

"Contre-développement" au Ladakh

Tanzania's "Walking Dead"

Tourism in... Burma?

The
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Canadian perspectives on global justice



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BHOPAL 25 years after the world's worst industrial disaster



In 1984, the Union Carbide pesticide plant operating in Bhopal India leaked poisonous methyl isocyanate, killing at least 3000 people. Since then, gas exposure has caused death, disease, mental illness and birth defects among the Bhopalis. In 1989, Union Carbide paid \$470 million to the government of India as compensation for the damage, but citizens of Bhopal continue to protest that they are not benefiting from this money, and lack the aid and medical assistance they have been promised by the local and state governments.

The site has still not been cleaned up. A 2009 study by the Sambhavna Medical Clinic found harmful chemicals in the water supplies in Bhopal, and linked them to the chemicals used in Union Carbide's pesticide production. However, the Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board says its studies show that none of the chemicals found in Bhopal's water are linked to those used in the pesticide plant. As a result, Dow, which bought out Union Carbide in 2000, refuses to take responsibility for unclean water.



When Bhopali women began mobilizing and eventually protesting, many of them were taunted and discouraged by their husbands, often unsupported by their families. After years of struggle, and numerous successes and achievements, Bhopali women are now some of India's strongest and most passionate activists. A hundred people joined a 700 kilometre march to Delhi to demand medical aid and financial compensation from the Prime Minister of India.



Cover: Protests outside the walls of the abandoned Union Carbide pesticide plant, Chola Road, Bhopal, India.

The Bhopal photo essay on the front and back covers is by Melanie Hadida. She lived and worked at the Sambhavna Trust Clinic for two months in the summer of 2007 researching women's activism and the successful strategies of community based mobilization. She also ran an art and music program for children from the nearby slum neighborhoods. In 2008 she returned to Bhopal for one month, assisting with the padyatra (march) to Delhi. She is now International Projects Officer at Vanier College in Montreal.

"Through my work in the Sambhavna Trust Clinic, in Qazi Camp, I was fortunate enough to be able to engage with the community on many different levels. I became personally involved in the lives of the children from the neighborhood, and became especially close to a group of 11 children—all first cousins living together in homes directly facing the clinic. I visited their homes regularly, and some in other neighborhoods, forming bonds with their mothers and neighbors. Slowly I became accepted into the everyday lives of several families and integrated into the community."

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Dear reader,



As I gathered the stories for this issue, I was struck by how many feature either failure or repression by national governments.

From the Canadian government's de-funding of NGOs to the refusal to support human rights policies at the World Bank, from the denial of justice in Guatemala and Bhopal to the suppression of women's rights in Iran, governments are too often distant from their responsibility to citizens they are supposed to guide and protect.

Our approach to these stories, as always in the Upstream Journal, is to look for elements of empowerment and capacity in the communities and individuals we write about. Their struggles continue despite their own governments' failure to help or, in too many cases, violent repression.

Look at the women on the cover, for example. They aren't portrayed as "victims," we see them demanding justice for what happened.

And we try to extend that dynamic of empowerment to include you, our readers. Many of our stories will include information about how to get involved or who to write to express your opinion, and that is often a government representative. One thing I've learned about human rights advocacy is that governments are, like corporations, sensitive about their public image. When people express their opinion it can affect how a government behaves.

So we don't just tell you stories about situations, we look at why they exist and who is accountable.

And speaking of getting involved, you'll want to check out the next issue, where we'll start a new section of the magazine. It will have articles exploring how individuals can get involved in social issues as a career or life choice.

What is involved in working professionally in development, for example? In human rights? In diplomatic service? What about internships – are they necessary? How do you get one that will help your career, and not one that's just a note in your resumé?

In the meantime, our writers have pulled together another collection of stories on various issues and struggles across the globe, to inform (and empower) you! As always, they have talked with the key people involved in each story, and I hope you agree they provide balanced, honest perspectives. Let me know what you think!



Derek MacCuish 1-514-933-6797 editor@upstreamjournal.org

We are again grateful to our volunteers and interns who create the articles, and for the financial support we get from people who, like you, support independent media and agree that it's important to go "upstream" and look beyond symptoms for the causes of poverty and oppression.

See pages 33 and 34 for details on how you can make a tax deductible donation.



The “walking dead”

Tanzania’s trade in the body parts of albino people

BY YIPING LAO

Known locally as the ‘walking dead,’ people with albinism are regarded with suspicion in Tanzania. Occult beliefs in the magical properties of albino body parts – used by witchdoctors for rituals thought to bring wealth and prosperity – have given rise to a series of albino murders.

The rapidly growing trade in albino body parts, which also targets children, is lucrative. Traders can sell albino limbs on the black market for \$500 to \$2000. It is estimated that this trade resulted in 60-70 murders in Tanzania in 2009.

Although the Tanzanian government has pledged to crack down on the gruesome industry, it admits that action has been slow because most of the attacks happen in rural areas where police forces are understaffed. As well, failure of the court system has meant that dozens of accused people have not been tried for the murders.

Peter Ash is the founder of the Canadian NGO “Under The Same Sun,” which provides advocacy and support for albino people in Tanzania. He says that of 57 reported murders, and 6 attacks in which victims lost limbs, in the last two years, there were convictions in only 2 cases. In neighbouring Burundi there were convictions in 12 of 14 cases. Government officials have blamed the slow progress on lack of funds, but Ash is not convinced.

“We are unaware of other capital murder cases that have been stopped due to lack of funds, we’ve never heard of that happening before,” he said. “We believe that it is due more to a lack of political will.”

Tanzanian blogger and journalist Richard Mbuthia also criticizes the Tanzanian government for letting the albino murders sit on the back burner.

“Maybe think they can using this loophole so they can ignore the killings, but the government just cannot say that. When other things that need money get money immediately,” he said.

As part of a response to the violence against albinos, Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikewete did appoint an albino woman, Al Shymaa Kway Geer, to parliament in 2008. Critics claim that while this may improve the government’s public image, it lacks substance and genuine commitment to change.

“She is not an elected MP, she exists at the pleasure of the president. We are enthusiastic that she has been appointed, but not much has really changed in terms of prosecutions of the offenders or the safety and security of people with albinism in Tanzania,” Ash said.

