in to make cars and streets safer for non-motorists, and to enforce fuel efficiency minimums, size and weight maximums for personal vehicles. To this end, local governments will need the freedom to modify their laws for their unique neighbourhoods and environments. So besides getting on your bike to help out this planet, use your vote wisely.



"Only The Workers and The Peasants Will Endure"

By Johanna Gabrielle, 1998

Postcard

from

Nicaragua

How can you describe feelings that are unexplainable? How do you portray pictures that even the no justice to? How can you express that which can not be said? One of the hardest things about in a developing country is definitely coming home and trying to relate colourful experiences which seem on paper. Trying to tell people that suddenly the faces on World Vision commercials have names, names that mean so much.

This is a report on a powerful ten days that a group of students aged 16-21 spend in Nicaragua, Central America. The experience began with a tour of Managua, the country's capital city. Poverty and culture shock were expected and yet the sights witnessed through the protective windows of a small tour bus were beyond belief. People looked up from their doorways, their eyes asking what gave us the right to look down at it as if at animals in a zoo. Indeed that is how these people have been treated by the world community as a whole.

For the lower and working class people of Nicaragua, political instability, hunger, fear and poverty are a reality. The nauseating sight of people living in dumps and sifting through the city's garbage for something to eat or sell is all too common. Tiny shacks made of tin that most North Americans would consider unfit to house animals are homes for 75% of the population, and these houses are found right next door to three storey mansions with well manicured lawns and well fed dogs at the windows. The rich 20% of the population is protected by walls topped with barbed wire and guards posted by the gates. Social injustice and inequality are obvious in Nicaragua, but viewed from the windows of the bus, the faces have no names and for many it is out of sight out of mind.

The main part of the trip was to be spent in a remote and impoverished village, and so on day three, the students set out. The people welcomed the entourage with open arms. After a tour of the village, a forty five minute walk to the farthest house, the group was split up. They went to live with families who would be their hosts for the next five days, this would be where they learned the most. When sitting on a dark porch at night with only a small oil light for the entire family to share, there was not one moment of boredom. After just a few moments there was a sense of familiarity between everyone. The language barrier which most experienced did not matter as basic sign language worked just as well as words.

During the day, work was done on a small school where community members volunteered along with the Canadians. They explained how much a school was needed as the closest school was more than four miles away. The children were excited about getting a school. All of them said they wanted to go to school, it was the only way to get anywhere. They even commented how generous it was for the group to miss school to help them as studies are so important.

As the week progressed, so did the relationships. There was a baseball game, football matches and long walks through the jungle. The more we got to know about the people the more we sympathized with their struggles. The stories they told of living through civil war were horrific. Tears in their eyes when they spoke of love ones lost to a needless war against the US backed Contras were the only lesson we needed on world politics and the functions of the United Nations. In a country once ravaged by and still showing the marks of a ten year long civil war and revolution there is much to make you question just what we call justice. Yet the glimpse we got at the people, their kindness and their constant efforts to improve life makes it easy to understand why Sandino (the father of revolution and change in Nicaragua) eloquently said "Only the workers and the peasants shall endure."

You might ask what is the point of such an article? Perhaps all you will learn is that Nicaragua is in Central America, but perhaps it will point you in the direction of Central America. Exposure trips are happening constantly, based in Toronto and throughout Canada. The intention behind this was to encourage you to embark upon a life changing journey if ever you have the chance. To see is to believe, to understand, to learn, and to all in love with a people and country that you might not otherwise have cared about.

Trans Child Removed from Supportive Parents

by Gwendolyn Ann Smith

OHIO — Parents Paul and Sherry Lipscomb are in the fight of their lives: An attempt to keep custody of their 6-year-old daughter, Aurora. A Franklin County Magistrate ruled against them August 23rd [2000], awarding temporary custody of Aurora to Franklin County Children's Services (FCCS).

When Aurora was approximately two years old, Sherry and Paul began to notice that she, then their son, had a preference for feminine toys, clothes, shoes, and activities. By the time she entered pre-school, Aurora was emphatically stating that she was a girl. She had also announced her choice of name and insisted that she be addressed by it. The Lipscombs initially viewed Aurora's behavior as just a phase of her development and assumed that she would outgrow it. As Aurora grew older, however, society around her began exerting increasing pressure on her to conform to social gender-role expectations. Accordingly, Aurora began exhibiting emotional problems in response to those pressures.

