

The **Upstream** Journal

**Stephen Lewis on
AIDS and poverty in Africa**

Femicide in Guatemala

Des enfants emprisonnés

**Les autorités françaises isolent les mineurs non
accompagnés à l'aéroport Roissy**

**WORLD BANK INVESTIGATION OF MINING PROJECT
SLAMS LACK OF CONSULTATION**

Free publication of the
Social Justice Committee

Dear readers,

I'm rushing to get this issue out to you in time for our big bash celebrating the SJC as we enter our thirties.

It's going to be a great evening for members, volunteers and staff to get together again, and to meet some new folks. As you can see by the cool ad on the back cover (by Marc Beningo, a student volunteer from L.A.) we've got some great music lined up.

H'Sao is that Chad group you've heard about, roaring into the world-beat scene with their energy and joy. I saw them at the jazz fest and was blown away. They'll close the evening for us, after three other dynamite acts from around the world.

Michael Jerome Browne is a star performer in blues and acoustic music. With three CDs as a solo artist under his belt, plus his work in the Stephen Barry Band, he is an accomplished pro with an astonishing repertoire, from John Lee Hooker to George Jones, and Blind Blake to the Talking Heads.

Acalanto plays Chilean roots music, proud of its role in the struggle for land and justice. They provided the music background for the SJC's software package on Third World debt. Thousands of copies went out since we produced it six years ago, so perhaps you've even heard Acalanto that way.

We'll open with Boubacar Diabate, from Senegal. A traditional "griot" of a distinct family lineage, he is a master of the kora - with its 21 strings over a large resonating hollow gourd - and mixes songs reaching back hundreds of years in African history with modern and Caribbean sounds. He tells me he'll retire from performing when he's 80, so see him now - he's almost there!

It's all in one evening, Saturday night April 22, at the Kola Note on Parc.

Caroline Foster, an intern from Toronto, the driving wheel for this event, has a team of volunteers harnessed to the task and we're ready for you to join us.

PS Why not book a table for a group - friends or co-workers, or maybe as a special 'thank you' to some people who have been helping you out?



Derek MacCuish
Editor

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Cover photo: Clive Shirley, GlobalAware

Good progress in latest debt relief effort, but more needs to be done

by Miguel Rua

The Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI), originating from the G-8 debt agreement reached in July 2005, promises 100% cancellation of debts owed by 19 of the world's poorest countries to the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the African Development Fund. The MDRI represents a step in the right direction towards combating global poverty, and is significant in two respects: first of all, the Initiative indicates that wealthy nations recognize the close relationship between debt cancellation and poverty reduction in developing countries. Secondly, the initiative sets a precedent by paving the way for deeper debt relief, to a wider set of impoverished countries.

Unfortunately the MDRI fails to address the crushing debt burden imposed on developing countries by other major multilateral creditors, such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). After taking into account the debt relief provided through the HIPC Initiative, Bolivia, Guyana, Honduras, and Nicaragua—the only Latin American HIPCs to have qualified for the G-8 deal—still owe a vast portion of debt to the IDB, and thus don't benefit as much from debt relief as their African counterparts.

In 2006, Bolivia will face an estimated \$344.6 million in total debt service obligations, of which approximately \$126 million (36.5 %) is due to the IDB. Bolivia is expected to meet its debt service obligations despite the fact that 63% of Bolivia's population lives below the poverty line, as does 82% of the country's rural population. Guyana's projected debt service to the IDB in 2006 is estimated at \$20.6 million, which represents 59.3% of its total debt service obligations (\$34.7 million) for the year. In 2006, Honduras will pay an estimated \$78.7 million in debt service to the IDB, which represents 55.4% of its total debt service of \$144.5 million. Approximately 54% of Honduras' population lives in extreme poverty.

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Despite the fact that 45% of Nicaragua's population lives in extreme poverty, the country faces in 2006 an overall debt service estimated at \$101.0 million, of which 59.1% or \$59.7 million is owed to the IDB.

Pushing the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative forward to include IDB debt cancellation also means addressing the unsustainable debt burden faced by Latin American countries that are not eligible for HIPC Initiative assistance. While Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, is the only other Latin American nation to have established debt burden indicators sufficiently high to qualify for the enhanced HIPC Initiative, several other severely indebted countries in the region, such as Ecuador and Peru, need immediate debt cancellation in order to increase poverty-reducing expenditures and work towards their respective Millennium Development Goals.

The promised debt relief to 29 countries is limited to too few countries. Beyond the 19 developing countries that have 'graduated' from the HIPC process and another 10 receiving HIPC debt relief on a provisional basis, there are at least 40 heavily indebted countries that need immediate debt cancellation in order to adequately finance their MDGs.

Canadian readers could comment on the debt relief program to Finance Minister James P. Flaherty, House of Commons, Ottawa ON K1A 0A6 (no postage stamp needed).

