

The Upstream Journal



Dedicated teachers make a difference in Haiti

Activists tell Canadian company "Stop building railway to Tibet"

Dangerous trees?
Faster and tougher than anything else in the forest

La résistance des femmes brésiliennes contre les plantations d'eucalyptus

"The Trouble with Africa"

A former World Bank official talks about his controversial prescription for the troubled continent

Can the ILO Convention 169 on the Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples help the Guatemalan Maya?

Free publication of the
Social Justice Committee

Dear readers,

To my great sorrow, my friend and teacher, kora player Boubacar Diabate, passed away on October 2 as I prepared this issue of the *Upstream Journal*. Many of you will recognize him from the SJC's music event at the Kola Note club in Montreal last April. That was, as it turned out, his final public performance.

For five years, Mr. Diabate was my guide in exploring traditional music of West Africa, and it was one of the great pleasures of my life when he shared some of that music with us on that night.

He was a *griot*, born into a family tradition of music and oral history that is no longer an essential component of culture in West Africa. We got a glimpse of that when he played some of the epic story of Sundiata and how he came to lead the Mali empire. He normally would not perform one of the old traditional songs in concert, and when I suggested one like Sundiata he laughed, saying that a song like that could take three days!

Mr. Diabate loved living in Montreal and greatly admired Quebec and Canadian societies, while at the same time being intensely proud of being African and of his home country of Senegal.

But he also often commented on the decline in Africa that he had seen over his eighty years. As sub-Saharan Africa declined in economic wealth and the conditions of life, it also lost much of its tradition and culture. Now, with his passing, Africa has lost another treasure.

Unfortunately, the protection of culture is largely neglected in international development. Thank you, reader, for your support of our work to promote protection of social, economic and cultural rights and the fight against poverty in impoverished nations.

This issue of the *Upstream Journal* brings you more stories of struggle for the protections of these rights, in Tibet, Haiti, Africa and Guatemala. I hope you will find them interesting, and helpful to you in your own desire to support efforts at a more just world.

Derek MacCuish
Editor

Publications Mail Agreement 41141008
Return undelivered Canadian addresses to
1857 de Maisonneuve ouest, Montreal QC H3H 1J9

The *Upstream Journal* is a free publication of the Social Justice Committee. It is one of several educational materials we offer on human rights and development.

Donations to the SJC are welcome, and go to support a range of human rights & development education activities. The SJC is a registered charity in Canada, and donations are tax deductible. We accept Visa and MasterCard.

Please consider making a donation and becoming a member. You can use the reply form on the back cover of this *Upstream Journal*, call us (toll free in North America) at 1-866-RIGHTS-2 or make a secure on-line donation at the SJC web site www.s-j-c.net

Cover: Mapuche man walks through new monoculture timber plantation of eucalyptus seedlings near Chol Chol, Chile
Photo: Orin Langelle

Comments on articles can be sent to editor@upstreamjournal.org

Printer: Payette & Simms
ISSN 0842-9928

Genetically engineered trees pose danger to forests and people, activists claim

By Anne Petermann & Orin Langelle

“GE trees are one of the most dangerous threats to forests, which host most of the Earth’s terrestrial biodiversity. The release of GE trees will inevitably and irreversibly contaminate forest ecosystems and destroy biodiversity,” says Ricardo Carerre, of the World Rainforest Movement.

GE trees present unique and potentially extreme problems. Trees live for centuries if not millennia and pollinate for hundreds to thousands of miles. Pollen models created in 2004 by Duke University researchers in North Carolina in the U.S. demonstrated pollen from native forests in the Southeast U.S. traveling for more than 1,200km north into eastern Canada. This means that engineered trees cannot be properly contained, and will lead eventually to irreversible contamination of native forests.

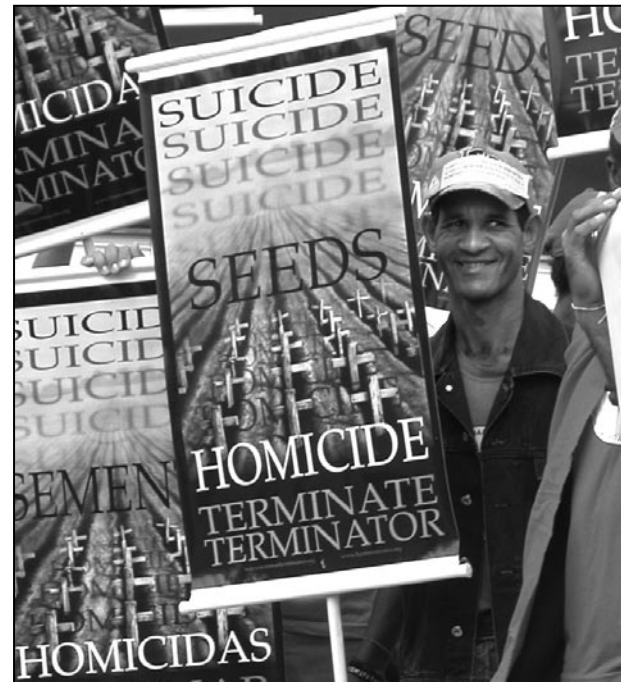
The purpose of genetically engineered trees is to kill insects, tolerate toxic herbicides, grow fast and be sterile. GE trees have reduced lignin, the substance that gives a tree rigidity and protects it from disease, insects and environmental stresses like wind.

The potential effects of the escape of these engineered traits into native forests include destruction of biodiversity and ecosystems. The ability of the GE tree to grow faster means it could out-compete native trees for light, water, and nutrients, contributing to soil loss and desertification. There is also the possibility for severe human health problems (from both the GE tree pollen and herbicide use) and cultural impacts, specifically in communities that rely on forest for food, shelter, water, livelihood and cultural practices.

These concerns were reflected in an agreement to continue the moratorium on so-called “terminator technology” and to recommend caution about the potential use of genetically engineered trees, made at the March 2006 meeting on the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The connection between these two issues emerged when industry argued that they needed terminator technology to address the contamination problems related to commercializing GE trees. Terminator technology is the genetic engineering of plants to produce sterile seeds that cannot be replanted.

The decision to uphold the Terminator moratorium was made during the first week of meetings, though countries such as Canada and New Zealand tried unsuccessfully to derail this agreement on later occasions. The decision on the issue of genetically engineered trees came to a close late on the last night of the conference. This decision acknowledges for the first time the potential dangers—both social and ecological—of genetically engineered trees. It urges countries to take a cautious approach to the technology, hopefully slowing the rush to commercialize GE trees:

“The ability of the GE tree to grow faster means it could out-compete native trees for light, water, and nutrients”



Via Campesina and the MST demonstrate at the Convention on Biological Diversity in Curitiba, Brazil in March 2006 Photo: Petermann/Global Justice Ecology Project

"The Conference of the Parties, recognizing the uncertainties related to the potential environmental and socio-economic impacts, including long-term and trans-boundary impacts, of genetically modified trees on global forest biological diversity, as well as on the livelihoods of indigenous and local communities, and given the absence of reliable data and of capacity in some countries to undertake risk assessments and to evaluate those potential impacts... recommends parties to take a precautionary approach when addressing the issue of genetically modified trees."

The stance against genetically engineered trees on the first occasion that the issue was introduced, despite pressure from pro-GE tree countries like

Canada, Australia and the United States, underscores the high level of concern over the threats posed by genetically engineered trees.

The decision also called for the initiation of a global compilation of data on the social and environmental implications of GE tree release, in a process that includes the participation of relevant organizations, including indigenous and local communities.

This is an important step forward for global efforts to stop GE trees, although corporations are rapidly moving ahead with steps to commercialize GE trees in countries such as Brazil, Chile, India and South Africa.

Geneticist Dr. Ricarda Steinbrecher of the Federation of German Scientists sums it up this way:

"Recommending a precautionary approach to GE trees represents a first step in recognizing the dangers of GE trees. It will assist NGOs and scientists alike in sending an urgent alert to all nations that there is insufficient scientific data on the implications of GE trees, which pose a threat to forests and indigenous and local peoples globally—and therefore it is crucial to halt all releases at least until such data and assessments become available."

Anne Petermann & Orin Langelles are with the STOP GE Trees Campaign, Global Justice Ecology Project, info@globaljusticeecology.org. To request a GE Trees Action Tool Kit, sign a petition to ban GE trees, or order a copy of the film "A Silent Forest: The Growing Threat, Genetically Engineered Trees" www.globaljusticeecology.org

The 2007 Latin American Agenda is now available

Once again, the SJC is happy to make available the English-language version of the Global Latin-American Agenda. This year's theme is "**Let's build real democracy together.**" Latin American writers such as Leonardo Boff, Eduardo Galeano, Frei Betto and many others share their thoughts on a topic important to all who are working for a global society based on justice, freedom and a healthy natural environment. How will we build this new world?

The 2007 Global Latin American Agenda:

- is a form of solidarity with those people in Latin America working for justice and peace
- gives you access to the thoughts of Latin Americans in English
- raises money in support of the SJC and other groups in solidarity with Latin America
- serves as a handy, very interesting date-book
- serves as a fund raiser for smaller groups.

Order your own copy now - **only \$15 each** plus \$3 postage in Canada, \$5 to the US

Better yet, buy several copies as gifts for others!