The Lipscombs sought therapy for Aurora, which included several inpatient hospitalizations. In the course of Aurora's treatment she was diagnosed with both Gender Identity Disorder (GID) and Aspergers Syndrome (a mild form of autism similar to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). The parents discontinued therapy and sought legal representation after they discovered that therapists were using behavior modification techniques in an attempt to force the child to identify and behave as a male. It was prior to the fourth and final period of hospitalization that the Lipscombs had told the doctors and Aurora's school that they were planning to support Aurora's gender identity, including having her ears pierced and home schooling her.

But then the problems started. "On the fourth inpatient stay the physicians totally flipped the diagnosis as strictly being psychological," said Paul Lipscomb, "[Telling us] we had to make a child conform." Children's Services in Franklin and Hamilton counties stated that Aurora should be kept in a male role against her and her family's wishes. FCCS filed a petition in Franklin County Court, suggesting residential care for Aurora, which would remove Paul and Sherry Lipscomb from custody, simply because they have refused to raise Aurora as a male.

Magistrate Sanchez of Franklin County agreed with the FCCS petition, placing Aurora in their custody. The Magistrate also refused to order that FCCS maintain Aurora's female gender identity while in their care, including the use of her name, and allowing her to wear girl's clothing. Following the hearing, the Lipscombs and their attorneys, Randi Barnabee and Mark Narens, filed an objection to the decision. To the parent's dismay, the objection will not be heard until September 12th because the judge to whom the case is assigned, Kay Lias, is currently on vacation.

The Lipscombs will also be filing a motion to stay the order granting custody of Aurora to FCCS. Duty Judge James Mason was not willing to stay the order on the day it was issued, because the court-appointed guardian for Aurora was not present. Judge Mason also posed the question, "Will the child die if I don't do anything tonight?" Planned legal actions by the Lipscombs include filing of a writ of habeas corpus in federal court in the hope that FCCS can be forced to relinquish custody. The Lipscombs also plan to file a federal sex-discrimination lawsuit in federal court against FCCS, the social workers involved, and others for their violations of Aurora's civil right to be whoever she says she is without regard for the gender-role expectations of others. Randi Barnabee noted that social workers do not enjoy absolute immunity from prosecution in civil rights cases, and that federal law permits social workers to be sued for damages in such cases even when they were ostensibly acting under the color of law. Paul and Sherry Lipscomb just want Aurora back home, simply stating, "we love our beautiful and creative daughter."

Donations to their Defense Fund can be sent to 2121 South Green Road, South Euclid, OH 44121. Make checks out to "Aurora's Defense Fund."

TRANSPHOBIA is at its most basic the fear of a transgendered person and the hatred, discrimination, intolerance, and prejudice that this fear brings. Transphobia is manifested as harassment, threatened safety, disgust, ridicule, restrictions on freedom of movement, restrictions on access to resources (housing, employment, services etc), and violence to name a few.

NEW TO THE OPIRG OFFICE

job postings

check out our clipboard with current job postings, generally the jobs are social justice and environment oriented

housing boards

Looking for a room? Do you have a room for rent? We have new bulletin space designated for housing

postering team

We know you like wheat paste. We know you like to poster. You like to poster... We have what you need. Twice a month, incentives included, poster with other postering addicts.

community and campus events

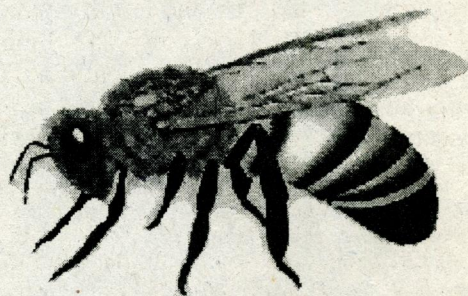
If you're promoting an event or campaign, or if you want to see what's going on, use our community and campus events boards

the bikeshare program

It's like a bike library to take out bikes for a 24 hr period. OPIRG will soon be a hub for this program.

the good food box

If you want organic food at cheaper than retail prices the GFB program will deliver.



SUBMIT TO US.

Now accepting submissions for the Winter issues of Action Speaks Louder. Submission deadline is January 5, 2001. We showcase writings, rants, artwork and other creative endeavors which speak to the spirit of social and environmental justice. Front cover contest - phone in for details and mystery prize.

Acto-scope



ARIES

March 21-April 20

Aries, you are a cardinal fire sign ruled by Mars. You tend to be a charismatic personality but are prone to aggression and confrontation. You have the intrinsic motivation to get a project/campaign started, but tend to fizzle out on the follow through. Aries, it is time once again for you to put your efforts towards direct action. Perhaps, through planning a community garden (petunias, sunflowers, and a bit of cannibis are nice) to reclaim some unused city space, you would fulfil your need for constant challenge, but at the same time, participate in an action that will provide some balance to your forceful nature.