Debt relief does get positive results. Example: Zambia scrapped health fees in March 2006, one of the first benefits to flow from debt relief granted to African countries last year.

Are you on our actions/events email list?
Sign on! Write us at sjc@web.ca.

Femicide in Guatemala

By Paula Godoy-Paiz

Last summer I looked forward with great anticipation to my return to my home country of Guatemala. I was not even seven years old when in 1987 my family immigrated to Canada due to the bloody civil war that was ravaging Guatemala at the time, yet I have always relished any opportunity to return and have felt a strong connection to my past. However, while previous trips caused me to reflect on my cultural identity, my stay in Guatemala during July and August of 2005 led me to consider my identity as a woman and what it means to be a woman in Guatemala today, particularly in light of the mass wave of gender-based violence that is presently sweeping the country.

During my stay in Guatemala, I was disturbed to learn that in the past seven years there has been an increase in the number of women murdered in the country. The Amnesty International report "Guatemala: No Protection, No Justice: Killings of Women in Guatemala" reveals that the number of women murdered annually has risen from at least 163 in 2002, to 383 in 2003, and over 527 in 2004. Furthermore, according to the report, from 2001 to 2004 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights registered the murders of 1,188 women in Guatemala. According to human rights organizations in Guatemala the number of women killed since 2000 is closer to 3000.

While these figures reveal a disturbing pattern, they do not capture the full extent of the problem as there are a number of factors impeding accurate recording of murders. These include a lack of public confidence in state institutions and a lack of interest on the part of officials as well as deficiencies within the justice system to deal adequately with these cases - all factors which contribute to the under-reporting of violent crimes against women. The violence is exacerbated by the silence and impunity that surrounds these crimes and the lack of government will to address the problem.

Parallel to the steep rise in killings of Guatemalan women, their murdered bodies are increasingly being discovered with signs of rape, torture and mutilation. There is a pattern in these murders that distinguishes violence against women from that committed against men. The increase in murders of women in Guatemala is being accompanied by increased sexual violence, as well as gruesome forms of aggression, where violence is enacted not only to inflict pain and kill the victim but to



terrorize others who are affected by those acts, such as family members, coworkers, and notably, other women. Given the fact that this violence is being perpetrated against women, the term femicide, the killing of women because they are women, is more than apt for describing the situation. Yet, this femicide has received scant international attention.

THE GRUESOME NATURE of present-day gendered violence bears strong resemblances to the violence perpetrated against women during Guatemala's civil war between 1960 and 1996. Women were among the most brutalized victims of this conflict; agents of the state carried out mass sexual violence against women as a mechanism to damage the social fabric of indigenous communities and to create a climate of terror in the country. The United Nations sponsored Commission for Historical Clarification found that women represented 25% of all the direct victims of the war and 99% of the victims of sexual violence registered, and that 87% of the victims of gender violence were indigenous women. Furthermore, both the United Nations Commission for Historical Clarification and the Commissions of the Human Rights Office of the Guatemalan Archdiocese conclude in their respective reports that individual and collective sexual assaults of women occurred during detentions, massacres and military operations, and therefore were "part of the war machinery". Common practices included the rape of women in front of their families and community members, as well as the mutilation of their bodies which were often left nude, with objects such as knives and wooden bars forcefully inserted inside them.

Present-day violence against women is a product of wounds left gaping from the failure of the government and the world to seriously address the horrors witnessed in Guatemala over the past four decades. Military personnel who

were trained in the most brutal torture tactics never received any sort of rehabilitation or support for re-integrating into society. Similarly, former guerrilla combatants were also not re-integrated into civil society or provided with viable job options. Moreover, the Peace Accords that outline provisions for advancing human rights in the country have yet to be actualized.

THERE ARE OTHER FACTORS contributing to the increase in violence against women. The Guatemalan popular media and the government often cite as causes youth gangs (maras) or women's own personal issues. While indeed it may be that gangs or men close to the women are responsible for a portion of the murders, we must ask what else is behind the large-scale devaluation of women in Guatemalan society that expresses itself in the form of femicide? What is creating and sustaining a climate of violence and insecurity in which women are increasingly the most vulnerable and least acknowledged targets?

“The violence is exacerbated by the silence and impunity that surrounds these crimes and the lack of government will to address the problem.”

countries with the least social spending in Latin America, extreme levels of poverty, and few opportunities to offer its youth that violence against women is on the rise. Moreover, it is the most marginalized women - poor women - who are paying for the country's social instabilities with their lives.

In Guatemala, as in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico or even Canada, it is women



Missing from accounts of violence against women that attribute women's killings to gangs or women's personal relations, is an analysis of why men are increasingly resorting to violent means. It is no coincidence that at a time when Guatemala is among the

who are socially and economically marginalized who are at the greatest risk of suffering violence. The femicide sweeping Guatemala follows a global trend where women are devalued and made to pay the price of society's ills

with their bodies and lives.