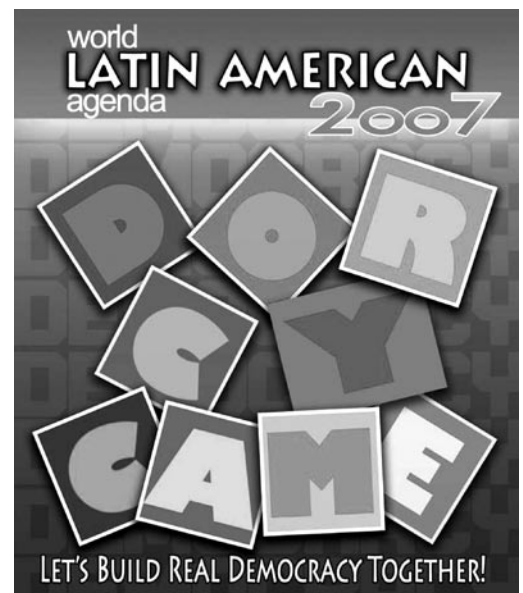
- 12 to 23 copies = \$13 per copy (does not include postage)
- 24 to 47 copies = \$11 per copy
- 48 or more copies = \$9 per copy

We accept Visa, MasterCard and cheques.

Phone toll-free **1-866-RIGHTS-2**

Email **agendas@s-j-c.net**

Mail The Social Justice Committee
1857 de Maisonneuve Ouest
Montréal QC H3H 1J9



Lutte contre les arbres d'eucalyptus

Par Cindy Ouellet

Le 8 mars 2006 (journée internationale de la femme), Barra do Ribeiro, état du Rio Grande do Sul, Brésil. Environ 2,000 personnes, majoritairement des femmes, de l'organisation Via Campesina, pénètrent dans la pépinière d'Aracruz Celulose, une entreprise privée qui cultive l'eucalyptus pour en faire de la cellulose (l'élément solide des végétaux utilisé pour la fabrication de la pâte à papier). Elles détruisent des millions de boutures d'eucalyptus, dont plusieurs étaient des échantillons de recherches en cours, ainsi que les serres et un laboratoire de l'entreprise, laquelle travaillait sur la génétique des plantes en question.

Le lendemain et pendant plusieurs semaines, les médias brésiliens s'emparent de l'événement et dénoncent avec force les méthodes « sauvages » utilisées et le caractère « terroriste » du geste. Les mouvements sociaux liés à l'organisation Via Campesina, un mouvement paysan international qui défend les organisations paysannes, sont décrits comme « attardés » et « violents », empêchant le développement économique de la région sud du Brésil. En effet, les médias insistent sur le fait que l'action des protestataires fait fuir les investisseurs, alors que l'entreprise Aracruz Celulose était à la veille d'annoncer l'emplacement de son nouveau centre industriel qu'elle entend construire au Brésil.

«Au Brésil, deux modèles d'exploitation de la terre s'affrontent,» explique Leonardo Toss, de l'ONG CAMP, «celui en faveur de l'agro-industrie et celui qui fait la promotion des petites propriétés rurales, de l'agriculture familiale. Ce dernier est en faveur d'une réforme agraire intégrale qui favoriserait, notamment, la souveraineté alimentaire du pays, tandis que



Femmes de Via Campesina contre les semences Terminator lors de la Convention sur la Biodiversité de l'ONU qui s'est tenue à Curitiba (Brésil), mars 2006. Photo: Karine Peschard

l'agro-industrie, basée sur l'existence de grandes propriétés terriennes (latifúndios), privilégie l'exportation des produits agricoles plutôt que la production pour une consommation locale.»

QUEL ÉTAIT LE SENS DE CETTE ACTION?

Le geste des femmes de la Via Campesina n'était pas gratuit, ni leur cible arbitraire. Sur le site du Movimento das mulheres camponesas (Mouvement des femmes paysannes), une des entités membre de la Via Campesina, on explique que le geste avait pour but, notamment, de dénoncer les conséquences sociales et environnementales de la monoculture de l'eucalyptus. Celle-ci débalance l'écosystème, à fortiori, lorsqu'il s'agit d'une essence exotique (terme opposé à natif) ce qui est le cas de l'eucalyptus, qui est originaire du continent australien. Celui-ci génère des substances qui sont toxiques pour les autres espèces, ce qui constitue une forme « naturelle » de défense de la plante qui

favorise sa propre croissance.

Cultivé par les entreprises de cellulose parce qu'il se développe rapidement (après 7 ans il a déjà atteint sa maturité commerciale), l'eucalyptus a un bon « rendement économique ». Cependant les multinationales comme Aracruz Celulose qui le cultivent emploient une grande quantité d'agro-toxiques pour favoriser sa croissance commerciale.

Selon Hilaire Yaccoub, chercheuse liée à l'ONG Koinonía, ce sont environ 250 000 litres par jour d'herbicides qui sont déversés sur les plantations d'eucalyptus dans l'état d'Espírito Santo. De plus, un de ces agro-toxiques serait le « Tordon », mieux connu sous le nom d'« agent orange ». En plus d'être illégal (parce qu'il est cancérigène et qu'il cause des maladies génétiques), il n'est pas adapté à ce type de culture.

Ces herbicides contaminent également la terre, l'air et les eaux - les fleuves, les lacs ainsi que la nappe phréatique. La question de l'eau est préoccupante dans le cas de l'eucalyptus, qui

en consomme énormément. Les 3,6 mille litres en un an (pour un arbre de 15 mètres d'hauteur) qu'il consomme représentent trois fois la moyenne du niveau de pluie dans la Pampa du Rio Grande do Sul. En raison de cette extraordinaire quantité dont il a besoin pour assurer sa croissance, il absorbe non seulement l'eau de pluie mais également celle des sous-sols.

En général, les plantations d'eucalyptus peuvent donner jusqu'à trois récoltes, après quoi le sol devient complètement stérile dû à cette énorme absorption de nutriments et d'eau. Pour cette raison, les écologistes parlent de « désert vert » lorsqu'il est question de monoculture de cette essence sur plusieurs milliers d'hectares.

LE CAS D'ARACRUZ CELULOSE

Les femmes ne se sont pas attaquées seulement à l'eucalyptus : elles ont ciblé une entreprise en particulier.

« Aracruz Celulose est un symbole de ce modèle socio-économique d'exploitation de la terre fondé sur l'agro-industrie, l'exportation des produits agricoles, l'utilisation de semences transgéniques et d'agro-toxiques », selon Leonardo Toss.

Ainsi, cette entreprise possède (dans un pays où la concentration de la propriété de la terre est un des pires au monde, devancé en ce domaine seulement par le Paraguay), 375 mille hectares, répartis dans les 4 états du Brésil où elle est présente. De cet immense territoire, environ 65% est destiné aux plantations d'eucalyptus, dont la quasi totalité de la production de cellulose sera destinée à l'exportation (97% de la cellulose est vendue dans les pays du nord).

Parallèlement, cela vaut la peine de mentionner que, seulement pour l'année 2005, ont été réalisées au Brésil, 221 occupations de terres, qui chacune mobilisent des centaines de sans-terre qui souhaitent une véritable réforme agraire qui leur donnera la possibilité de cultiver le sol pour s'alimenter.



Manifestation pour la souveraineté de la terre au Brésil Photo: Cindy Ouellet

Ainsi, la multinationale ne produit pas d'aliment, mais un papier de luxe vendu dans les pays du nord, où la consommation de ce produit est énorme (de même que le gaspillage).

Dans l'état d'Espírito Santo, où Aracruz Celulose a bénéficié d'incitations fiscales importantes qui ont toujours cours aujourd'hui, l'entreprise ne paie pas d'impôts à l'état ni à ses municipalités. Pire encore, elle reçoit un généreux financement public. Seulement sous le présent gouvernement, à travers la Banque nationale de développement économique et social (BNDES), elle a reçu en 2005, un prêt de 318 millions de dollars pour la construction d'une industrie dans l'état de Bahia. De plus, en décembre de la même année, un financement de 297 millions a été approuvé par la même institution étatique afin de moderniser une industrie de l'entreprise dans l'état du Rio Grande do Sul. Selon le journal de gauche Brasil de Fato, la plus grande productrice de cellulose au monde a enregistré des profits nets de 347 millions de reais (environ 158 millions de \$ canadiens), seulement durant le premier trimestre de 2006.

Dans l'état d'Espírito Santo, l'entreprise a réussi à acheter les terres de communautés rurales noires et amérindiennes à cette époque, sous la promesse de fournir des emplois à ces derniers. Toutefois, cette promesse ne s'est

jamais concrétisée puisque les industries de cette dernière sont hautement mécanisées et demandent donc une main d'oeuvre qualifiée, chose inexistante dans cette région où le niveau de scolarité est très bas.

En 1998, à la faveur d'un accord entre le gouvernement et l'entreprise, le territoire des peuples Guarani et Tupinikim a été réduit de moitié (il était de 18 000 hectares originellement). Les Amérindiens se sont mobilisés et ont autodémarqué le territoire qui leur avait été reconnu par Fondation nationale des Amérindiens (FUNAI), alors que la police est intervenue, légitimant ainsi la présence de l'entreprise sur ces terres. Les forces policières ont de surcroît bénéficié de l'appui logistique d'Aracruz.

Aracruz a été mise en accusation et jugée, aux côtés de grandes entreprises comme Suez, Bayer et Repsol, à Vienne, en mai 2006, au sein du Tribunal permanent des peuples sur les multinationales Européennes. Aracruz cellulose était accusée d'avoir violé certains articles de la Constitution brésilienne concernant le droit à la terre des Autochtones et des communautés noires rurales et de créer un « désert vert ».

Cindy Ouellet est une ancienne bénévole du CJS qui vit maintenant en ce moment au Brésil.

Development or cultural destruction?