TAURUS

April 21-May 21

Taurus, you are a fixed earth sign ruled by Venus. You have a love of the sensual and sensory world. But be careful Taurus, this affinity for the aesthetic also makes you prone to being duped by pretty packaging that only ends up in places like Adam's Mine, long after the flavour of the chewing gum has vanished. So next time you see those foul blisterpacks, go to an organic store in Kensington Market and bulk buy some organic granola instead. It's good for you and good for the environment. Oh yeah, it doesn't hurt if you carry around your own plastic baggies too.



GEMINI

May 22-June 21

Gemini, you are a mutable air sign ruled by Mercury. You love variety and are influenced greatly by change. Many new social justice issues will become increasingly important to you in the near future Gemini, and your challenge is to try to focus your energies, lest your efforts, spread across too many enterprises, becomes diluted by lack of depth and attention for each one. You will be asked to choose alliances, but if you stay true to yourself, you'll be able to resolve your inner contradictions. Either diversify your labels, or discard them all. What ever you do, make sure it's your choice.



CANCER

June 22-July 23

Cancer, you are a cardinal water sign ruled by the moon. This makes you unpredictable but also infuses you with the capacity for deep emotions. Feeling a sense of home and community is very important for you Cancer, even though you often feel the need to escape this attachment and extend outside your comfort zone. You should take the opportunity to go on that exchange to Cuba or Mexico in the future. It will make you glad and grateful that you had the chance to go away, and it will also make you appreciate coming home again.



LEO

July 24-August 23

Leo, you are a fixed fire sign ruled by the Sun. You're a very strong and warm, but dominating personality. Your input is always sought after in social groups, but you must watch that the attention given you does not make your head swell. (Do the hat test if you're not sure about cranial enlargement.) Next time you're in a meeting, instead of saying everything that's on your mind and commanding the direction of the meeting, just dim your light a little, so that others who are less versed in the public arena, get a chance to shine. Who knows, you just might learn something that surprises and delights you, and as a bonus, you might also get a healthy sense of humility. (The hat will fit again!)



VIRGO

August 24-September 23

Virgo, you are a mutable Earth sign ruled by Mercury. You are highly organized and have a great analytical mind and you will always be given the opportunity for great success. However Virgo, you are inclined to be highly critical of yourself and others because of your perfectionistic nature. Next time you create a poster or see some guerilla theatre, try to move outside your own critical perspective and look at the worthy attributes of each. It might not be perfect, but it just might be fun, or appropriate, or do the job, which in the end, is what counts. And you know what, it's actually pretty cool to allow yourself to be impressed by what you and others can achieve sometimes. It's okay to give yourself a pat on the back for your deserving efforts.



LIBRA

September 24-October 23

Libra, you are a cardinal air sign ruled by Venus. Your sweet personality and attractive appearance often fools others into thinking that you're 'nice' but ineffective. Show your true colours Libra. You've newly discovered that you have skills and attributes that make you more valuable than just that of a pretty shelf ornament. It's time to take charge and see your visionary ideas to their endpoint. You often let others cut you off during serious discussion. Don't let it happen again. Make your voice heard. You've got claws, don't be afraid to use them if you need to.



SCORPIO

October 24-November 22

Scorpio, you are a fixed water sign co-ruled by both Pluto and Mars. You are a strong and powerful personality, and others will want to be near you. Sex is never far from your mind, and you have a great appreciation for all that is sensual and erotic. But beware that you do not calously take the people around you for granted. Others may not be as confident as you are, and you will have to be more aware of gender politics, and explore assumptions of your own sense of sexual liberation and tolerance.



SAGITTARIUS

November 23-December 21

Sagittarius, you are a mutable fire sign ruled by Jupiter. You are very extroverted and sociable, and you enjoy interacting with people. Sagittarius, you would make a great spokesperson in front of the media. So next time you find a camera in front of your face at an anti-police brutality demonstration, don't be afraid to grab the mic, look straight at the camera, work your magic and tell the viewers the truth; that the cops are fucking around, abusing their power, and violating people's rights, especially people in marginalized communities targeted by the cop's Community Action Policing campaign. But of course you will say it more eloquently than that, and people will listen.