Superstitions associated with albinism are deeply rooted in East African culture. Murdering albinos for their body parts is based on belief in witchcraft and a perception of albinos as ghosts, not humans.

Ash thinks the weak governmental response may be due to superstition, which is so widespread that police and members of government may themselves subscribe to it.

“We have evidence that high-ranking politicians consult witchdoctors. If the politicians and police themselves use the services of witchdoctors, it makes it hard to clamp down on the industry of albino body parts,” Ash said.

Activists for albino rights in Tanzania urge Canadians to get involved.

“Canada gives millions of dollars of foreign aid to Tanzania, and I’m glad we do because Tanzania is extremely poor. But it also means that the government of Canada has significant political clout,” Ash said. “It can contact the Tanzanian government and say look, we’re giving you millions of dollars in foreign aid and this kind of treatment against innocent citizens and children simply because of the color of their skin is unacceptable. We want to see some action in dealing with this.”

Rick Guidotti, a former fashion photographer who now takes photos of albinos to raise awareness and



Tanzania has approximately 17,000 albino people. In North America and Europe, it is estimated that 1 in 20 000 people have some form of albinism. In Tanzania, it is 5 times as common, with 1 in 4000 people being affected. Most people with albinism are legally blind.

Albinism

There are two types of albinism, that which affects the skin, hair and eyes (the most common form, oculo-cutaneous albinism) and that which affects just the eyes (ocular-albinism).

Albinism is a recessive trait, so if both parents have the gene defect for albinism, there is a one in four chance that the child will be albino.

More than 90 Tanzanians have been charged with killing albinos or trading in their body parts; 4 were police officers.



"I'm about raising awareness through positive imagery, and empowering people with a positive sense of who they are. Helping mobilize them to become ambassadors for change themselves, changing communities at the grassroots level, and empowering them through self acceptance and self esteem."

- Photographer Rick Guidotti speaking with author LiPing Lao about his work.
Photos courtesy of Rick Guidotti for Positive Exposure (photoexposure.org)

combat discrimination, is hopeful for change.

"It's tough, and going to be very hard, but we have to start," he said. "It's a viral message; anything that is a positive message is viral. People don't want to hate, and people don't want to discriminate or be prejudiced. It's cultural, and we need

to change that. It's going to be difficult, but it's absolutely going to happen."

YiPing Liao is a Singaporean-Swiss student currently completing her Bachelor's degree at McGill University in political science and economics.

Under The Same Sun is a Canadian organization founded in 2008 by businessman Peter Ash, who is himself albino. The organization engages in advocacy and awareness-raising, and provides direct support for people with albinism in Tanzania. www.underthesamesun.com

Former fashion photographer **Rick Guidotti** founded Positive Exposure in 1998 after a chance encounter with a young girl with albinism outside his New York studio. Guidotti uses his skills as a photographer to raise awareness of albinism through positive imagery. www.positiveexposure.org

Richard Mbuthia is a freelance journalist living in Dar-Es-Salaam. His blog is called "On the Spot: Albinos in Tanzania." albinos-in-tanzania.blogspot.com

To communicate with the government of Tanzania:

His Excellency Peter Allan Kallaghe, High Commissioner
High Commission for the United Republic of Tanzania
50 Range Road, Ottawa ON K1N 8J4
contact@tzrepottawa.ca or tzottawa@synapse.net

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Burma

The ethics of travel to an exotic tourist destination ruled by tyrants



The ancient city of Bagan, with more than 2000 pagodas and temples.. Photo: Jose Javier Martin Espartosa

BY YIPING LAO

For the tourist, Burma is a country of contradictions. The southeast Asian country boasts cultural sites and sandy beaches that rival any tourist paradise in the region. But according to some democracy activists, the very functioning of the tourism industry is bound up with gross human rights abuses committed by the military regime that has ruled the country since 1988.

The untouched scenery and friendly locals have made Burma an attractive tourist destination, and so commercial tourism has been promoted despite

calls for a boycott. Asian travel agents have long promoted cheap tours to Burma, and now European and American travel agents are also establishing tourist operations in the country. Lonely Planet founder Tony Wheeler has been a vocal proponent of Burma as a cheap and beautiful holiday destination.

The Burmese military regime exploited the most vulnerable members of society to develop its tourism industry. Political prisoners were used to clear the moat surrounding the historical Mandalay palace and thousands were forcibly relocated from Bagan city in 1996, when the military regime launched a “Visit Myanmar” year of tourism promotion. For heavily indebted countries like Burma, tourist dollars can become a significant source of

income.

While forced labor and relocations are now less common in central Burma, which attracts the majority of the country's tourists, the practice continues in outlying areas.

"It is still a big problem in the minority states. Right now they are launching a horrific assault against the Karen people. We have also heard reports of small-scale forced labour, particularly on infrastructure like roads" said Mark Farmaner, director of the Burma Campaign UK, an NGO that aims to restore human rights and democracy in Burma on behalf of the Burmese pro-democracy movement.

The National League for Democracy (NLD) in Burma publically asks tourists not to visit, arguing that nowhere else in the world have human rights abuse and tourism been so closely linked. In 1990, the NLD won more than 80 percent of the seats in parliament but was prevented from forming an operational government by the military junta.

Farmaner staunchly supports the NLD's pleas to boycott tourism to Burma.

"Tourism development has been directly linked with human rights abuses, and you are helping to fund the dictatorship. Yes, a tiny amount of what you spend in Burma might benefit a local people to a small degree, but you'll be helping to fund the

military, and that military is engaged in wars with ethnic minorities."

The Free Burma Coalition, a Burmese-led group founded in Wisconsin, argues that sanctions do little to affect political change in Burma. Dr. Maung Zarni, the group's founder, has said that engagement through tourism could even have a positive effect on the country by drawing Burma out of its isolation. Provided that tourists avoid businesses that are owned by the military, tourism would be beneficial in providing employment and revenue to locals. Few other sources of revenue exist.

Derek Tonkin, the former British ambassador to Vietnam, Thailand and Laos also disagrees with the calls to boycott tourism in Burma.

"I think that in principle tourism can be a good thing, because I think development of contact between people is important," said Tonkin, chairman of Network Myanmar, a group with the stated aims of promoting reconciliation in Burma, working to reduce the country's isolation, and advocating for the civil and political liberties of its people.