Railway to Tibet

by Christine Lynch

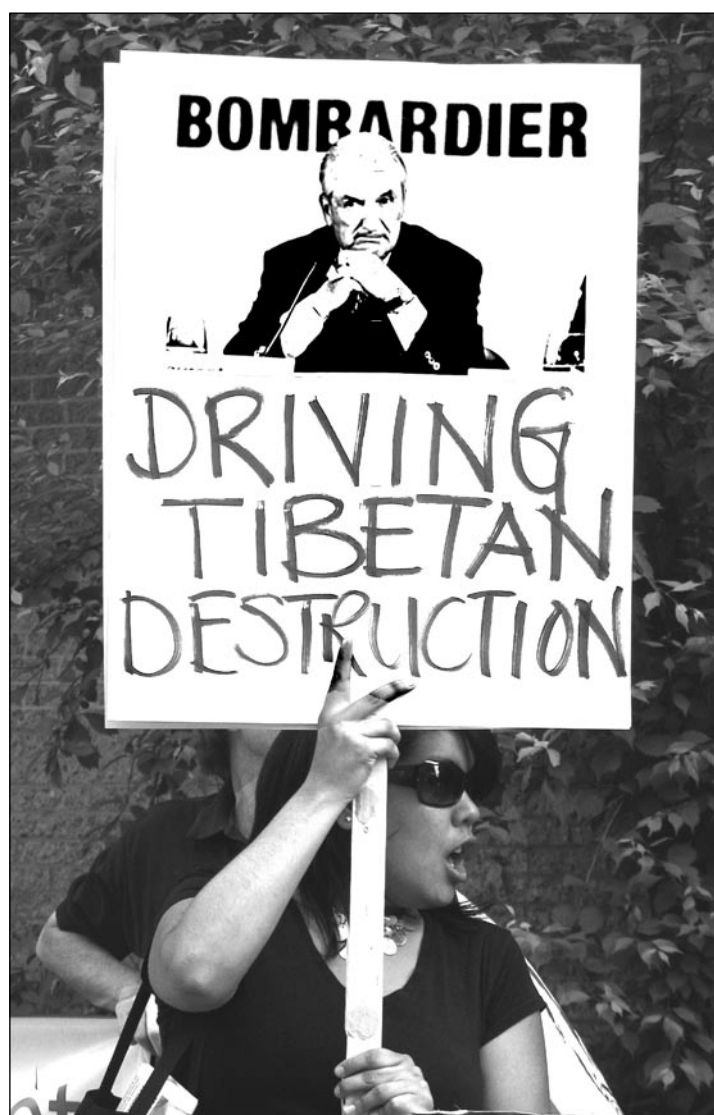
Tibetans and Tibet-support groups worldwide fear that the final phase of Tibet's cultural genocide is about to begin. According to Chinese officials, a new major railway linking the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) with mainland China will transport up to 100,000 Chinese settlers per month into the region, where Tibetans themselves are already a minority. Critics of the railway project point out that an influx of Chinese settlers represents a threat to the cultural and economic survival of the Tibetan people, as well as their hope for genuine political autonomy.

Three Canadian companies are, in part, complicit in this project that is deemed by much of the international community, as cultural genocide: Bombardier, Power Corporation, and Nortel are in partnership with the Chinese government in building the railway, which aims to fully assimilate Tibet within 'the motherland'.

7.5 million Chinese live in Tibet, alongside 6 million Tibetans. When the railway becomes fully operational at the beginning of 2007, Tibetans expect a further entrenchment of the marginalization they already face on a daily basis. Tibetan children encounter discrimination in the educational system: they must pay higher school fees than their Chinese peers, and instruction in their native Tibetan language and history is forbidden. Tibetans also have limited job opportunities and are experiencing growing unemployment. Racial discrimination and a lack of Chinese language skills are the two main reasons why the Chinese-dominated business community gives preferential employment opportunities to new Chinese settlers. The railway project itself is an example of job discrimination, where out of the 38,000 employees hired to build the railway, only 6,000 are Tibetans.

The railway is a \$3.2 billion dollar project. This expenditure exceeds the combined total amount that Beijing has spent on healthcare and education in Tibet Autonomous Region over the last fifty years.

The project is a high-profile project for China's "Great Western Development" campaign and closely tied to the government's political objectives. In 2001, Jiang Zemin,



then president of the People's Republic of China, was quoted in the New York Times as saying "some people advised me not to go ahead with this (railway) project because it is not commercially viable. I said this is a political decision."

Historically, rail lines were used by the Chinese government to colonize territories such as Inner Mongolia and East Turkestan through facilitating the transportation of Chinese settlers and increasing political and military control in those regions.

Tibetans fear a similar fate; in addition to bringing in Chinese settlers, the new railway will facilitate an expansion of military bases and the transportation of nuclear missiles into the Tibetan plateau. There are also well-founded concerns that the railway will facilitate an increase in large-scale mining operations, leading to deforestation, soil erosion, grassland degradation, and loss of biodiversity; in short, it will devastate the local ecosystem, which is at one of the highest altitudes on earth and is the watershed for ten of the biggest river systems in Asia.

Former Chinese premier Zhu Rongji calls the railway a "common desire of the Tibetan people," however

Tibetans were never consulted. Tibetans are unable to express their views on the railway because civil opposition in Tibet is criminalized. Many Tibetans want better transportation within Tibet, however, they believe that the trade-off should not be environmental destruction and an increase in Chinese settlers and militarization of the plateau. The construction of the railway left entire Tibetan villages demolished and relocated, and people's lands were confiscated without adequate

compensation.

THE CANADIAN CONNECTION

Tibet-support groups worldwide have repeatedly called on Canadian companies (Bombardier, Power Corporation, and Nortel) to pull out of the project, highlighting that the population transfer is a violation of the Tibetan people's right to self-determination. In 2000, the World Bank withdrew a loan that was going to be used to promote Chinese mi-

Bombardier's position

Bombardier declined a request for an interview, or to comment for the article on the China-Tibet railway.

Bombardier's 2006 Annual Report provides the company's response to a proposal calling for Bombardier "to draft and adopt a human rights policy and to produce an independent report on the progress made in this regard by November 2006."

"We respect concerns expressed by Tibet support groups about this project," Bombardier management said in its response to the shareholder motion. "We have maintained a respectful dialogue with these groups, and while we remain open to dialogue, we have made it clear that Bombardier-Sifang-Power Transportation is fully committed to pursuing this project though to completion."

Bombardier recommended that shareholders vote against the proposal, put forward at the company's annual meeting by the Corporation des Syndics Apostoliques des frères mineurs ou Franciscains and the Congrégation des Soeurs de Sainte-Anne.

On human rights, Bombardier claimed that it abided by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and by ILO labour standards and "will never tolerate any action against any one of these principles."

On social responsibilities, Bombardier "acknowledges it has a role as a corporate citizen, while also recognizing the limits of its influence."

Bombardier "must have an integrated approach to these issues, given its presence throughout the world, and that while contemplating the possibility of subscribing to some statement of principles, the Corporation thinks that adopting a very targeted policy on a single aspect of corporate social responsibility is inappropriate."



Protest at the Bombardier Annual General Meeting, 2006. Photos by Nathalie Bianco

gration to Tibet, based on human rights grounds. Despite the Bank's precedent, all three Canadian companies refused to divest, stating that their involvement in the project is purely 'business' and that they do not get involved in 'local politics'. Bombardier issued a statement that it is "fully committed to pursuing this project through to completion".

Bombardier provided 361 rail cars, Power Corporation provided funding for the railway project, and Nortel provided a digital wireless communications network. Yet, none of the companies conducted environmental impact assessments as promoted by international standards of corporate social responsibility.

At their Annual General Meetings, all three companies voted against resolutions submitted by a group of shareholders, proposing that the companies adopt a human rights policy, prepare a human rights report on their activities in Tibet, and conduct a human rights impact assessment on the railway. In rejecting these resolutions, the companies are effectively disregarding the fact that when the railway starts its operations next year, Tibet's unique culture and pristine natural environment will be destroyed.

Christine Lynch was an intern with the SJC in 2006, and a volunteer with the Canada-Tibet Committee.

For more information, see the World Tibet Network News published by the Canada Tibet Committee at www.tibet.ca

To express your thoughts about this railway project, and for more information, contact:

Laurent Beaudoin
Chairman and CEO, Bombardier Inc.
800 Rene-Levesque Blvd. West
Montreal QC H3B 1Y8

Andre Desmarais
President and Co-CEO
Power Corporation of Canada
751 Victoria Square
Montréal QC H2Y 2J3

Mike S. Zafirovski
President and CEO, Nortel
8200 Dixie Road
Brampton ON L6T 5P6

Reading:

Wole Soyinka, Nobel-prize winning Nigerian author, speaks out on **Darfur**

What further dimension of state terrorism does the world need in order to act when a government unleashes its surrogates, armed to the teeth, supported, supplied, and logistically enabled by its own forces and intelligence services, authorised by well documented mandate of ethnic cleansing, its acts witnessed, recorded and reported by the United Nations' own agencies, its results seared on the Sudanese landscape as mass burial grounds, ruins of burnt villages, poisoned wells, slaughtered livestock, in the swelling army of mutilated survivors, victims of gang rape, of diseased and overflowing refugee camps?

Words are our stock-in-trade, and writers are not slow to notice when a word screams out through absence and avoidance. Now what is that word that the United Nations, once again, has scrupulously skirted, a strategic avoidance, a moral liability that led, in this very recent memory to - Rwanda? The protocols are clear. Recognition of a certain dimension of criminality against a people, its culture, against the very existence of the people of Darfur compels the United Nations to act. But no, Darfur is not the heart of Europe.