However, this is not only a story about victimization. Women in Guatemala are breaking the silence surrounding this issue and protesting against the escalating violence against them. Feminist organizations such as the La Cuerda and the No Violence Against Women Network are actively working to draw national and international attention to this growing social problem and pressuring government to seriously confront violence against women.

On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Nov. 25th, 2005, crowds of Guatemalan women took to the streets to voice their opposition to the then 580 murders of women in 2005 and to all forms of violence against women. Sadly, at the same time that women marched in opposition to violence, the body of one more murdered woman was found in Zone 3 of Guatemala City.

As a woman and as a Guatemalan, I call on the international community to join Guatemalan women in achieving the dream of a society without violence, so that this country, which has only recently emerged from a genocidal war, can bury the present femicide. ♦

To comment on the situation of women to the Guatemala government, readers in Canada could write to the ambassador:

His Excellency Carlos Humberto Jimenez Licona
Embassy of Guatemala
130 Albert Street
Suite 1010
Ottawa ON K1P 5G4
or email:
embassy1@embaguate-canada.com

World Bank not off to a good start on indigenous rights in Guatemala mine project

By Judith Brisson

The first World Bank project since the adoption of new standards to protect indigenous communities – the Marlin mine in Guatemala – is not meeting this standard, according to the institution's own internal assessment. It remains to be seen if there will be an improvement in the project and in World Bank practice overall.

The Bank's new policies on extractive industries (mining, oil and gas) state that it will not support projects that "affect indigenous peoples without prior recognition, of and effective guarantees for their rights to own, control, and manage their lands, territories and resources."

Guatemalan NGOs and the local Catholic Church diocese were concerned about the lack of proper consultation before forging ahead with the development of the Marlin mining project. Local people said that they were not properly informed of the possible impacts of living close to an open-pit gold mine. These impacts may include increased competition for scarce water resources and pollution of local waterways.

Tension in the area was most clearly evident when a protest in January 2005 ended in a violent confrontation between protesters and the military that left two protesters dead.

In January 2005, Madreselva, a Guatemalan NGO, filed a complaint with the World Bank on behalf of the

community of Sipacapa.

The division of the World Bank that supports private sector projects like this mining operation is the International Finance Corporation (IFC). The IFC provided the company, Glamis Gold, US\$43 million to open its Marlin mine. Glamis is based in the US but also registered in Canada.

The Madreselva complaint was assessed by the body responsible for monitoring the IFC, the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO). Among the complaints made to the CAO were claims that the mining company acted "in a devious and untruthful manner," and that it "never told the people that there were precious metals in their land."

AMAR INAMDAR, LEADER of the CAO assessment team, spoke with me about these concerns with empathy.



Sipacapa children. Photo: Paul Lemieux

"People were very genuinely scared about these types of investments," he said. "This was a new big thing in their local environment, and I think that there was a genuine feeling that we picked up on of concern, of apprehension and of fear about what this meant for them. We well understand that."

Complaints that the communities were not properly informed were corroborated in the resulting CAO investigation report, released in August 2005. It recognized that the timeframe for efforts to promote a dialogue on mining were "not compatible with the timetable of the project's development."

The CAO report found "no formal notification or records that indicate whether or not the government of Guatemala informed or consulted the local people or their leaders prior to the granting of the exploration license for the Marlin area."

On the other hand, some critics of the mine weren't completely honest or helpful, according to Inamdar.

"There was a fair amount of misinformation in many different directions, that was heightening that fear, and left people in a position where they really didn't know who to trust."

That misinformation was not helped by the restrictions on information that

was available.

"A lot of the criticism that had happened about that mine at the time while we were out there hadn't had the benefit of any external technical expert," he said. As a result, local people weren't able to feel that "here is information that we can believe is credible, that gives us a sense that can really address the apprehensions that we have."

Asked if he thought the CAO assessment process had helped improve the transparency and accountability of the IFC and World Bank, Inamdar said "I would always like to see more, but I think that we have made a difference for the people on the ground. We've made a big difference in ensuring that the voices of those who are very vulnerable in this situation have been heard by those right at the very top of the World Bank."

Although the mine is now operational, there are still unresolved issues under negotiation, and opposition continues.

A JUNE 2005 CONSULTA (plebiscite) in Sipacapa, attended by national and international observers, resulted in over 95% of participants rejecting the presence of the mine. Neither Glamis nor the Guatemalan government acknowl-

“ There was a fair amount of misinformation, in many different directions, that was heightening that fear. ”

edges the legitimacy of the vote, and asked supporters of the mine not to participate in the process.

In December representatives of the community of Sipacapa met with the new president of the World Bank, Paul Wolfowitz, asking for a recognition of the consulta on the part of the IFC and Glamis, a guarantee that the community would suffer "no adverse impact" as a result of the mine's operations, and provision for more culturally appropriate development assistance.