Tonkin argues that tourist dollars represent a neg-

OIL MONEY

The French oil and gas company Total is the principal stakeholder in a consortium including Chevron (US), PTT Exploration and Production (Thailand), and MOGE operating the Yadana ("treasure") gas pipeline that transports natural gas from Burma to neighboring Thailand. The project is currently one of the single largest sources of revenue for the Burmese authorities.

In 2009 Total disclosed that its portion of the Yadana natural gas project generated US\$254 million for Burmese authorities in 2008.

TOTAL DEFENDS ITS INVESTMENT

"Countries own their natural resources. Under the terms of the applicable production sharing contract, the government grants companies a share of the profit from the production operated by the consortium.

As a foreign company, we have no say on the state budget, although we hope that the revenue will benefit the people of Myanmar as effectively as possible.

We promote financial transparency in our operations worldwide, as our active participation in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative demonstrates. Under the terms of our production sharing contract, the government of Myanmar receives its share of the profit from the sale of the natural gas, as well as income and other taxes paid by each consortium member." - *from a Sept. 2009 statement*



Myanmar Buddhist monks gather in the streets in the vicinity of Shwedagon pagoda in Yangon, Myanmar, on 24 September 2007, the seventh day of peaceful rebellion against the country's military regime. Photo by "Racoles."

ligible source of funding for the military regime. “You don’t go there to convert people, but you do go there to see what is happening, and when you come out of the country, you can tell people what you’ve seen.”

However, Farmaner insists “Change will only come if the international pressure on the regime is maintained, and the tourism boycott is part of a short-term strategy to ensure long-term prosperity, security and freedom for all of the peoples of Burma.”

THE DISPLACED CHILDREN OF BURMA

On 17 January 2010, Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) number 367 initiated a fresh round of attacks on several villages in Karen State’s Nyaunglebin District in eastern Burma, killing three villagers, burning down houses, and committing atrocities against civilians. Over a two-day period, the attacks forcibly displaced over 1,000 villagers, including hundreds of children.

These children are now living in uncertain conditions, hiding from further military attacks with little more than the clothes on their backs. They are at extreme risk of continued human rights violations, malnourishment, and serious health problems.

Such attacks are common in military-ruled Burma.

Since 2002, Free Burma Rangers (FBR) has independently documented over 180 incidents of displacement, and for the last 14 years both Partners and FBR have provided lifesaving humanitarian service to thousands more. From 2002 to the end of 2009, more than 580,000 civilians, including over 190,000 children, have been forcibly displaced from their homes in Eastern Burma alone. An estimated one to three million people live as internally displaced persons throughout Burma. As many as 330,000 to 990,000 of the displaced are children.

Source: Free Burma Rangers and Partners Relief and Development

*“The traveler sees
what he sees. The
tourist sees what he
has come to see.”*

~ G.K. Chesterton

BURMA’S MILITARY REGIME

Since it seized power in 1988, the military regime that rules Burma has been accused of recruiting child soldiers, political imprisonment, and forced relocation and labor. The current number of political prisoners is at its highest level since the 8888 uprising when the army opened fire on student-led pro-democracy advocates in 1988. In 2007, the military also crushed dissent by opening fire on students and monks alike. When Cyclone Nargis devastated the Irrawaddy Delta in 2009, the government’s obstruction of international relief efforts resulted in deaths of an estimated 100,000 people.

THE 8888 UPRISING

On August 8, 1988, thousands of protestors staged a series of marches, demonstrations, and riots in Burma. Students in Rangoon initiated the uprising, which quickly spread throughout the country as monks, young children, housewives and doctors demonstrated against the regime. The Burmese Junta violently ended the uprising on September 18. Thousands of deaths have been attributed to the military during this uprising.

THE SAFFRON REVOLUTION

The Saffron Revolution was a series of anti-government protests on August 15, 2007. Led by students and opposition political activists, the protest demonstrations were dealt with quickly and harshly by the junta, with dozens of protestors arrested and detained. Starting September 18, the protests had been led by thousands of Buddhist monks and those protests were allowed to proceed until a renewed government crackdown on September 26. The protests have been called the saffron revolution after the color of the monks’ robes.

MYANMAR OR BURMA?

In the Burmese language, there have been controversies about the name of the country since the 1930s, and the decision of the military regime in 1989 carried the controversy into the English language. The state is officially known as the “Union of Myanmar”. The military believes that the use of “Myanmar” is more inclusive of minorities than “Burma”, while opposition parties argue that the name “Myanmar” is a purely Burmese name reflecting the policy of domination of the ethnic Burman majority over minorities.

The Million Signatures Campaign

Iranian women face imprisonment for demanding their rights

BY RENÉE FUCHS

Mahboubeh Karami and Bahareh Hedayat are among the inmates of Iran's notorious Evin prison for fighting for the abolition of laws discriminating against women.

Karami was arrested in March and placed in solitary confinement, even though the charges against her remain to be clarified and she has not been able to meet with her lawyer. She told her family she was to be charged with "participating in illegal protests and membership in the group Human Rights Activists in Iran." She has been in touch with her family by phone, and her physical condition is reported to be worsening.

Hedayat, a student activist, was arrested in December 2009 during a gathering in front of Evin prison in solidarity with the families of recent political detainees.

Both are involved with the "Million Signatures Campaign," which aims to show the Islamic Republic of Iran that both men and women want equal rights for Iranian women. Its original goal was to get signatures of support from one million Iranian nationals.

Hedayat and Karami's arrests are the result of widespread resistance to the campaign from the police and some segments of government. Many campaign members have been arrested, interrogated, and denied legal rights, such as knowing the charges brought against them and searching their homes without a warrant. Some have been subject to travel bans.

"We couldn't even have peaceful demonstrations in the streets," said Niloofer Golkar, who now lives in Toronto and represents the Million



Bahareh HedayatIn. In May she was sentenced by the Revolutionary Court to nine years in prison, on charges of "propaganda against the regime through interviews with foreign media, insulting the Leader and the President, and disrupting public order by participation in illegal gatherings." Time was also added from a suspended sentence for activities at Amir Kabir University, in 2006. Photo: Raha Asgarizadeh



Mahboubeh Karami has been in solitary confinement in Evin prison for months. Communication has been through letters she sends to her brother and father. Her father suffers from Alzheimer's, and she was his main care provider. Photo: Raha Asgarizadeh

"My dear father, I know you are awaiting my return and they have told you that I'm away on a work trip. You don't know that your daughter is forced to spend several months in a solitary cell only because of her humanitarian activism and struggle to change women's condition. Even solitary cells are tired of my tears."