It is not the heart of Lebanon or the borders of Israel. It is located in a land of disdain, recognized only as the home of want and occasionally – of much sought material resources. So, just what is this word that accuses, damns, and will not be silenced? What is this word for which so many substitutes are massed, though derobed of the inexorable imperative, in the corridors and chambers of the United Nations?

As writers, we cannot cease to recognize and embrace our mission of testifying and laying ambush for escapist minds. Those who are alive today to witness this renewed perfidy, and their successors living or yet unborn in the mission of warning and bearing witness, will not forget. Let words, at the very least, be mobilized towards the fulfillment of responsibilities by those who are charged with the protection of the weak and helpless, the temporarily disadvantaged,

Let them persist in saying to you, all who hold the primary controls of the direction of a continent's future, that that future will not forget, nor will it forgive. As the armies of the Sudanese state mass for the final onslaught on its long determined design of race extermination, that future will stigmatise you one and all, will brand you collaborators and accomplices if you abandon the people of Darfur to this awful fate, one that so blindingly scrawls its name across the supplicating sands and hills of Darfur – Genocide!

- Wole Soyinka, speaking at the 50th Anniversary of the 1st International Conference of Black Writers & Artists, Paris, 19-22nd September 2006.

Teacher works to change attitudes in Haiti

Traditional approaches to education not enough

By Afsoon Donna Houshidari

Linda Gershuny works “against the currents of disunity, injustice and oppression so prevalent in the world,” as she puts it, to improve the education system in Haiti. The mission of her organization, the Centre d’Apprentissage et de Formation pour la Transformation (CAFT), is to contribute to the positive transformation and socio-economic well being of Haitian families through educational training.

“Education has the power to reveal the treasures hidden within every individual so that the more subtle process of integration, unity and justice can advance,” Linda said.

As an intern with CAFT, I worked with local groups on community improvement projects and trained village leaders to do youth work. CAFT emphasizes progressive education in place of overly theoretical learning and punitive discipline, and when Linda asked me to teach step-dance, using only movement in place of music, I was amazed to see men and women from ages 17 to 67 get up with energy and eagerness to try something new. Plumbers, civil servants, lawyers, students and teachers came together through their belief that artistic expression can enhance learning.

A Canadian expatriate, Linda went to Haiti after completing her training

in Toronto and Vancouver. She helped form CAFT in 1999 with a group of Haitian educators, working together on a volunteer basis to conduct periodic teacher enrichment courses. CAFT collaborated with 400 school principals and teachers throughout the country to explore new teaching methods, creating progressive classroom conditions where students could learn more effectively.

“CAFT members come from diverse faith backgrounds,” says Linda, “but we are united in our vision of the innate potential for constructive social change which exists within all of us in-

dividually and collectively. But even if thousands of teachers could be trained in the next few years using traditional means, I think little would change.”

Haiti’s constitution provides for compulsory primary schooling. Classroom facilities and teaching materials are supposed to be provided by the state to elementary school students free of charge, and there is supposed to be freedom of education at all levels. These provisions respond to the recognition of education as a human right as espoused in international documents, most comprehensively in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

However, the standards set by constitutional guarantees and by international agreements are a far cry from Haiti’s reality.

The right to safety and freedom from abuse within the educational process must accompany the right to formal education, Linda says. She acknowledges that international standards of education are indispensable but not sufficient, as they may actually serve to obscure the lack of real progress.

This leads most governmental and



Some of the author’s students in Haiti Photo: Afsoon Houshidari

NGO funding agencies to prioritize basic education while neglecting to emphasize the necessity of further development in the educational system in Haiti. If the Millennium goal of universal education by 2015 will be achieved in the Land of Mountains (Haiti), these barriers must be confronted. CAFT's work focuses on precisely these issues.

The lack of trained teachers and the low quality of education that results from decades of political misconduct and extreme poverty in Haiti is noted as a major challenge to improvement in Haiti's 2002 State Report to the UN on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Only 10 per cent of primary schoolteachers had attended teacher training college in 1998.

The possibility for transformation is tremendous, and with grassroots efforts such as those of CAFT, change is happening.

"We know that building for the future is a very difficult thing to do; we cannot hope to complete the work in one generation; all the more reason to begin at once," says Rene Cassin, who helped create the first full draft of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "We must of course work hardest at education. In order to reform attitudes of mind we must train educationalists who will themselves have a new mentality."

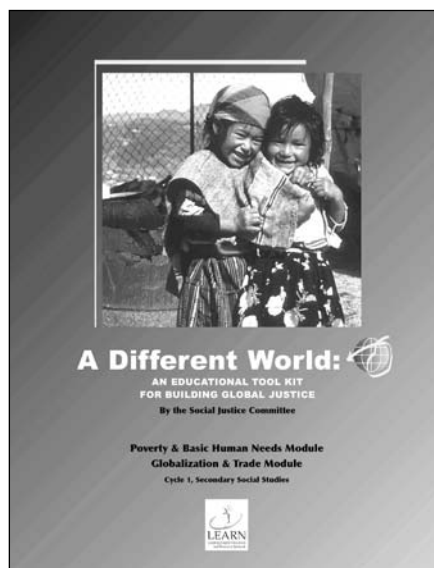
Afsoon Houshidari is a former intern with the SJC.

Facts on Haiti (from www.yelehaiti.org)

- Once one of the richest nations in the western hemisphere, it is currently the poorest.
- Barely 50% of Haiti's population over age 15 can read and write.
- The unemployment rate is 80%.
- More than one million children receive no formal schooling.



Linda Gershuny (right) with author Afsoon Houshidari



"A Different World"

Educational Tool Kit for Building Global Justice

SJC produces new "Tool Kit" on poverty and development for high school teachers

This Educational Tool Kit is designed to help students develop the skills, knowledge, and values necessary to become responsible citizens in an interdependent world. It includes two secondary-level teaching modules.

- The **Poverty and Basic Human Needs** module explores the themes of nutrition, hunger and food security, health and HIV/AIDS, the environment and water.
- The **Globalization and Trade** module explores the themes of globalization, trade and multinational corporations.

Each module contains learning units that use project-based learning and interactive classroom activities, fact sheets, handouts and resources on global themes. A comprehensive set of student assessment and evaluation tools are also included.

The Educational Tool Kit is intended for Cycle 1 Secondary Social Studies (especially Geography and History and Citizenship) and is tailored to the new Quebec Education Program. However, the publication can be used in secondary schools across Canada.

A Different World: An Educational Tool Kit for Building Global Justice is being produced by the Social Justice Committee in collaboration with educational institutions and high school teachers, and with the support of the Government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

This 250-page book is being published and distributed by LEARN Quebec, the Leading English Education and Resource Network. The English language edition is scheduled for release in November, the French language edition in January. LEARN can be contacted at 2030 Dagenais Blvd. West, 2nd Floor, Laval (Québec) H7L 5W2 Tel.: (450) 622-2212 / 1-888-622-2212.



New representative for Canada at World Bank

Samy Watson, described by one source as “the volatile and difficult former Deputy Minister of Environment,” is being sent to the World Bank to replace Marcel Massé as the executive director representing Canada. Closely associated with the Liberal government’s Kyoto Plan commitment, Mr. Watson will assume the office on October 31, 2006. His email address is swatson@worldbank.org.

Debt relief for the poorest countries in the Americas still denied

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has not kept pace with international efforts to cancel debts of poor countries, and cancelled the debts of **Bolivia**, Honduras, Nicaragua and Guyana. The IDB is the largest creditor to these countries, holding about half of their debts.

Other creditors have begun to award full cancellation. The IMF cancelled the debts of a group of countries in January, and the World Bank began its program in July. The countries that benefit are mostly in Africa, but the World Bank and IMF programs also apply to the four countries in this hemisphere, and recently Haiti was accepted into the debt relief program.

Unfortunately, without IDB cancellation, the debt relief will fall short of what is needed and what was promised.

The delay has been caused by the reluctance of IDB members, mainly Brazil and Mexico, who do not want the IDB to absorb the ‘cost’ of the debt relief. Apparently they would like the US to cover the debt payments instead, and the US is reluctant to do so.

The presidents of Bolivia, Honduras, Nicaragua and Guyana have asked for an IDB debt relief program by Dec. 31.

To communicate your thoughts on debt relief by the IDB, you can contact the IDB Executive Director for Canada, Mr. Charles Basset by email charlesb@iadb.org.

Benefits of debt relief in Zambia limited because government has little room to make policy choices, UNDP study says

A new Country Study by the International Poverty Centre, a UNDP program, calls for a new approach to international development aimed at achieving Millennium Development Goals of poverty reduction, rather than limited macroeconomic objectives

Excerpts:

“The study finds that due to associated policy conditionalities and other factors, HIPC debt relief will result in less fiscal space, rather than more.”

“Part of the problem is that the Zambian government has little leeway to choose its own fiscal policies, despite donor rhetoric about ‘national ownership’ of poverty-reduction policies.”

“Very little discretion has remained for the important decisions affecting management. In other words, the conditionalities, restrictive in themselves, constrained other policies not explicitly subject to conditionality.”

“The Zambian government enjoys very little ‘policy space,’ namely, the ability to choose its own fiscal policies. Instead, it is tightly hemmed in by an array of external conditionalities, the sum of which determines virtually all of its major economic policies.”

“This does not imply that this debt relief could not be helpful. What these projections underscore is that such relief would be decidedly more help-

ful if international donors continued, at least, their present levels, of assistance, instead of reducing them, and removed many of the economic conditionalities that prevent the Zambian government from taking advantages of debt relief.”

“An MDG framework, which is oriented to accelerated growth and human development, is likely to identify more ambitious economic policies than those imposed by the current conditionalities focused on maintaining macroeconomic stability.”