Whether or not this meeting results in a better deal for citizens affected by the mine remains to be seen. The mine, which will be using 25,000 liters of water per hour, has free and unlimited access to the area's water sources. As for poverty alleviation, the mine will provide only 200 jobs for local residents. Compensation for the mine's activities currently stands at a 1% royalty to be paid to the national government, with a tax-exemption status to be enjoyed until 2008.

Issues that are yet to be resolved include monitoring, company compliance to and enforcement of pollution standards during the mine's lifespan (about ten years), as well as clear procedures and financial commitments by the company for mine reclamation once it ceases operation. ◇

Excavating the mine



Des enfants isolés dans la zone d'attente de Roissy

Maud Hainry

Comment la France a-t-elle rendu légal l'enfermement d'enfants non accompagnés dans la zone d'attente de l'aéroport de Paris Charles de Gaulle ?

Le mot est révélateur du soucis français de n'aller ni contre la loi, ni contre les consciences ; lorsqu'on fait référence à l'enfermement des personnes voulant accéder au territoire français, on utilise le terme « maintien ». Caroline Maillari, permanente à l'Anafé, Association Nationale d'Assistance aux Frontières pour les Etrangers, explique la raison d'être de ce choix de vocabulaire : « On ne parle pas de rétention, on parle de maintien. En effet, s'il y a un droit, qui est complètement illusoire, c'est que la personne peut partir de la zone d'attente quand elle veut, mais en direction d'un pays qui l'accepte, c'est-à-dire vers son pays de nationalité ».

La zone d'attente de l'aéroport de Roissy est un lieu où sont enfermées les personnes qui ne sont pas autorisées à entrer en France, soit parce qu'elles ne remplissent pas les conditions légales, soit parce qu'elles demandent l'asile. La durée maximale de maintien y est fixée à vingt jours. Mais la procédure s'est extrêmement accélérée depuis les nouvelles lois du ministre Sarkozy. Selon les chiffres de la police aux frontières, la durée moyenne de maintien en zone d'attente est de 5 jours. « Qu'il y ait une demande d'asile ou non, la demande d'accès au territoire est traitée en moins de 4 jours, c'est une accélération de la procédure qui est très inquiétante » affirme Maillari.

Les immigrants retenus à la frontière ne peuvent pas accéder au territoire car on doute que leurs papiers soient vrais. On les maintient en zone d'attente le temps déterminer si leurs demandes sont manifestement infondées ou non. Or, « comment en si peu de temps on peut décider si la demande d'asile est réellement infondée ? » s'interroge Maillari.

Comme la police aux frontières postule que les papiers sont faux, lorsqu'une personne arrive avec des papiers d'identité qui la présentent comme un mineur de moins de 18 ans, on met en doute ces informations. Pour déterminer l'âge, on effectue une expertise osseuse sur la personne. Cette méthode est très vieille et très controversée par les médecins, puisqu'il existe une marge d'erreur de 18 mois. Ainsi, certains mineurs sont maintenus et traités comme s'il s'agissait d'adultes.

Quand le mineur arrive à l'aéroport, il signe tout seul sa notifi-



Photos: Clive Shirley, GlobalAware

cation de maintien en zone d'attente, alors qu'il en est incapable juridiquement. Les interprètes ne se déplacent jamais en zone d'attente car « la loi Sarkozy de 2003 a légalisé l'interprétariat par téléphone ce qui réduit la possibilité d'avoir le droit à un réel interprète », affirme Caroline Maillari. De plus les interprètes travaillent uniquement dans les cinq langues de l'ONU, ce qui n'est pas d'un grand secours pour la plupart des immigrés.

LA CONVENTION INTERNATIONALE

des droits de l'enfant dit que la privation de liberté pour un enfant doit être une mesure de dernier recours. « La France a réussi à légaliser le maintien de ces jeunes dans ces zones en créant une institution qui s'appelle l'administrateur ad hoc, qui est censé assister et représenter le mineur placé en zone d'attente » explique Caroline Maillari. L'administrateur ad hoc est un bénévole de la Croix Rouge qui saisit le parquet mineur. Mais le parquet mineur n'informe pas systématiquement le juge des enfants.

Selon la procédure, le passage devant le juge des libertés et des détentions se fait à partir du quatrième jour de détention. Puisque la durée moyenne de séjour en zone d'attente est de 4 jours, il y a beaucoup de mineurs qui sont renvoyés avant de passer devant ce juge. Pour qu'un mineur soit libéré sur le territoire français, il faut que soit le juge des enfants se saisisse et décide de son sort, ou qu'au quatrième jour, le juge décide de remettre les enfants à sa famille, si celle-ci est à l'audience. Mais l'Anafé note que ces cas sont de plus en plus rares. Il arrive souvent que l'enfant soit en contact avec sa famille sur le territoire et ne puisse pas la rejoindre.

Ce fut le cas récemment de deux enfants Malgaches de 6 et 8 ans. Le père avaient accepté de les prendre avec lui pour s'en occuper et avait donc acheté les billets d'avion en toute bonne foi.