Signatures Campaign in Canada. "Police started coming to our homes and arresting us, and they monitor our telephones and e-mail."

In 2008, Golkar and other women activists were arrested on their way to hold a peaceful protest, legal according to the Iranian constitution, in front of the revolutionary court where other women activists were being tried.

"I was imprisoned for three days. Actually, we were in the solitary confinement cells in Section 209, but because we were more than thirty people they put three or four people in a single cell."

The situation in Iran has impeded the campaign from releasing a status report on the number of signatures collected since its launch in 2006. Uncounted signatures are scattered amongst the homes of several activists in order to be kept secure.

"There have been so many problems. There have been attacks at the homes of many activists. The intelligence agency took many of the signatures," Golkar said.

Campaign activists want to reform laws that limit women's legal rights in cases of divorce, child custody, inheritance and a court system that counts the testimonies of two female witnesses as equal to that of one male witness. They are also lobbying for stricter punishment on honour killings and to abolish polygamy, which is legal.

The Million Signatures Campaign was instrumental in mobilizing public resistance to a bill that would allow men to marry a second wife without his first wife's consent.

According to Golkar, discrimination against women escalated when President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected in 2005, and voices advocating women's rights are increasingly silenced.

"There is even more pressure against women rights activists and others. If you have 'bad hijab' – when your scarf is not suiting the police standard – they harass you in the street."

Women are subject to detention for exposing their hair or bare feet.

Golkar and many campaign activists believe that legal discrimination against women is out of step with advances in equality in the Iranian university system, where women make up 60 per cent of enrolment. "The parliament is worse than ever," Golkar said. "Even the reformists within the government can't talk anymore and are being arrested, so how will the activists have their voices heard if the people within government are being silenced?"

Renée Fuchs has a Master's degree in Philosophy and is currently enrolled in the French Common Law program at Ottawa University for September 2010.

On writing this article, she said: "I had a difficult time finding a campaign member from Iran to interview. I realized that the women I attempted to contact might not have answered my

requests because of the recent protests surrounding Iran's anniversary. I asked Golkar if I should be expecting to hear from those women any time soon, she chuckled and said, 'They control everybody and especially people they know are active. No, you won't be hearing from them at this time.'"

The Million Signatures Campaign asks for support of their imprisoned members through "polite letters to Iranian officials requesting their immediate release, their fair treatment in prison and in court. It is important for the safety of activists that support is not posed in terms that can be closely linked with "regime change" efforts or propaganda, because not only is this not a goal of the Campaign, but it will endanger activists working on the ground."

The representative of Iran in Canada is

Mr. Bahram Ghasemi, Chargé d'Affaires,
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran,
245 Metcalfe St., Ottawa ON K2P 2K2.

Email: executive@salamiran.org or
iranemb@salamiran.org.

Information about the campaign, and
about incarcerated campaign members,
is at:

www.we-change.org/english



Although the campaign mostly works through one-on-one or small group discussions to educate people and get support, they have also engaged in public protest. They risk arrest and imprisonment at Evin Prison in northwestern Tehran, Iran's biggest jail. Activists, journalists and other political prisoners are held and tortured in Section 209, which became known internationally when Canadian-Iranian photographer Zahra Kazemi was beaten to death there. 54-year old Kazemi was arrested in June 2003 while photographing a student-led protest outside the prison. Photo: Arash Ashoorinia

The Social Justice Committee of Montreal considers changing its name, seeks input from its members

We've had the name "Social Justice Committee of Montreal" for the 35 years that we've fought to eliminate poverty and human rights violations. Is it time for a change?

We're concerned that the word "committee" in our name might not best represent the permanency, autonomy, and uniqueness of our work. Committees usually form parts of larger organizations and are dissolved once they accomplish what they set out to do. Many churches around the world have their own "social justice committees."

It's important to us that our name expresses what we are about and allows us to be recognizable as an independent organization. We want the new name to communicate the uniqueness of our mission but also acknowledge the advantages of bearing a name that is explicit about exactly what we do. And then of course, there is the appeal of keeping our old name, which everyone knows us by.

We've decided that we can't make this decision without input from our supporters and readers. What would you change our name to? Or would you even change it?

Please send your ideas to us at info@sjc-cjs.org by August 24, 2010. A shortlist of suggested names, chosen by our Board of Directors, will be presented at our Annual General Meeting in September. Members of the SJC will vote on the name change at that time.

“Contre-développement” au Ladakh

Contrer les effets du développement conventionnel

Imaginez un paysage fragile mais immense, au cœur de l'Himalaya, entre des steppes arides et une vallée ensoleillée. Une communauté y vit en réciprocité avec la nature, dans une autosuffisance complète qui lui apporte une joie profonde. Le calme d'une vie simple mais remplie s'entend. Le contentement et la fierté se lisent sur les visages. Imaginez maintenant qu'on fasse miroiter à ce peuple un rêve doré, de grandeur et de richesse. Qu'on lui promette plus de productivité et un plus grand bonheur, si seulement il abandonne tout ce qu'il connaît pour adopter ce qui est nouveau, moderne. Imaginez que ces gens finissent par croire à cette fable...



Helena Norberg-Hodge. Photos courtoisie d'International Society for Ecology and Culture

PAR ARIANNE CARDINAL

Anglaise d'origine mais Ladakhie d'adoption, intellectuelle, activiste et femme de terrain, Helena Norberg-Hodge est considérée comme une pionnière dans la critique du modèle de développement dominant, particulièrement en raison de la destruction des spécificités culturelles locales qu'il provoque. Elle est reconnue pour son travail au Ladakh, et pour avoir présenté l'expérience du Ladakh comme source d'inspiration, tant pour les pays du Sud que ceux du Nord.

Elle est arrivée au Ladakh pour la première fois en 1975, tout juste après que celui-ci ait ouvert ses portes au tourisme. En 1975, il était considéré comme ayant presque été coupé du monde moderne, tant la colonisation avait eu peu d'influence sur la région. Le mode de vie était resté le même: une économie de subsistance basée sur l'agriculture, la cueillette de fruits et légumes poussant bien dans la vallée (malgré un climat aride et des températures extrêmes) et l'élevage d'animaux.