To see the report:
www.undp-povertycentre.org

Export credit - the new “odious debt” of the Third World

Patricia Adams, executive director of Probe International, speaking to the European Commission Conference on Export Credit Agencies and Sustainable Development, 20 June 2006, Brussels.

In 1991, I published a book called **Odious Debts: Loose Lending, Corruption, and the Third World's Environmental Legacy, in which I resurrected a century old legal doctrine called the “Doctrine of Odious Debts”** to argue that most of the loans made to the Third World in the past half century have been odious. The doctrine says that debts not incurred for the needs or in the interest of the State, but to strengthen a despotic regime, to repress the population, or for interests that are “manifestly personal” would be deemed odious. In such a case, the creditors would have committed a hostile act against the people in extending those loans and would lose their claim to repayment.

I suspect the vast majority of Export Credit Agency (ECA) loans, credits, and guarantees to the Third World, which have doubled and now account for 34% of all Third World official debts, could be deemed “odious”. Why? The evidence of boondoggles made possible by ECA support the Three Gorges dam in China, the Norwegian shipping deal to Ecuador, the Manantali dam in the Senegal River basin, the Bataan nuclear power station in the Philippines, pulp and paper mills in Indonesia, the Ok Tedi Mine in Papua New Guinea, military exports to Iraq is extensive and well documented.

ECAs back projects that are too risky and in markets that are too “dodgy” for the private sector. Their feasibility studies are prepared by equipment suppliers, their products marked up by as much as 100%. They operate in secret, without effective public oversight.

Their business environment, state to state deals in the absence of sunshine laws, makes their operations a hot-house for corruption. Because they insist on sovereign guarantees, and counter guarantees from Third World governments, should purely private deals sour, they convert private corporate risk into public risk. As such, ECAs are moral hazard machines.

Most damning is that their mandates are political, not economic: the mandate of all ECAs is to win contracts for their country's exporters away from the next country's, at any cost, without attracting the discipline of the OECD “Arrangement” or the WTO's “Agreement”. The economic viability of the projects ECAs finance is irrelevant to, and thus not a factor in their support.

It is inevitable that the deals ECAs subsidize in Third World nations do not generate the wealth needed to repay the loans.

STOPPING THE BAD LOANS

Now, in perhaps the most stunning acknowledgment of what I would call the greatest financial scandal of the past half century in which Third World taxpayers have been forced to subsidize northern multinationals by repaying them for boondoggles, the OECD Working Party on Export Credits and Credit Guarantees has issued a Statement of Principles that ECAs should no longer extend credits to “unproductive expenditures” in the poorest and most indebted Third World nations.

I agree, and to ensure that these “unproductive expenditures” don't occur again in future, I would recom-

mend the following steps:

The first step is to call for an immediate moratorium on the repayment of current ECA claims against Third World nations and then, under an odious debt arbitration procedure, conduct public audits of all claims to determine their legitimacy. Many ECA claims for odious debts would fail and be written-off. The legitimate debts that remain those that can be proven to have been spent in the interests of the people could then be forgiven if countries are too poor to repay them.

Third World nations have been threatened for the past 60 years into honouring illegitimate contracts. This must end and the burden of proof must now be placed on lenders to establish the legitimacy of those contracts. Holding them to account will embar-

“Third World nations have been threatened for the past 60 years into honouring illegitimate contracts. This must end and the burden of proof must now be placed on lenders to establish the legitimacy of those contracts.”

ness the ECAs, it will certainly inform Northern taxpayers of the waste laid by their ECAs to the Third World's environment and economies, and it will lead to write-offs of most Third World ECA debts. But it won't stop new ECA debt from being created in future.

As a former American National Security Council member and debt consultant commented when the US Ex-Im Bank went into technical insolvency in 1990 after it set up a special reserve to cover losses on delinquent Third World loans, "not that anybody gives a damn".

And therein lies the key to the problem of the ECAs. Their governments don't "give a damn" if they lose money. Their purpose isn't to make money. Their purpose is to push exports, usually for favoured firms in politically important constituencies. They are in the business of patronage, pork barrel, and cronyism.

CAN EXPORT CREDIT AGENCIES REFORM?

Can ECAs be reformed to "do no harm"? Not likely.

As long as they are charged with the mandate of subsidizing exports, all other goals—environmental, economic, social, anti-corruption—will remain secondary, unenforceable, and outside of their legal mandate.

Oh sure, the OECD may try to harmonize this standard or that standard upward, but the fact remains, in the absence of tough national laws to stop ECAs from causing environmental harm, corruption, human rights abuses and the like, civil society will be helpless to stop these ill-effects from happening.

For example, Canada's enabling legislation for our ECA, Export Development Canada, or EDC, was carefully rewritten a few years ago to give it, in the words of a Parliamentary advisory body, "complete, unlimited freedom to make any decision that would be

virtually immune from judicial review on its environmental decisions. Meanwhile, Canada's anti-corruption legislation is full of holes and EDC saw no reason to bar Acres International, the first company to be convicted in the landmark Lesotho trials, after it had been debarred by the World Bank, and even though loss of business is about the only effective deterrent to corruption.

As for disclosure, one of Canada's top forensic accounting firms who we asked to review EDC's financial statements concluded that there was no way for taxpayers to tell which of EDC's sovereign financing deals was politically motivated.

“ECAs are modern mercantilist organizations that distort markets, give life-support to smokestack industries, destroy environments, finance dictators against their people, turn private sector risk into public sector debt, and promote cronyism.”

Moreover, to silence critics, EDC now has the extraordinary power to jail and fine anyone who uses the letters EDC in any circumstance that could be characterized as a "business purpose" or an "advertisement" without EDC's written consent! Under Canadian law, I could be fined \$10,000 and jailed for the presentation I am making before you today.

Can ECAs be reformed to "do good"?

I would ask: why would we want to? Why would we want to turn ECAs into agents of the Millennium Development Goals, in effect turning them into aid agencies, when we can't even get the existing aid agencies, the development banks and bilateral agencies

to stop supporting environmentally damaging and odious projects? What on earth would make us think that we could turn this sow's ear into a silk purse?

It makes me think that perhaps reform of international financial institutions has become a business in itself.

Here is what we know about ECAs. We know that ECAs are modern mercantilist organizations that distort markets, give life-support to smokestack industries, destroy environments, finance dictators against their people, turn private sector risk into public sector debt, and promote cronyism. We know they have no legitimate public policy purpose or economic function.

As Eugene Lawson, a former acting chairman and president of the U.S.

Export-Import Bank, explained, export aid is a "lousy and costly way to do business".

Robert Richardson, former president of EDC, agreed that concessionary financing is not economical. "If other countries didn't do it, we wouldn't either," he said.

"Our approach is merely to match others," said Jeffrey Garten, former dean of Yale's School of Management and Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade. "In the best of worlds, governments ought to get out of this business altogether."

In the absence of any legitimate public policy benefit, and in the presence of overwhelming evidence of harm done by ECAs, here are three steps to protecting future generations: first, force the ECAs to account for their past operations with disclosure and audits of all claims; second, write-off the odious debts they created; and third, begin the orderly shut down of their operations post-haste.

Probe International is the publisher of "Odious Debts Online"
See www.odiousdebts.org

Out of (patience with) Africa?

The Trouble with Africa: Why Foreign Aid Isn't Working

by Robert Calderisi

Palgrave Macmillan 2006 249 pages

Review by Derek MacCuish

An interesting and insightful read, “The Trouble with Africa” has much in its favour, along with more than a few controversial suggestions from its author, Robert Calderisi, a former senior staff person at the World Bank. He suggests, for example, that foreign aid to poor countries should be cut in half. He believes that aid agencies should limit their support to five countries, contending that the other African countries have unproductive and wasteful governments.

“Africans need breathing space much more than they need money,” he writes. “Not a Marshall Plan, but real backing for the few governments that are fighting poverty, plus political support for the millions of Africans that are resisting oppression and violence in the rest of the continent.”

The book covers a lot of ground quickly. The main point he makes is that African troubles are primarily the fault of failure of the political leadership, and not the result of colonial history, the Cold War, globalization, or agencies like the World Bank (where Calderisi was a spokesperson for its Africa programs).

“Much of Africa’s potential, and the cause of its current difficulties, is hidden in the shade of major misconceptions – about the slave trade, colonialism, the World Bank, and so on – which simply need to be whittled away. Individual Africans have risen

to the challenges confronting them for decades, but their governments have not; even worse, most leaders have stood in the way of individual initiative and innovative solutions.”

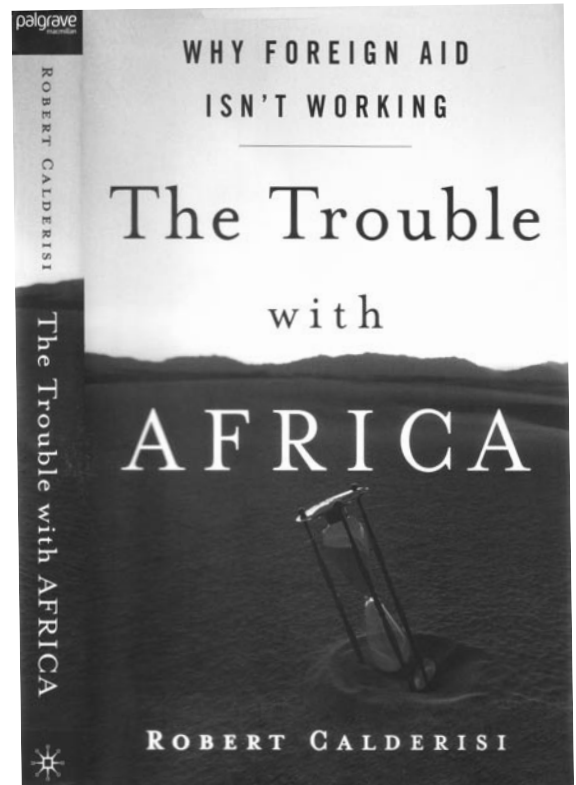
His frustration with African leaders is blended with his admiration for Africans as a whole and as individuals, people he calls heroes.