En 2004, sur 609 mineurs isolés demandeurs d'asile, 444 n'ont pas reçu l'autorisation de pénétrer sur le territoire français. Ceux dont la demande n'est pas acceptée sont reconduits à la frontière.

Certain d'entre eux sont considérés comme majeurs après l'expertise osseuse – 15 cas en 2004 – et sont alors traités comme des adultes, c'est-à-dire avec les violences possibles qui accompagnent les reconduites aux frontières.

Seulement 3,4 % des enfants ont accès au territoire, et ceux qui ne passent pas devant le juge des enfants sont renvoyés.

« Donc beaucoup d'enfants ne peuvent tout simplement pas venir en France en vacances pour voir leurs parents » affirme Caroline Maillari, Association Nationale d'Assistance aux Frontières pour les Etrangers.

Arrivé en France ils ont pu voir leur père pendant dix minutes avant d'être renvoyés au Madagascar. Selon l'Anafé, ces cas arrivent de plus en plus souvent, que les enfants aient ou non leurs papiers.

Lorsque les parents ont reçu le droit de rester en France, ils doivent effectuer la procédure légale de regroupement familial pour faire venir leurs enfants auprès d'eux. Cette démarche est particulièrement longue, pouvant prendre plusieurs années. Si les parents font venir leurs enfants en France sans passer par cette procédure, ils sont illégaux au regard de la loi et considérés par la police comme étant des « regroupement sauvage ». Même quand tous les papiers sont en règle, la police aux frontières se méfie des enfants qui rejoignent leurs parents, et les envoie

alors en zone d'attente.

Ceux qui refusent le retour jusqu'au dernier moment, passent devant le tribunal correctionnel pour ensuite être placés en prison. A la prison s'ajoute trois ans d'interdiction d'accès au territoire français. « Du coup il y a des enfants étrangers de moins de 18 ans dans les prisons françaises, même s'il y a un document prouvant son âge, acte de naissance ou autre, car la police considère que ces actes sont faux » constate Caroline Maillari. ◇

Article 37 de la convention relative aux droits de l'enfant : « Nul enfant ne soit privé de liberté de façon illégale ou arbitraire. L'arrestation, la détention ou l'emprisonnement d'un enfant doit être en conformité avec la loi, n'être qu'une mesure de dernier ressort, et être d'une durée aussi brève que possible ».

Is there fair trade beyond coffee?



Fair fabric

by *Tanjir Rahman*

When we first met in 1978, **Mohktar was a house servant**, like millions of other children living in Bangladesh. He was nine years old, and I was seven. His task at my grandparents' house was to help my grandmother cook and clean, and to buy fresh vegetables everyday. Very curious and with a gift for telling stories, he would come back from the market with stories of the vendors, mimicking their words and gestures with great hilarity. We used to sit together in the kitchen as my grandmother cooked, and later we would spend the afternoon playing on the lawn, climbing trees and eating fresh guavas from the garden.

Now I live in Canada, and he works in one of the many garment factories of Bangladesh. The garment industry accounts for two thirds of the nation's total export earnings in Bangladesh. Workers are expected to work twelve-hour shifts, with one day off a week. The average monthly wage is \$40 for men, \$35 for women. Workers do not receive any health protection. They live in slums, in conditions slightly better than those in shantytowns and with the constant threat of violence.

The country's contribution to the global \$400 billion/year apparel industry is a cheap labor force. The "Made in Bangladesh" label - like "Made in the Philippines" or "Made in China" or in whatever developing nation has cheap labor as an asset - comes with a cost in human misery. In Bangladesh,

as more factories open, landlords raise their rents and the overall cost of living rises

Bad jobs are better than no jobs, Mohktar says. But the major retailers that dominate the clothing market here in North America could exercise more control over wages and working conditions. Fewer than 30 retailers account for 98% of apparel sales in publicly held retail outlets, according to the 1999 Journal of International Economics.

As an alternative to this abuse of human potential, a small market is growing in North America to support fair trade in clothing. Companies like American Apparel and No Sweat have entered the market in response to rising demand, promoting fair wages and working conditions. However, some groups like Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International have not entered into the textile industry. The industry is hard to monitor, requiring money and manpower.

ALTHOUGH FAIR TRADE OUTLETS like the Dix Milles Villages (Ten Thousand Villages) stores in Montreal do not carry a lot of clothing, the store on Monkland Avenue has a collection of "No Sweat" products like t-shirts, sweatshirts and sneakers (which comes with a price breakdown so consumers know where their money is going).

"Buyers are overwhelmed with requests from suppliers to carry their merchandise, but by the time they visit the factories these very suppliers can



"We are not conscientious about what we buy" - Janis Crawford

have unhealthy working conditions, which the buyers will not agree to support," says Janice Melanson, manager of the Monkland Avenue store.