«Leur bouche restait grande ouverte. Ils me dévisageaient!» raconte-t-elle à propos de ses discussions avec les Ladakhis sur la vie en Occident.

Ce qui a d'abord frappé madame Norberg-Hodge, c'est la joie de vivre des Ladakhis; leur principale caractéristique culturelle, et l'aspect ayant eu le plus grand impact sur sa personnalité, me confie-

t-elle.

Au début, elle y effectuait des études linguistiques. Elle en est vite venue à comprendre et parler le ladakhi, ce qui lui a donné un accès privilégié à la culture et lui a permis de comprendre les subtilités de l'organisation sociale - terrain encore vierge car elle est considérée comme la première Occidentale à avoir maîtrisé ce langage dans les temps modernes. Cependant, c'est un rôle auquel elle ne s'attendait pas qu'elle a été amenée à jouer auprès des Ladakhis.

Et, en effet, elle était la seule source directe d'information concernant l'Occident, et un témoin privilégié des conséquences désastreuses de ce qu'elle nomme «la hache du développement» sur l'une des dernières économies de subsistance encore vivante.

«Ce qu'ils recevaient était cette image idéalisée et magnifiée de la culture urbaine de consommation, comme étant incroyablement riche, prospère et sans problème. Alors qu'en fait, en Occident même, nous commençons à faire face à des problèmes environnementaux et sociaux.»

CONTRE LES EFFETS DE LA « HACHE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT »

Dans son livre *Ancient Futures : Learning from Ladakh*, Norberg-Hodge explique les différences qu'elle a pu constater entre le avant et le après, alors qu'une vague de développement a exposé la région aux marchés extérieurs et aux notions de «progrès» de l'Occident. Elle y a constaté la destruction d'une économie ayant répondu aux besoins des Ladakhis depuis mille ans, la dégradation de l'environnement, et surtout,



En dehors du Tibet, c'est au Ladakh que l'on retrouve la plus grande concentration de monastères bouddhistes de l'Himalaya, appelés gompas. La majorité des Ladakhis pratiquent le bouddhisme dans sa forme tibétaine, alors que les autres sont surtout musulmans chiites.



Le Ladakh est aussi appelée «Petit Tibet», car il s'agit d'un ancien royaume tibétain indépendant annexé à l'Inde au cours du dernier siècle. Aujourd'hui, le Ladakh est une région semi-autonome de l'Inde, dans l'État de Jammu et Cachemire au nord du pays. Il est à majorité bouddhiste.

Helena Norberg-Hodge a reçu le prix Right Livelihood Award (ou « prix Nobel alternatif ») en 1986, pour avoir initié un mouvement de contre-développement au sein de la société ladakhie. Elle est l'auteur de plusieurs livres dont *Quand le développement crée la pauvreté*. L'exemple du Ladakh (2002) et *Ancient Futures : Learning from Ladakh* (1991, rééd. 2009).

Le Ladakh Ecological Development Group (LEDgE) qui explore et implante des alternatives écologiques de développement au Ladakh souligne l'influence de madame Norberg-Hodge dans la création de cette ONG (www.ledeg.org).

Récemment, Helena Norberg-Hodge s'inquiète de l'influence des grosses corporations en Inde et au Ladakh, sur l'environnement et la culture. Elle indique que deux mouvements contradictoires sont à l'œuvre dans la région, comme partout ailleurs, mais le mouvement de contre-développement bénéficie de beaucoup moins de visibilité et de financement.

la dégradation de la culture.

De nouveaux besoins ont été créés, ainsi qu'un sentiment d'infériorité et la dépression.

Rapidement, elle en est venue à s'impliquer dans ce qu'elle nomme aujourd'hui le « contre-développement. » Ce concept qui rompt avec les présupposés entourant le développement résume bien son travail de terrain et le message qu'elle porte à travers le monde.

«J'ai réalisé qu'il y avait un urgent besoin d'information quant aux impacts de beaucoup de ces pratiques conventionnelles du développement, et c'est vraiment ce que j'appelle le contre-développement. Le fait de contrer le développement conventionnel qui consiste en l'introduction d'une dépendance aux combustibles fossiles, aux pesticides et à beaucoup de produits chimiques et de technologies s'étant montrées dangereuses.»

Une part importante de son travail consiste à informer les Ladakhis que les nouvelles technologies vertes mises au point en Occident sont souvent inspirées de savoirs et pratiques traditionnelles comme les leurs, et que ces savoirs sont essentiels à notre survie à tous.

«J'ai aussi trouvé qu'il était très important de montrer que des alternatives étaient en train d'être développées.»

Au sein de l'International Society for Ecology and Culture (ISEC), qu'elle a fondé dans les années 1980, Norberg-Hodge fournit de l'information aux leaders ladakhis pour qu'ils soient en mesure de s'orienter vers un développement plus équilibré, durable et qui s'appuie sur la culture traditionnelle. Les activités de l'organisme sont multiples, allant de la formation sur les énergies renouvelables à la sensibilisation aux enjeux liées à la conservation de la culture. Elles incluent l'échange culturel et le support à des ONG locales naissantes et la création de plusieurs organisations locales oeuvrant dans le même sens.

Une autre part importante de son travail concerne ce qu'elle nomme «l'estime culturelle», qui serait à reconstruire.

«Au cours du processus de développement conventionnel, les gens, surtout les jeunes, développent le sentiment que



Les hommes et les femmes du Ladakh participent au filage de la laine de yak, de mouton et de chèvre, qui est soit utilisée ou vendue. La laine de pashmina filée dans la région est l'une des plus prisées au monde. Fabriquée à partir du fin duvet des chèvres, elle est la plus fine. Elle sert à tisser des châles et autres vêtements.

leur propre culture est inférieure. Ceci crée automatiquement un besoin psychologique de s'associer à la culture de consommation, mais cela n'est basé sur rien d'autre qu'un besoin psychologique pro-



Un champ d'orge, pour consommer et pour faire du *chang*, sorte de bière traditionnelle.

fond d'être accepté» me dit-elle.

Selon elle, restaurer l'estime culturelle est possible. «Il s'agit de montrer qu'il y a beaucoup de forces et de valeur quant à plusieurs aspects de leur culture. Et ces aspects deviennent évidents à travers une profonde compréhension de ce qui se passe en Occident.»