“Africans must take the most important steps. First, they should stop feeling sorry for themselves and expecting others to do so as well. Sympathy for Africa, like foreign aid, is drying up. Intellectuals and politicians must stop looking for excuses for their own failures to achieve liberation,” he writes. “Africans must demand much more from their governments rather than accept that they are doomed to dictatorship or mere imitations of democracy.”

The concern with corrupt and/or dictatorial governments in Africa is widely shared.

“What the African peoples, poor or not so poor, are faced with is a predatory state which is preoccupied with its own survival,” African scholar Archie Mafeje argued in 2002. “Any amelioration or transformation of the conditions of life in Africa presupposes the emergence of a democratic state.”

On the other hand, Mafeje considered that the structural adjustment programs of the 1980s “effectively reversed the previous philosophical trend towards equity and solicitude for the poor by putting at the centre of its pro-



grams not people but ‘market forces’... By betting on the economically strong and by arguing against any affirmative action by African governments, the World Bank was in fact forsaking the small producers and the poor and reverting to the old orthodoxy of ‘trickle-down’ theories.”

Calderisi agrees that small-scale support of local producers makes sense for Africa, but this is overshadowed by other priorities when he makes ten specific recommendations to western governments and agencies.

These recommendations should be considered seriously, not only because of the depth of his experience and evident commitment to Africa. Most of them make good sense, like the recovery of stolen public funds, increased banking transparency, and building

countries' infrastructure. The recommendation that the IMF, World Bank and UN should merge is a bit odd, considering his description that they are either "as compatible as oil and water" or even characterized by a sense of loathing.

His suggestion that a greater emphasis be placed on democratic structures is a good one. He suggests that internationally accepted electoral processes be a requirement for assistance, as would allowing an active, independent press. A proposal to support citizen groups to review government agreements with outside agencies is interesting, but he would limit their engagement to dialogue with national governments.

More problematic is his call for international "supervision" of countries' programs to provide education and services to people with HIV/AIDS, which he argues is "too important to leave to the whims of African governments."

"Would this not be even more humiliating than traditional aid?" he asks. "Perhaps. But no government that is unwilling to look after the basic needs of its citizens should want to hold its head very high."

It is unclear from the book how his recommendation to limit aid to only five countries would assist others in reform. Nigeria, for example, is already frustrated by the lack of support and recognition it gets from the West for its efforts to combat corruption.

Development and poverty issues are really about power and exclusion, whether at the national or international levels. The need to recognize this was made clearly in a World Bank study called "Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?"

"Poor people's experiences reflect fundamental inequities in power among different social groups, and the lack of bridges or horizontal linkages between those more powerful and those less powerful. It is no surprise that in this institutional environment the experiences of poor people are characterized by the lack of power and by voicelessness. In these circumstances promotion of voice and empowerment of poor people become the central tasks of development policies and agencies."

Calderisi does not champion voice and empowerment. He argues that processes of disempowerment and exploitation in Africa's past are no longer relevant, and does not acknowledge the extent to which these continue in relationships between African countries and agencies like the World Bank.

His frustration with national governments ("In many cases, giving aid to Africa has been like giving money to a drunkard down the street expecting him to spend it on food") is coupled with his desire to see Africans "break the cycle of terror, poverty, and mediocrity that keeps them subdued." The conclusions he arrives at, however, could have brought a better championing of empowerment and voice of African people than what he provides here.

These concerns notwithstanding, the book succeeds as a look into the experiences and perspectives of a World Bank official, and as a reflection with contentious conclusions. ■

Robert Calderisi talks about "The Trouble with Africa"

Robert Calderisi has worked on Africa since 1975, mostly at the World Bank, where he served as its international spokesperson on Africa (1997-2000) and Country Director for Central Africa (2000-2002). There he was deeply involved in defending and supervising the controversial Chad-Cameroon Oil Pipeline. His new book - "The Trouble with Africa: Why Foreign Aid Isn't Working" - is an inside look at international development and how - the author says - it has failed Africa. He visited the SJC office recently to talk about his book, and his belief that Africans and the world need to take strong measures to free talent and encourage enterprise on the continent.

UJ: In the solutions you propose in your book, what is the role of empowerment of Africans and people having a voice in the way their countries are run?

Calderisi: The most important thing Africa needs is not money but a more open political environment to take advantage of opportunities that are blocked by bad government. Small farmers have been disempowered, to use the jargon, because they have not been given good prices for their crops or because the government spends more money on the main roads rather than improving rural roads which will help farmers to bring their goods to market.

The real empowerment of people as I see it is to create economic opportunities and have government get out of the way. Empowerment will come from unmuzzling the press, taking away opportunities for some government officials to exploit their fellow citizens and doing away with silly regulations which allow them to say yes or no to whether a farmer or small business person can prosper. Governments should worry instead



“The most important thing Africa needs is not money but a more open political environment to take advantage of opportunities that are blocked by bad government.”

about keeping young people in school, fighting HIV/AIDS, and ensuring clean water.

UJ: African thinkers such as Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiong'o point to multiple factors for Africa's present problems such as corruption as well as history of western interference, however you argue against these viewpoints.

Calderisi: I have great respect for Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka and others who have tried to bell the cat in Africa. While colonialism had an effect at one stage in African life, it does not explain why Africa has been going backwards for the last 40 years. It left some countries at a disadvantage; Mozambique and perhaps the Congo are the two worst examples of bad colonial government of the Portuguese and the Belgians. I'm suggesting that it's time to recognize that Africa has been making its own history for 40 years rather than look for excuses. Africa has to stop thinking of itself as a victim and start using its opportunities and resources and skills.

UJ: On the World Bank, why is it that the head of the institution is selected by the U.S. and what are the implications of this?

Calderisi: I personally think the current president of the World Bank is a typical example of an abuse which can come from having one country responsible for nominating the president. I hope that the next president from the World Bank will be chosen through competitive selection in the same way the head of the United Nations Development Program was done last year. Given the way the Bank has been turned into the caricature of an ideological, U.S.-dominated institution, which Bank staff always denied it was, I suspect it will force the Europeans, who are the largest source of help to poor countries, to insist that the next president of the World Bank won't be appointed by the United States.

UJ: Regarding the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline, a person from Chad commented that the World Bank failed by not understanding the context and not setting up restrictions and obligations. What would you say to that?

Calderisi: On the contrary, it was considered an unprecedented intrusion into Chad's national sovereignty, because we insisted that the oil money go into an overseas bank account and would not go directly to the government. 10% of the money was to be re-

served for future generations. Most of the rest would be spent on development activities important for reducing poverty, including 5% which would go directly to the producing region to avoid the horrors of Ogoniland in Nigeria. The project was important for Chad, and we thought we were doing as much as was possible to keep the government under proper control, but we were wrong.

Unfortunately, we didn't insist the World Bank hold the right to close the account if something went wrong. Second, I think which should have been firmly agreed, not just implied, that the donor community as a whole would shut down programs in Chad if the government cheated. Third, I think the oil companies should have agreed to close down the pipeline if necessary, to force the government to see reason. The Bank and the company should have shut down the pipeline in January, once the government passed the law allowing oil revenue to be spent on security. Chad needs that money much more than Exxon Mobil. In my mind that pipeline was an agreement not just between the World Bank and Chad but also between the World Bank, Chad, and the rest of the world. That is how it should be treated still.

UJ: In your book you mention the relationship between economic reform and social justice (p. 150). How do you define social justice?

Calderisi: Well this comes back to structural adjustment. I defended structural adjustment in Africa when I was in Côte d'Ivoire because people did not know what it was. Structural adjustment was about shifting economic power from the towns to the rural areas. I argued that it had no "social dimension"; it was *all* social.

The whole point of adjustment was to help the poor, not the rich. Of course, some of these reforms also helped the rich, but the main purpose was to revive agriculture and promote rural development through higher prices for farmers, more investments in services which would support rural production and more attention to primary education and basic health. That story hasn't been told; I have tried to tell it in my book.

UJ: For whom is your book written, and what has the response been?

Calderisi: I have written the book for a western reader who doesn't know much about Africa. Africans won't learn very much in this book, except perhaps about some aspects of the way aid works. I've written it for people who are wondering why aid isn't working and how they still can help Africa. For people who have been exposed to Africa a long time ago and have not been discouraged by what's going on, I have had the reaction that it is nice to be reminded about what Africa has done in the past and what it is capable of, and about the heroic people still fighting for a better life. They found the overall tone of the book not just provocative but hopeful rather than depressing. So that's how I hope most people will react to the book.

Robert Calderisi was interviewed by Julia Stubenrauch and Denise Hughes-Tafen.

Book review

The Macroeconomics of HIV/AIDS

Edited by Markus Haacker

The International Monetary Fund, 2004. 344 pp.

Review by Will Sacks

We don't hear the words "economic collapse" very often; much less from the lips of economists at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), whose job it is to maintain the stability of the world economy. Yet, *The Macroeconomics of HIV/AIDS* demonstrates that after twenty years of rapid expansion across national, societal, and gender barriers, the global HIV/AIDS pandemic is threatening to make the dismal prognosis of economic collapse in the developing world into a reality.