The Dix Milles Villages store in Point Claire stocks some t-shirts from Zimbabwe but pricing is a problem, according to store manager Terry Taylor-Geller. "Tariffs are too high to import the clothing. It doesn't come in bulk shipments, as with major retailers, but in small quantities, which makes the cost a little expensive for most consumers."

The Coop La Maison Verte in the NDG district of Montreal is another retail outlet that supports fair trade and good environmental practices. They have a selection of clothing and accessories, including shirts, dresses, socks and handbags from the Khadi Nation Cooperatives in India, a movement started by Mahatma Gandhi.

Store manager Janis Crawford believes that North Americans are not as aware of the abuses and exploitation as are Europeans. "There are more fair trade clothing outlets in Europe because the demand is much higher there. The buying habits of North

Americans are different from Europeans because we are not as conscientious about what we buy. Here, we are heavily influenced by brand names and the companies that support them.”

Fair trade businesses must be ethical, but an ethical business is not necessarily Fair Trade

The members of the International Fair Trade Association (IFAT) agree that “it is not enough to be ethical. Fair trade is about more than following codes of conduct and meeting labour standards. Fair trade organisations specifically seek to work in partnership with marginalised and disadvantaged groups to try and help them overcome the serious barriers they face in finding markets.”

To make it easier for consumers to support fair trade initiatives, the IFAT network provides identifying labels or “marks.” The Fair Trade Organization Mark is issued to registered members to identify organizations that practice fair trade. The FLO issues the Fair-

trade Label for products. (You may know this group by other, local names: TransFair, Fairtrade Foundation, Max Havelaar etc.)

For information about IFAT and where to find fair trade products visit www.ifat.org.

Ethiquette.ca is a web site guide to finding quality fair trade products and socially conscientious services throughout Quebec and online. Products listed range from fair trade shoes and coffee to mutual fund responsible investment services. The Montreal based service supports local and Canada wide businesses, co-ops, and shops, most of which have undergone a recognized standard evaluation process including stages of production and distribution. Products are examined in terms of being environmentally friendly, organic, and fair trade certified with attention to long-term sustainability, working conditions and wages.

SJC Annual General Meeting May 1

Guest speaker: Juan Tema, a community leader from Sipacapa, Guatemala

St. Patrick's Congress Hall 454
René Lévesque West

Food provided at 6pm (donations welcome), speaker at 7, business and election to the Board of Directors at 8.

Nominations to the Board are now being accepted. We are seeking individuals who can contribute to building the SJC as a strong educational organization and voice for human rights in the Third World.
Info: 933-6797



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Stephen Lewis talks about

Ending AIDS and poverty in Africa

Stephen Lewis, the United Nations Secretary-General's special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, delivered the 2005 Massey Lectures, "Race Against Time." Shortly after, Jason MacLean, an intern with the Social Justice Committee, interviewed Mr. Lewis for the Upstream Journal. They spoke about the relationships between western nations, international financial institutions, debt, and the crises of AIDS and poverty in Africa. This interview will be presented in two-parts, to be continued in the next issue.

You begin your 2005 Massey Lectures by outlining the relationship between Western nations and institutions and Africa. By beginning this way, what kinds of connections did you hope to evoke?

SL: The policies that were pursued by the colonial powers and then mirrored by the economic behaviour of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund prejudiced Africa's future profoundly. It is necessary to understand that context before you can understand the carnage of today.

UJ: If equality is our goal, does this not call for a radical restructuring of the relationship between the West and Africa through a process that involves both genuinely listening to voices that are not empowered and changing the way we live in the West.

SL: I think a tremendous amount can be achieved by listening to the voices of Africa that no one ever listens to and by radically changing the policies on debt, trade, and aid. I absolutely believe that huge benefits can be derived by Africa if we provide much more by way of resources, which incidentally we have promised and never delivered – it isn't as though I am asking for more than we have promised, it is just that we have never delivered on the promises, we have always betrayed the promises. If we revise those fundamental relationships, if we took Africa



Stephen Lewis in Swaziland

Photo: Tamela Hultman/Allafrica.com

seriously rather than manipulatively, it could make a great difference in the quality of life in Africa.

I note for example as we are speaking that the Hong Kong ministerial meeting this month for the World Trade Organization is already retreating on achieving significant changes on agricultural subsidies, which is so important for Africa, and they are already pretending that Hong Kong, rather than a decisive step on the way to a final trade agreement, is but an interim moment and that they will have

to pursue it next year. Africa's agenda is always delayed, always set back.

The proposition that it will require profound changes on the part of the West – yes that's true, but I can't hold my breath for that. That is a matter of generations. It is like changing male sexual behaviour – the women are dying today, you have to empower the women now, because male sexual behaviour won't change for generations.

Similarly, you have to empower Africa now through changes in public policy, because changes in Western

consumption habits, and Western uses of energy resources, is going to take years and years, and Africa does not have that time.

UJ: What do you see as the potential of the Western institutional approach to ending both the pandemic and poverty in Africa?