APPRENDRE DU LADAKH

«Le Ladakh est unique, car la colonisation n'y a pas eu beaucoup d'influence. C'est une opportunité de voir une version condensée et accélérée des changements qui ont eu lieu comme dans beaucoup d'autres parties du monde. C'est également une leçon quant à la non-durabilité du modèle dominant.»

Norberg-Hodge croit qu'il faut déconstruire plusieurs de nos certitudes. «Il y a tout un ensemble de préjugés, mais le plus important mythe qui doit être réexaminé est l'idée que la pauvreté est un état né essentiellement d'un manque de développement. En fait, c'est le modèle de développement lui-même, ce modèle de croissance qui a créé la pauvreté.»

Apprendre du Ladakh veut aussi dire revenir à une échelle locale, car cela permet de répondre aux considérations environnementales, à la justice économique, et aux besoins fondamentaux de connexion et de communauté. La localisation, ou le retour au local, est donc son nouveau cheval de bataille, et passe entre autre par les systèmes d'alimentation locale.

«Ça peut arriver et c'est déjà en train d'arriver, au niveau de la base! Nous bougeons tranquillement vers la localisation, car les gens sont très inquiets, dans les villes et les communautés. Ils veulent poser des gestes pour réduire leur dépendance au pétrole. Beaucoup de personnes réapprennent à faire pousser leurs aliments, à jardiner de nouveau. Ils réapprennent des compétences de base pour répondre à leurs besoins, en s'inspirant des savoirs traditionnels» me répond-elle

Pour plus d'information sur l'ISEC, vous pouvez consulter www.isec.org.uk (info@isec.org.uk) ou ISEC France www.isec-france.org (info@isec-france.org)

avec enthousiasme.

Mais il faut aller plus loin que cela.

«Le développement de connaissances locales et des recherches à ce sujet sont nécessaires. Avec le réchauffement climatique, nous aurons besoin de savoirs locaux sur l'environnement pour faire face aux crises à venir, mais tout cela doit être supporté par les gouvernements et les ONG. Il y a aussi un énorme besoin d'éducation et d'activisme à ce sujet !»

ENTRE L'ESPOIR ET L'URGENCE

Madame Norberg-Hodge considère très encourageant de voir toutes les initiatives locales qui naissent un peu partout et prennent de l'ampleur sans aucune aide des médias ou des gouvernements. Reste qu'elle ressent à la fois un sentiment d'urgence pour diffuser l'information sur les possibilités qui s'offrent à nous.

Ce changement à grande échelle dont elle parle s'inscrit aussi dans un processus de transformation spirituelle, peut-être un autre héritage de la sagesse du Ladakh.

«Je sens que les gens deviennent de plus en plus en contact avec leur nature profonde, c'est-à-dire ce besoin de ressentir de l'amour et d'expérimenter la connexion, de sentir qu'on fait partie de l'univers comme les êtres vivants qui nous entourent. Au cours de ce processus, ce qui arrive, ou ce que nous souhaitons, c'est que l'attention se détourne de cette culture de consommation réductrice qui est une culture de solitude et d'isolement, vers une compréhension de l'importance de reconstruire la communauté et notre relation avec la nature. C'est ce que la localisation peut apporter.»

Arianne Cardinal termine une maîtrise en Science politique, profil développement international à l'UQAM. Elle est stagiaire au Comité pour la justice sociale de Montréal, depuis septembre 2009.

The Annual General meeting of the Social Justice Committee of Montreal will be held Sept. 21 at 6pm.

We invite our members to come, find out more about our programs, and plans for the future.

Members will **elect the SJC Board of Directors** for the coming year. Nominations to the Board are now being accepted. (Nominations can be from any five members, with the written consent of the nominee, and provided to the SJC office at least one week prior to the AGM).

SJC members will consider and vote on amendments to the organization's by-laws and **possible changes to the name and mission.**

The **financial report** from last year will be presented.

To keep informed on SJC activities, sign up for the email bulleting. Visit www.sjc-cjs.org and self-subscribe.

For more information about the AGM or about any of our activities, phone us at 514 933 6797.

No healing for the child soldier

The psychological and social rehabilitation and recovery of former child soldiers remains inadequate, and their personal struggles continue years after the armed conflicts end.

BY IRINA GABER

“The night the soldiers came to our village, they rounded up just us kids and told us we had to go with them, that our country needs us. The girls were separated from the boys and sent to ‘safe places’ to care for the dead and the wounded. We were taken to a military base and given an M16, which became our pillow and nightly companion for the months and years to come.”

Tore Martinez Figueroa, now 31, told me about the day he found himself enrolled in the Armed Forces of El Salvador (FAES). “I was almost 14, studying in the city, and surfing most afternoons. We were very poor, and my father was often away working. I grew up mostly with my friends and ‘doña Ela,’ a lady who looked after me.”

Salvadoran law allows for compulsory military service at 18, but emergency directives during the war allowed voluntary enrollment from the age of 16. Civil war broke out in 1980 and lasted twelve years.

Of 6 million people, 80,000 were killed and one million fled the country.

Now almost two decades later, Tore, like most of his compatriots, is trying to rebuild his life while still haunted by a not so distant past.

“Between hills and highways, mountains and towns, we kept running, looking for the guerrilla. As we ran, so did much blood from both sides. It was normal to see a kid get shot or die of hunger. Cutting heads was like cutting mangoes.”

It is generally acknowledged that both sides of the war drafted children, some younger than 16. Up to 80% of the national armed forces and 20% of the rebel FMLN (Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación) combatants were under 18.

“I remember one night, walking with the other soldiers towards the city, we could see several parts of the capital in flames, helicopters disappearing in the smoke. I had been starving the whole day, and was wishing for the war to be over. But it never was.”

Today, an estimated 300,000 child soldiers are involved in more than thirty conflicts worldwide. Military commanders see child soldiers as “cheap, compliant and effec-



The Child Soldier as defined by the Cape Town Principles (established at a 1997 symposium by the NGO Working Group on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF):

“A child soldier is any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers and anyone accompanying such groups, other than family members. The definition includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and for forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms.”