The Macroeconomics of HIV/AIDS shows in clear and compelling detail that while it is technically possible for affected governments to turn the tide against HIV/AIDS, they do not have the resources to do it alone. Thus, if an economic collapse is to be avoided, it will be because of bold actions taken by donor countries. The work clearly proves that governments and international agencies need to view HIV/AIDS not just as a health issue, but as a powerful constraint on economic development as well. *The Macroeconomics of HIV/AIDS* bridges the gap between macro and micro-economic perspectives of the epidemic and shows why HIV/AIDS poses such a grave threat to the future health of national economies, businesses, government ministries, families, and children.

Because HIV/AIDS overwhelmingly affects young adults at an age when they would otherwise contribute most to economic production, premature mortality in this group reverberates throughout every sector of society. For private employers, premature mortality in the workforce increases costs and reduces productivity, thereby shrinking profits and making investment in the economy less attractive. Government ministries are faced with the same problems as the private sector; revenue is decreased as a result of a shrinking corporate tax base (due to decreased investment) and a shrinking personal tax base (due to AIDS mortality). Capacity is directly threatened by HIV/AIDS infections among government employees; workers become harder to replace as AIDS mortality ravages the population and the "brain drain" phenomenon lures skilled workers away.

Shrinking revenue and capacity, reduced investment, and a shortage of skilled labour are serious challenges to any economy. Yet, while the macro-economic implications are sufficiently alarming, the book goes on to discuss the effects of HIV/AIDS at the family and individual level. It is here that the specter of economic collapse comes into focus. The most interesting and startling analysis is a model of the effect of HIV/AIDS on the transmission of human capital to future generations.

The model proposes two sources of human capital: those skills, concepts and behaviors learned in school and those that are learned and reinforced in the

Keep up to date on SJC events and action alerts. Write us at action@s-j-c.net and ask to get on our list

home. The tragedy of AIDS is that this age-old transfer of knowledge is cut short and the transmission of human capital is inhibited on both fronts, resulting in young adults who lack both the benefit of book knowledge learned in school and of conventional wisdom learned at home. This lost human capital carries the threat of increased poverty as well as a dangerous situation in which successive generations have insufficient knowledge of civics, ethics, history, and culture. Thus, the explosion in the number of AIDS orphans in many countries signals an erosion of the social fabric upon which civil society rests. The model presented in the book makes a convincing case that a severe reduction in human capital introduces the possibility of acute social discord and even war within the span of a generation.

This volume is the IMF's first publication focusing on a public health issue, and is a valiant effort to bring together the work of individuals from all sides of the epidemic. However, there is one glaring omission in *The Macroeconomics of HIV/AIDS*; it lacks any discussion of the impact of external debt or debt service on the national budget constraints of countries dealing with HIV/AIDS.

Though the book takes no political stand, the fact that it exists at all is certainly a good sign. If the publication of a book like *The Macroeconomics of HIV/AIDS* is necessary to convince those within international financial institutions that HIV/AIDS is a macro-economic development issue, then it is surely welcome. Perhaps this book will help the international community and donor nations to drum up additional resources for prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, and prove the doom saying economists at the International Monetary Fund wrong.

Will Sacks is a recent graduate in Mechanical Engineering and Economics. He was a volunteer with the SJC in 2005, and now lives in Toronto.

Guatemalans seek help from ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples

by Afsoon Houshidari

Convention 169 is important to the indigenous people of Guatemala because the agreement requires states that have ratified it to consult indigenous peoples on matters that affect them, such as the exploration of natural resources on their land, "with the objective of achieving agreement or consent."

The Convention stipulates that indigenous peoples have the "right to decide their own priorities for the process of development." This means that they must participate "in the formulation, implementation and evaluation" of development plans.

Indigenous Guatemalans argue that their government did not consult them before it gave permission to Glamis Gold for the construction of its mine on their land in San Marcos, such that the government has violated this Convention.

The Trade Union of Workers of Guatemala (UNSITRAGUA) submitted a report to the ILO outlining its concerns with the events in San Marcos relating to the mine.

Practical impact

The ILO response requested that the Guatemalan government put in place a consultation process to ensure rights of indigenous people be protected. Whether such a finding will help the indigenous peoples in their struggle to stop the advancement of the Glamis Gold mine remains to be seen.

In two significant situations, such a report by the ILO, which includes specific recommendations to the non-compliant government, has assisted the plight of the indigenous peoples.

In Norway, through a unique agreement between the Saami indigenous peoples (represented by the Saami Parliament), the ILO, and the Norwegian government, the Saami peoples are allowed to report directly to the ILO on the implementation of Convention 169 in their country. The Saami no longer have to contact the ILO through the intermediary of a national labour union. This strengthens their right to consultation and demonstrates the political power of the convention.

In 2002 in Ecuador, the ILO found that the Ecuadorian government violated Convention 169 when, without consulting the Shuar indigenous peoples, it granted concessions to Burlington Resources, an American oil company, to explore on Shuar land in the Ecuadorian rainforest. The finding has contributed to a six year (and counting) stall of the exploration on indigenous lands.

ILO Convention 169:

Is recognized as the leading international policy document for the protection of indigenous rights

Covers a wide range of issues including land rights, conditions of employment, vocational training, rural industries, educational rights, and cross-border co-operation
Was adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1991, but ratified by only 17 countries, predominantly in Latin America, including Guatemala (1996)

Allows national employer or worker unions in states that have ratified the convention to bring complaints to the ILO regarding their government's possible non-observance [or violation of the convention's provisions]

Stephen Lewis talks about Ending AIDS and poverty in Africa

Part II

The 2005 Massey Lectures, "Race Against Time" were delivered by Stephen Lewis, the United Nations Secretary-General's special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa. Upstream Journal intern Jason McLean spoke with Mr. Lewis about the relationships between western nations, international financial institutions, debt, and the crises of AIDS and poverty in Africa.

When Part I of this interview ended (in the last issue), Mr. Lewis was commenting on poverty and the roles of the international community. He continues here:

There is a major story today about little Lesotho and how the disease burden in collaboration with the elements is just absolutely eviscerating the country, so how do you get economic growth when you have no capacity for people to farm the land, teach the children, or simply have a job? They are all too sick, too many of them have died, we have lost too much human capacity.

So I accept that proposition that, on the one hand, you address the burden of disease forcefully, that is to say AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, and on the other hand you beat international financial institutions and donor countries over the head until they stop using prejudicial policies against Africa, which further compromise Africa's recovery, and that means you have to persuade them to move on trade, AIDS, debt, and you have to make Gleneagles real – at the moment Gleneagles is falling apart in front of our eyes, which was completely predictable.

My view is that you fight on those two fronts simultaneously, you repair the country internally by overcoming the disease burden, and you put endless pressure on the West, and that's the way you achieve the new paradigm.

I don't know where else to turn. There's no divine intervention around that will alter things. If this was 1960, or 1965, and you were starting out a



Lewis at a meeting with women of Mafeteng, Lesotho

fresh, and the countries had not been so eviscerated by structural adjustment, by inappropriate political leadership, and by frantic efforts to build an economy out of the remnants of colonialism (because so many countries were left with absolutely nothing after the colonials left), if you were starting over again 40 years ago, your position would be the right position.

How do you allow all of this to be placed in the hands of the West, whose record is so bad? It is not a question that can be answered other than in rhetorical ways because people are too ill, countries are not functioning.

If you are born in Zambia today, your life expectancy is 30. Well, how can you make an economic recovery on any ground if that is the case? In New Delhi, the new Executive Director of Unicef (UNICEF) has recently

“Countries are too sick. The West has to reform... their instincts are perverse, they are neocolonial, but we just have to hammer them into submission.”

pointed out that the reduction in infant mortality – one of the eight Millennium Development Goals – will be 30 years behind the target on present estimates. That is what kind of puts an ideological quip into my analysis. I have to accept that real politic. Countries are too sick, the West has to reform, and while I agree with you, all of their instincts are perverse, they are neocolonial, but we just have to hammer them into submission.

SJC: I want to ask you about the personal responsibility we all have as citizens of Western nations. University of Toronto history professor Sean Hawkins, who is presently writing a book on the history of love in Africa, argues that our failure to act is a failure of empathy, a failure of our moral imagination. What I found so powerful in your initial lectures were the vivid, heart-rending stories you told of African women and children, stories that cannot but carry the listener to Africa and to the tragedy of the pandemic. What, in your view, can citizens of Western nations begin doing now to help end the pandemic and economic inequality?

SL: Well that's interesting and I am not sure I know how to answer. You just try to fight this thing through on every front. I use those vivid anecdotes because all my political experience taught me, and continues to teach me, that the only way to communicate serious issues is to construct them in human terms – I did that when I was a politician in the Ontario Legislature on everything from disturbed children to occupational health and my political experience is what has served me in this job. I understood right away that you simply could not talk in large abstract numbers forever, nobody could relate to it, but if you tell a real, true, and vivid story about what is happening on the ground, then the empathetic instinct is immediately stoked, and I agree that empathy counts for a lot.

I'm fascinated by the numbers of young people getting involved in Af-

rica. I am personally persuaded that there is something going on, a kind of renaissance among young people in both high school and university, going across to Africa, twinning with schools in Africa, bringing students across from Africa.

It is just fascinating to me how there is a new Peace Corps going on – I would not have thought it imaginable but it is definitely there. I constantly counsel people to get involved with one of the major NGOs because they do such great work on the ground and it makes Canadians much more aware if they get involved with one of the major NGOs (e.g., Care, Save the Children, World Vision, Oxfam, Doctors Without Borders, or UNICEF). I am just inclined to counsel involvement, however marginal in whatever way, and I have learned from my own foundation that if people can be involved in some way, they are much more susceptible and open to empathetic responses because they understand the basic issues.