SL: Well, it is in many respects a matter of context, and the context now internationally is the Millennium Development Goals targeted for 2015. Since the Millennium Development goals were fashioned at the United Nations and are seen as an outgrowth of the United Nations, the United Nations should have some significant influence over their achievement. That means that the United Nations agencies have to perform at a very high level.

It also means that we have to collectively recognize that the United Nations is in some ways best placed to drive the humanitarian and development agenda – the United Nations has huge numbers of people on the ground, more than any of the bilateral donors, however big they may be (e.g., the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada), and the United Nations probably has the best relationship with all of the recipient governments. People often do not understand that, and sometimes if they do understand that they forget it.

For example, when I travel in Africa, I am struck by the willingness of the governments to listen to the United Nations, the willingness of the Ministry of Health to listen to the WHO representative, the willingness of the Ministry of Family and Child Services to listen to Unicef, the willingness of the Ministry of Agriculture to listen to the World Food Program. No one fully understands the power and influence of the United Nations on the ground, and so you have is (a) a lot of people and (b) a lot of influence, and that makes the United Nations the

significant vehicle for social change in reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

Now if the United Nations does not perform adequately, and that's where I have been critical and I am not going to retreat from that, then a huge opportunity is lost. That performance, then, consists of two aspects: (1) in collaboration with African governments, never unilaterally, always in collaboration, to help to drive the process on the ground, and (2) to keep the pressure on the G8 countries in particular but the donor world generally to deal with issues of resources, trade, debt, human capacity support, support for the reformation of infrastructure – all of the things which the UN can do by raising its voice.

That seems to me to be where someone like myself comes in. My job is advocacy, but it is not blind advocacy on behalf of one or another approach, it is advocacy that identifies anyone that is not performing adequately.

UJ: Does a continued emphasis on reforming the UN so as to address the crisis in Africa through Western institutional channels run the risk of reproducing the voluntaristic, “altruistic” aid paradigm and the paternalism that you so convincingly and courageously condemn in your first two lectures and thereby forestall a paradigm shift whereby the West – governments, institutions, corporations, and, not least, individuals – recognizes and finally makes good on its non-negotiable moral obligation to change?

SL: Well, what's the alternative? That's the basic answer to that question. There is no alternative. What you have to do, I think, is fight against the neo-colonial impulse and frontally take on the policies of the Bank and the Fund, and by the way that is being done more and more, as I think I have begun to show in the lectures, by the everybody from the United Kingdom to the United Na-

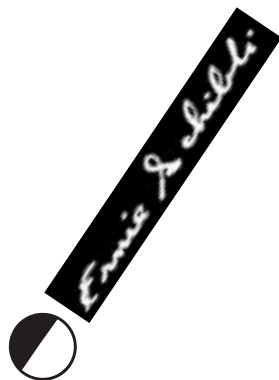
“ A tremendous amount can be achieved by listening to the voices of Africa that no one ever listens to and by radically changing the policies on debt, trade, and aid ”

tions itself, and I notice, and this was a very significant departure, that when the Executive Director of UN Aid this very week opened the International AIDS Conference in Africa in Nigeria, the Director said for the first time that the economic positions of the international financial institutions cannot be used to prejudice the capacity of these countries to respond to Aids.

There is a growing climate of opinion, there is a growing clamor from the advocates and from the activists, and there is now tremendous pressure being placed which is now being mirrored by formal government statements – tremendous pressure that the neo-colonial impulses (i.e., paternalism) must change, must be reversed.

The problem is that there are no alternatives. These countries are too sick to generate internally the kind of economic growth which would give them indigenous economic power. Until you deal with the “disease burden” in these countries, forget about economic growth, stop talking about giving Africa the capacity to withstand the deprivations of the West because they have some economic growth, until you deal with the burden of disease.

To be continued next issue...



“We have met the enemy and he is us.”

Ernie Schibli is a founding member of the SJC and our coordinator of public education programs.

FOR MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS the SJC has chosen to carry out its mission of public education through a series of campaigns. These range from advocating the “New International Economic Order” back in the 1970s to our current campaign in support of Guatemalans opposed to the Marlin gold mine in Guatemala. Some were highly successful, such as the opposition to the Mackenzie Valley pipeline thirty years ago, or when we accompanied Salvadoran refugees in Honduras who were determined to return home as communities. Others have been long, drawn out struggles, such as the campaign for the cancellation of the foreign debt of the world’s poorer countries – some success so far but still a lot to do.

Yet, when I look at our world today, I have the feeling that, despite all our work and that of like-minded organizations, we have not nearly achieved the success that our world desperately requires.

I don’t say this to disparage our work, far from it. Who knows what our world would be like today, had not so many people and organizations, in wealthy and poor countries alike, engaged themselves under the banners of social justice and environmental health! Nevertheless, we clearly have a long, long row yet to hoe.