CAPRICORN

December 22-January 20

Capricorn, you are a cardinal earth sign ruled by Saturn. It's time to start a worm farm! Your practical nature has been telling you, for a long long time now, that you should be composting all of your foodwaste. You always look at the leftover bits of food and guiltily discard the morsels into the trash. But no longer Capricorn. Starting a worm farm will open up a gateway towards living an enviro-conscious life. Giddy-up little wormies... Yee Haw... Next step: if it's yellow let it mellow; if it's brown flush it down! Have fun!

**AQUARIUS**

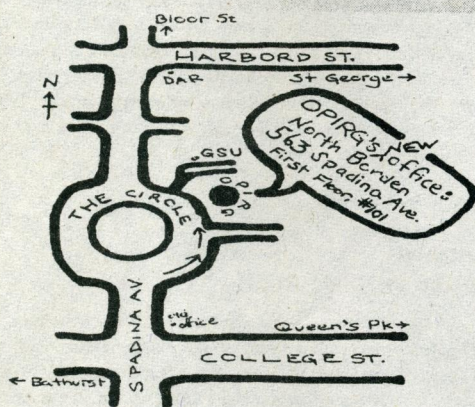
January 21- February 19

Aquarius, you are a fixed fire sign co-ruled by Uranus and Saturn. You are a curious mixture of theory and practice, often continuously negotiating the boundary between being individualistic and radical, and at the same time being compromising and conforming. Though this gives you a multi-perspective view of most issues and dilemmas, it is time Aquarius, for you to commit some theory to practice without compromising your idealism. Next time you have a great idea, like running for Mayor on a ecological platform, move beyond the thinking stage and go for it. You might not win, but if you make a concerted effort, it'll be a hell of a lot of fun and at the same time it will be a huge consciousness-raising campaign. Tip: enlist the help of a Sagittarius.

**PISCES**

February 20-March 20

Pisces, you are a mutable water sign ruled by Neptune. You are a very loving person. You love coffee. But lately you've been wondering about this thing called fair trade. You're wondering if everytime you buy a cup, if you could somehow be helping out producers in other countries get a fair exchange for all their hard work. Being as loving as you are, (loving people too) you decide to research this. To make this easier on you Pisces, ASL has compiled a list of some of the fair trade distributors in Toronto on pg. 33. Check it out and sniff out some fair trade joe.

Where's Opirg?**OPIRG's RESOURCE CENTRE**

Check out the new location of the resource centre, across from the OPIRG office at the Women's centre. There you'll find books, videos, magazine and articles on social justice and environmental issues. We also have a large supply of pamphlets and vertical files on many issues. Check out our on-line publications at:

www.campuslife.utoronto.ca/groups/opirg

Hours: Monday-Thursday 11am-6 pm

Phone: 978-7770

**OPIRG Toronto Orientations**

Want to know more about OPIRG Toronto? New volunteers, members and community individuals are encouraged to attend an OPIRG orientation to learn about what we are working on and how we function. All orientations take place at the OPIRG office, 563 Spadina Ave., Room 101 (between Harbord and College). If you can't make these dates, give us a call to arrange an orientation and ask for mooky.

Monday Sept. 18th, 1-2pm

Wednesday Sept. 20th, 6-7pm

Tuesday Sept. 26th, 1-2pm

Thu. Sept. 28th, 6-7pm

Tues. Oct. 3rd, 11-12 noon

Thu. Oct. 5th, 1-2pm

Activist Skills Series Workshops

We are currently putting together workshops for volunteers to fine tune and share your existing skills and to learn some new stuff. The workshops dates are not finalized but will take place between October 10-31. To confirm location and date, please call the office @ 978-7770. Workshops include: Facilitation, Activist Poster Making, Media Relations, Direct Action Rights & Solidarity, and Anti-Racism.

VOLUNTEER AT OPIRG-TORONTO!

RESIST!

graphic by eric drooker

OPIRG-Toronto is a volunteer-driven, student based organization on U of T campus dedicated to social and environmental justice. We work on a variety of issues through activism, education and research. No experience is necessary to get involved and you will gain valuable skills, experience and the opportunity to work collectively and effectively for meaningful social change. Are you interested in issues of poverty, anti-racism, corporate responsibility, First Nations Solidarity, sweatshop labour, queer activism, labour activism, radio, natural menstrual health, newsletter, global solidarity, police brutality, prisoners' justice, internet activism, GMO foods, or environmentalism? OPIRG Toronto acts as a catalyst for action. Come into our office and check us out!

FOR MORE INFO, CALL 416.978.7770 OR EMAIL opirg@campuslife.utoronto.ca
563 Spadina Ave, Room 101 www.campuslife.utoronto.ca/groups/opirg