But it is not easy. You just have to keep hammering away at it. I have a major speech next week in Orlando to literally 6,000 health professionals and a few thousand more via teleconferencing, and I am trying to think about what are the vivid, personal anecdotes that I can use to somehow galvanize these people and make them understand that there is a human face to this tragedy, that it is not just 40 million people dead, and 5 million new infections every year, and 3 million orphans, and all of the round numbers. It is much more than that, but it is difficult to find the images sometimes. The best way is to get people involved.

"The Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF) helps to ease the pain of HIV/AIDS in Africa at the grassroots level. It provides care to women who are ill and struggling to survive; assists orphans and other AIDS affected children; supports heroic grandmothers who almost single-handedly care for their orphan grandchildren; and supports associations of people living with HIV/AIDS." - www.stephenlewisfoundation.org

SJC pushes for greater social responsibility of mining companies operating abroad

As the federal government hosts public hearings on the social responsibility of Canadian oil, gas and mining companies operating in poor countries, the SJC has responded:

- **Developing a new educational package** for the national organization Development and Peace.

"The Cost of Guatemalan Gold" is an interactive presentation in the style of the SJC's popular workshop on Third World debt. People can book a workshop on mining through either the SJC or D&P. For more information, contact ernie Schibli, ernie@s-j-c.net.

- **Co-hosting a film series** on mining, at various locations in Montreal. The schedule is available on our web site, www.s-j-c.net.

-Co-hosting the visit to Montreal of community leader Vinicio Lopez of Sipikapa, Guatemala.

- **Presenting the SJC analysis** of the current Guatemala context to the government hearing in Montreal in November.

La Mésio-amérique n'est pas à vendre



*Mesoamerica
is not for sale*

Guatemalan video now available from SJC with English and French subtitles

"Mesoamerica is not for sale" presents an insiders view of the struggle in south-south-west Mexico and Central America to protect natural resources and maintain cultural autonomy in the face of growing threats from neo-liberal economic policies and transnational corporations.

Interviews with activists, community organizers and farmers reveal the spiritual importance of water, corn and land- the very resources being threatened by short-sighted neo-liberal economic policies and relentless globalization. This film provides information on the history of the region to help the viewer understand the historical roots of this modern struggle. Important viewing for students of history, economics and politics and for anyone concerned about the negative effects of globalization and the draining of resources from the developing world.

This DVD was produced in Spanish by the "Centro de Investigacion e Educacion Popular de Guatemala," and is now made available by the SJC with English or French subtitles. 30 minutes. Available for purchase for \$20 plus \$5 shipping.

Please call 1-866-RIGHTS-2 to order (VISA, MasterCard and cheques accepted)

Vidéo guatémaltèque fournie par le CJS avec sous-titres anglais et français

« La Mésio-amérique n'est pas à vendre » est une présentation, vue de l'intérieur, de la bataille qui se déroule actuellement au Sud Mexique et dans toute l'Amérique Centrale, afin de sauver les ressources naturelles et maintenir une autonomie culturelle face aux menaces grandissantes du néolibéralisme et des grandes firmes multinationales. Différentes interviews d'activistes, mais également de leaders communautaires et de paysans, nous révèlent l'importance quasi-spirituelle de l'eau, le maïs et la terre - ces mêmes ressources actuellement menacées par les politiques économiques à court terme du néolibéralisme ainsi qu'une mondialisation acharnée.

Ce documentaire apporte une information détaillée sur l'histoire de cette région, essentielle pour permettre au spectateur de bien comprendre les racines historiques de ce combat d'aujourd'hui. Une précieuse source d'informations notamment pour les étudiants en histoire, économie et politique, mais surtout pour toutes les personnes qui se sentent concernées par les effets négatifs de la mondialisation ainsi que le pillage des ressources du tiers-monde.

Ce DVD est produit par le « Centro de Investigación e Educación Popular de Guatemala » en version espagnole, et rendu disponible par le SJC dès maintenant avec sous-titrage français et anglais. 30 minutes. Disponible à la vente au prix de 20\$ (plus 5\$ de frais d'envoi).

Veuillez appeler au 1-866-RIGHTS-2 pour passer votre commande (Visa, Mastercard et cheques acceptes)



Democracy, Where art Thou?

The first of four “roundtables” on Canadian extractive industries working in other lands was held in Vancouver in July. Since the SJC has been involved in the Marlin gold mine issue for several years, it was only natural that I would watch for an article or two to appear in the *Montreal Gazette*, but I didn’t see a thing. So I turned to my computer. Surely there would be an article in one of the Vancouver papers, or even from Toronto or Ottawa. But no; the days turned into a week, and ... nothing!

So it was with a sense of anticipation that I awaited our monthly meeting of the SJC Central America/Mexico committee. Several members had been present at a meeting of the Montreal coalition working on this meeting. They would tell us what happened, and boy did they ever. What they had to say was something that I never expected to hear in Canada.

Mining industry representatives apparently made it clear to the government that if the press were to publish anything about what was said or done at either the closed or public sessions of the roundtable, the mining industry would pull out. The government acquiesced. The only thing that will appear is what the roundtable organizers will put on its web site.

This comes on the heels of reports, from all over the world, of protests against the way Canadian mining companies are conducting their business. In Guatemala, hundreds of indigenous people protested peacefully outside of the Canadian embassy about the Canadian government’s support of gold and nickel mines in that country. In El Salvador people marched to protest another Canadian mine, which they fear will contaminate their water.

Even in Canada, there was a news item about four community members from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug who walked over 2000 kms. to Toronto to protest the way the Ontario government is handling a dispute between a mining company and local indigenous people. The report said that the company has launched a \$10 billion suit against the community because it is (peacefully, I might add) resisting the mine.

Clearly, there is something terribly wrong with the way

the Canadian mining industry operates, particularly in regions of the world inhabited by indigenous peoples.

A year ago, already aware of these and other problems with the mining industry, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, a parliamentary committee, issued a report to the Canadian government calling on it to regulate the industry. When the federal government announced that its response would be a series of roundtables across Canada to discuss the matter, many of us were hopeful, even if that hope was tinged with some scepticism.

Then came Vancouver, the home of the first of these roundtables, and the imposition of a news blackout covering both the closed and public sessions. This, in Canada, a country that prides itself on being democratic! Yes, the mining industry is important to Canada, but all the more reason that it should behave ethically and responsibly and for the government to see that it does so.

The mining industry is clearly in trouble. That it should play hardball in order to protect its perceived interests comes as no surprise. There is a lot of money at stake. But that the government should acquiesce to this blackmail is quite another matter. This is a failure of democracy and the government must be held accountable. It is no longer just a question of Canadian corporations acting in ways that hurt people in other lands. It is about Canadians’ right to know and to have a say as to what public policies will be. This is fundamental for any democratic country.

So shame on the government! Shame on the industry! And shame on the press for allowing itself to be muzzled!

There are three more roundtables scheduled – in Toronto, Calgary, and Montreal (in mid-November). There cannot be another Vancouver. The press must be there and completely free to report on what is taking place. If that means the mining community will pick up its ball and go home, so be it. Better if it were present, dialoguing with government and civil society on an issue that affects us all, but not at any cost. The sharing of information is far too important a price to pay. Blackmail in any form is odious.

In Montreal, a coalition of groups concerned with Canadian mining around the world, including the SJC, is preparing for the roundtable in this city. For more information contact us at 514-933-6797.

Ernie Schibli is a founding member of the SJC and our coordinator of public education programs. Contact: ernie@s-j-c.net



The Social Justice Committee
Le Comité pour la justice sociale

The Social Justice Committee of Montreal has been working to raise awareness of the root causes of hunger, poverty and repression in the world through our education programs since 1975. We work in solidarity with organizations in a number of Third World countries in the search for a more just and sustainable global socio-economic system.

The Social Justice Committee depends on financial support from its members and the general public. It is a registered charitable organization; donations are tax deductible.

We invite you to donate today, and become a member by supporting the mission of the Social Justice Committee to:

- Analyze the underlying structural and global causes of poverty, human rights violations and other social injustices.
- Contribute to informed popular participation in eliminating these injustices.
- *Work in solidarity to transform our world into a just society.*

The Social Justice Committee believes that social and economic change is essential for the creation of a sustainable world, and that each person has the right and the responsibility to participate in the process.

Le Comité pour la justice sociale remercie le **ministère des Relations internationales** de son appui à sa mission d'éducation à la solidarité internationale.

The Social Justice Committee thanks the **Québec Ministry of International Relations** for its support of our mission of education on behalf of international solidarity.

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.

All articles or other content credited to IPS is copyrighted. All rights reserved, IPS – Inter Press Service 2004. Total or partial publication, retransmission or sale forbidden.

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

Visit our web site:

www.upstreamjournal.org

Contact us:

Email: editor@upstreamjournal.org

Telephone: 1-514-933-6797

Toll free: 1-866-RIGHTS-2

**Please send donations and
change of address notices to:**

**The Social Justice
Committee**

1857 de Maisonneuve W.,
Montreal, Quebec
H3H 1J9 Canada

Telephone
1-514-933-6797

Email sjc@web.ca
www.s-j-c.net

The Social Justice Committee
1857 de Maisonneuve ouest, Suite 320
Montreal QC H3H 1J9

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Date: _____

Email: _____

☐ Yes, I support the mission of the Social Justice Committee and would like to become a member.

☐ My contribution is enclosed. For credit card donations, call toll-free 1-866-RIGHTS-2

☐ I am unable to make a contribution at this time, but I would like to receive the Upstream Journal.



Revenue Canada Charity Registration 88797 3048 RR0001