I wonder though, if we at the SJC have been entirely honest in our campaigning. We have conducted hundreds, if not thousands, of public presentations in which we point out the injustices perpetrated by governments, international financial institutions and corporations. We encourage people to sign petitions, write letters, send e-mails and visit their MPs. Inevitably we point fingers at some structure. That structure, be it public or private, has to change. There’s certainly nothing wrong with that, since structures determine so much of what takes place in our modern world. But, do we go far enough? What about our own complicity in these structures? What about the Canadian public’s?

Most Canadians (and others) do not like seeing others hurt, especially those who are particularly vulnerable. We only have to look at last year’s response to the tsunami that caused so much grief to people in Asia. We also genuinely desire peace and a healthy natural environment in which to

live. But there’s a dilemma. We also want our cars, our home theatres, our travel and all the other toys and experiences that our society offers. In fact, many of us believe that we have the right to them.

I am sure that you have heard it said that for all the world’s people to live as we do in the West, we would require anywhere from three to nine planets Earth. Think about that. Should the statement be true, and I have no reason to doubt it, it means that we Canadians, Americans and others in the West for a number of years now have had a choice to make. We can continue to live as if our money gives us the right to take from this world whatever we want, even if it deprives others of what they need, or we can change our possessive life style to doing with less and cooperating with those whose material needs are greater than ours.

So far, as a society we have chosen the first. In fact, there are precious few constraints on our greed. Those structures mentioned above are building a global system in which those who have are getting more, and those who have not are being left further and further behind. And we, the average everyday people, have bought into it.

So it would seem that the message that social justice folk bring to the public is incomplete. We are reasonably good at telling people about various horror stories, the matter of our campaigns. We identify the victims, the crime, and some of the culprits – such and such a company or institution. What we don’t do so well is expose our own complicity. I believe it was Pogo, the old comic strip character, who said, “We have met the enemy, and he is us.”

So yes, by all means, let us continue to work hard on our various campaigns in favor of life and justice. But, as we do so, let us also look more closely at ourselves, individually and corporately, and the inconsistencies in our own lives. Real change must begin at home.

“Each individual is wholly involved in the democratic process, work at it or no. The results of the process fall on the head of the public and he who is recalcitrant or procrastinates in raising his voice can blame no one but himself.”

- Pogo cartoonist Walt Kelly discussing the phrase “We have met the enemy, and he is us.”

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The Social Justice Committee works to raise awareness of the root causes of hunger, poverty and human rights abuse in the world through our education programs. Since 1975 we've worked in solidarity with organizations in a number of Third World countries in the search for a more just and sustainable global socio-economic system.

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The *Upstream Journal* is published by the **Social Justice Committee, Montreal**. The *Upstream Journal* focuses on economic, social and cultural rights, reflecting the SJC perspective of Third World poverty as a human rights issue.

Subscription to the *Upstream Journal* is by donation, which goes to support a range of SJC educational projects. The journal is published five times a year, at irregular intervals between September and June.

Views expressed in the *Upstream Journal* are the writers' own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Social Justice Committee. We welcome the submission of illustrations and articles on aspects of international development and human rights.

Unless otherwise indicated, articles are available for free reprint. Advance permission is not required, but we ask that you credit the *Upstream Journal* and the author for use of original articles, and let us know if you use our material.

The Social Justice Committee invites you to come celebrate its 30 year anniversary at our "Global Music 4 Social Justice" fundraising concert!

We will mark our 30 year anniversary April 22 by holding a fundraising concert entitled "Global Music 4 Social Justice". You are all invited to come celebrate the SJC's past and ongoing involvement in delivering popular education programs and advocacy campaigns on economic and human rights issues in Third World countries. This is an excellent opportunity for our friends and supporters, old and new, to interact with one another while enjoying some great music.

Artists scheduled to perform at the "Global Music 4 Social Justice" concert include:

- legendary West African griot minstrel **Boubacar Diabate**,
- traditional Chilean folklore and resistance music group **Acalanto**,
- JUNO-nominated traditional folk and roots musician **Michael Jerome Browne**, and
- critically-acclaimed Chadian musical group **H'Sao**.

The SJC fundraising concert takes place at **Kola Note** (5240 Ave. du Parc) on Saturday, April 22nd, 2006 at 8 p.m. (doors open at 7 p.m.). Admission \$20 regular, reduced rate \$10.

Please note that this is a non-smoking, 18+ event. Advance tickets can be purchased from the Social Justice Committee (via phone, e-mail or in person). Visa and MasterCard are accepted.

To reserve tickets or book a table for a group of six or more guests, please e-mail the SJC at sjc@web.ca or phone 514-933-6797.



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All proceeds go to the Social Justice Committee, a Montréal NGO celebrating thirty years of giving voice to local communities in the developing world particularly in Africa and Central America.
Les bénéfices seront versés au Comité pour la Justice Sociale, une ONG qui célèbre ses trente ans de service communautaires particulièrement dans les pays en voie de développement en Afrique et en Amérique Centrale.