Photo: Gary Mark Smith. This photo was taken during a firefight in Chalatenango, El Salvador in 1982. The series of photos, “The Streets of the Cold War/ El Salvador,” is online at streetphoto.com.

tive fighters,” according to Human Rights Watch. Their low level of cognitive maturity makes them less likely to contradict orders and more likely to be fearless.

As a war tactic, use of child soldiers can shock an enemy. They are universally recognized as society’s most precious asset and its future.

LACK OF SUPPORT

The successful rehabilitation and reintegration of former child soldiers into civilian society is a necessary first step in setting the foundations for lasting peace.

Many studies have analyzed the effects of exposing children to the ravages of war. The consequences of being torn away from family, friends and community and submerged in violence can include psychological, behavioural and emotional problems, especially when maladaptive coping mechanisms bring regressive and/or aggressive behaviour.

In 1998, a UNICEF-led survey in El Salvador revealed that 71% of child soldiers had received no support in their transition to civilian life. While various “Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration” programs are available in El Salvador, by 1999 fewer than 40% of the FMLN underage combatants had been integrated into one, with only 5% completing it.

The lack of success was at least partly attributed to the low level of support of support from the international community, as well as a lack of follow-up at both the national and international levels. In addition, the local FAES officers insisted that even if there were soldiers under 18 years of age, they were all at least 16 and had joined voluntarily. The lack of recognition meant that many child soldiers weren’t eligible for the programs.

GOING BEYOND THE MEDICAL RESPONSE

To find out what is being done now for child soldiers, I spoke with Dr. Duncan Pedersen who leads the international Trauma and Global Health (TGH) Program based at the Douglas Mental Health University Institute in Montreal. The program’s aims include reducing the mental health burden of civilian populations exposed to protracted and endemic political violence and fostering the process of healing, psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery.

“Cutting heads was like cutting mangoes.”

It is a unique initiative, conducted in partnership between Canadian and developing country researchers, funded by the Global Health Research Teasdale-Corti Team Grant Program and supported by the Douglas Mental Health University Institute and McGill University. Its goal is to encourage



Tore Martinez Figueroa. “After the war, I continued in the army, since I had nowhere to go. They kept training me for special forces, which was a little traumatic, and after four years I graduated as an Army Officer. The day after the graduation, I came back to the beach, never going back to what I lived.” After we talked, he sang a traditional song about lost liberty. Photo: Angie Bloch

policies that recognize that “exposure to armed conflict... carries not only physical burdens, but also great psychological and social ones.”

The program focuses on the impact of violence and sustained trauma on civilian communities. The percentage of civilians affected by war has been steadily increasing, and now are as high as 9 out of 10 casualties.

The team at the TGH questions assumptions that a purely medical model is the most appropriate one.

“A successful intervention would use the community itself as the point of departure, and involve indigenous resources, locally available. such as strong social support networks and local health workers, and include traditional healers and community-based leaders,” Dr. Pedersen told me. “Another important feature of a successful intervention is the understanding of local indicators of distress, instead of those identified by the American Psychiatry Association for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.”

“The field of humanitarian intervention is shifting slowly, from a ‘refugee camp’ relief model, providing shelter, food, clean water, and medical supplies, to a more sustained, peace-building, development-oriented, long-range set of interventions. What we are lacking is an efficient and reliable intervention model in which many other sectors beyond medical services are included.”

In El Salvador, old problems and new threats continue to challenge the democratization process. Delinquency and non-political violence has increased since the signing of the peace accords. The lack of security threatens the legitimacy of the political system as citizens doubt the state’s ability to protect them.

An American study of PTSD looked at more than 2700 recorded interventions on treatment modalities, and found there was little or no evidence that current psychosocial and pharmacological therapies were effective.

“The conclusions were shocking for the medical community. The therapies were either completely neutral or, in some cases, actually more damaging than helpful,” Dr. Pedersen said.

“In addition to the remarkable lack of agreement on treatment goals and best practices in dealing with emergency crises situations, the changes in the nature of conflict and the shifting paradigms of humanitarian interventions point to the urgent need to restructure our humanitarian responses, to build them to be not only more humane but more efficient. A transition beyond the medical response into justice, education, housing and work realms is badly needed, rather than assuming that the only consequence of being at war is PTSD.”

“My main memory of the war,” Tore told me, “is of the number of families that lost their homes, many of them at the same time dealing with deceased or lost family members. What I learned is that life is too precious to waste in war. Before, we had to run for our lives and kill to eat. Now, we struggle with no job, no way to make money, and a police system whose only role seems to be repressing the young, particularly those who express themselves with piercings or tattoos.”

Irina Gaber traveled for several months in Central America, living with local families in Guatemala and El Salvador, following the completion of a masters degree in biology at Concordia University. .

Under international law, the participation of children under 18 in armed conflict is generally prohibited, and the recruitment and use of children under 15 is a war crime.

The number of children under the age of 18 who have been coerced or induced to take up arms as child soldiers is generally thought to be in the range of 300,000.

The youngest child soldiers are about 7 years old.

From 2004-2007 10 governments around the world used child soldiers.

Non-state groups use child soldiers in at least 24 countries.

With the exception of two cases in the DRC, no one is known to have been prosecuted by national-level courts for recruiting and using children.

The United States sponsors programs for approximately 400,000 high school boys and girls where children are taught to march, shoot, act and think like soldiers.

The United Kingdom routinely sends 17 year olds into conflict.

Sources: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, UNICEF

Mass murder's paper trail

The Guatemalan police archive's documentation of death and disappearance

BY SARAH SCHAUB

More than twenty-five years after Edgar Fernando Garcia, labour leader and father of a one-year-old girl, disappeared from outside his relatives' house in Guatemala City, suspects in his abduction have been identified and detained.

In March 2009, senior police officer Héctor Roderico Ramírez Ríos and retired policeman Abraham Lancerio Gómez were arrested as suspects in Garcia's disappearance. The arrest was based on evidence accidentally discovered five years ago in an old munitions dump in Guatemala City. The abandoned building contained 75 million pages of secret national police documents, many of which provide information on police actions during Guatemala's violent civil war. It is estimated that 400,000 people disappeared and 200,000 were killed between 1960 and 1996. Documents among the stacks of decomposing and mouldy paper indicate that Garcia was abducted as part of the state-sponsored violence that mainly targeted community leaders, most of them Mayan, and trade unionists that the government perceived as threatening.

The day Garcia disappeared, he left his house to go to a market in Guatemala City. He and his family planned to celebrate his aunt's wedding anniversary in that afternoon in February, 1984. He never showed up. Instead, soldiers arrived to take his belongings away. No official explanation followed. No government investigation took place to find out what had happened.

Garcia's daughter, Alejandra Garcia Montenegro, now a lawyer, is taking his case to court using the newly discovered evidence. "I wanted to become a lawyer to fight the injustice in the country and because of my parents," she said.

Concealing the evidence was part of a larger operation to conceal information about police activity during the armed conflict from the Guatemalan public, censoring written information and by controlling the media. Now, President Alvaro Colom, elected in 2007, supports making the archives public and accessible. Alvaro recently removed the Human Rights Ombudsman's exclusive control over the archives, allowing access by the public. The restoration and declassification of the files' con-



An explosion and fire nearby led officials to explore an abandoned munitions building in Guatemala City, where written, audio, and photographic documents on a wide range of police matters from as early as the 1900s were stored. A Guatemalan team funded by Switzerland, Spain, and Germany is cleaning, organizing and making digital copies of the documents, many of them disintegrating with age and exposure to moisture. The files can be used as evidence in the victims' legal cases, and their discovery contributes to fighting impunity in a country where human rights abuse and corruption are still common.

Photos courtesy the Guatemalan National Police Archive Project

tents can be a dangerous process. Human Rights Ombudsman Sergio Morales' wife, Gladys Monterroso, was abducted and assaulted hours after he released the first report on the contents of the police documents. Human Rights activists Article 19 believe that Monterroso's abduction was intended to intimidate Morales and was directly related to the report, which implicates the national police in human rights abuses committed during the civil war. Morales has also received threats, and he and the team working on the archives are subject to physical attack and other acts of intimidation.

Resistance to the declassification of the discovered documents is suspected to come from perpetrators of human rights abuse who have remained in powerful police and government positions. "Half of the people in government were horrified by the discovery of the documents," says Kate Doyle, director of the National Archives project. Impunity, corruption, and human rights abuse remain prevalent in Guatemala.

Alejandra Garcia knows that she might lose the case and the police officers may be acquitted despite the evidence from the archives. After twenty-five years of not knowing what exactly happened to her father and of unfair treatment by the government, she wants closure.

"I can forgive, but I have to know whom."

Sarah Schaub, a history student from Europe, was an intern with the SJC in 2009.

Guatemala by the numbers

Number of people killed in civil war: 200 000
 Number of documented massacres during civil war: 626
 Number of these massacres that were successfully prosecuted: 3
 Percentage of atrocities carried out by security forces during civil war: 93%
 Number of murders in 2008: 6,300
 Percentage of crimes that go unpunished: 98%
 Women murdered in 2009: 717
 Of these, victims showing signs of torture: 14%
 Victims showing signs of sexual abuse: 13%
 Murders per week in Guatemala City in 2009: 25
 Attacks on human rights defenders in 2008: 220
 Human rights defenders killed in 2008: 12
 Judges and lawyers killed between 2005 and July 2009: 40
 Money contributed by Canada to the UN International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala in 2008: \$5 million
 Percentage of GDP consumed by wealthiest 20% of population: 51%
 Percentage of people living on less than \$2 a day: 51%



The U.S. supported the Guatemalan government during the civil war, especially during the period from 1982 to 1986. Ronald Reagan, US president from 1981 to 1989, adopted policies of support for the oppressive government and denial of the involvement of the National Police and the military in the murders and disappearances. Kate Doyle of the National Security Archive wrote that declassified documents shed light on the "complex, intimate, and enduring role played by successive US administrations in Guatemala throughout the course of the long civil conflict."



When Canadians get into trouble abroad

BY PAULINE CORDIER

Several Canadians have, for one reason or another, been captured or imprisoned abroad. These include Amanda Lindhout, Brenda Martin, Mohamed Kohail, Huseyin Celil, Abousfian Abdelrazik, Bashir Makhtal, Ratnarajah Thusiyanthan, and Suaad Hagi Mohamud.

The government has intervened in the cases of Martin, Kohail, Celil, Makhtal, but has been reluctant to help in others.

When Abousfian Abdelrazik was imprisoned in Sudan in 2003 and again in 2005, the government refused his repatriation, even after his release, because of alleged ties to terrorism (he is the only Canadian on the UN no-fly list). He was returned to Canada in 2009, after the Federal Court ordered the government to provide him assistance.

Suaad Hagi Mohamud made headlines in 2009 when a Canadian embassy official in Kenya declared her an imposter and she was jailed and charged. She was granted bail, and then returned to Canada after the government was pressured into doing a DNA test that confirmed she is who she says she is.

Repatriation of prisoners

More than 200 people imprisoned abroad have requested repatriation to Canada. In cases of Canadians imprisoned by foreign authorities, the percentage of citizens abroad granted transfer to a Canadian prison has fallen from 98% in 2005-06

to 27% in 2009-10.

The government no longer seeks clemency in all cases of capital punishment. Since 2007, its policy has been to review requests for assistance on a case-by-case basis.

Ever since capital punishment was abolished in Canada in 1976, every Canadian government has sought clemency for its citizens sentenced to death abroad. The change in policy by the Harper government, which was immediately denounced by the Canadian Bar Association for being arbitrary and discriminatory, has meant that some cases are ignored.

In the case of Ronald Smith, who has been on death row in a US prison since 1983, efforts to seek clemency stopped in 2007. In 2009 the Federal Court then ordered the government to re-start the appeals for clemency, calling the 2007 policy unlawful. The government has since introduced legislation that would expand the conditions that have to be met before a person can request a return to Canada, a move that is viewed by critics as consistent with a “get tough on crime” approach.

In the case of Mohammed Kohail, his dual Canadian and Saudi citizenships caused media in both countries to speak for or against his death sentence in Saudi Arabia. The government engaged with Saudi authorities, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs said he was pleased with the decision to revoke the sentence and launch a retrial.

Although international law and treaty obligations support governments in their efforts to

demand due process for their citizens, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada is sending the message that citizens can not expect to get support if they run afoul of other countries' laws. Its web site is specific: "A non-Canadian charged with a criminal offence in Canada would be tried under Canadian criminal law in a Canadian court, and, if convicted, sentenced accordingly. Just as Canadians would not accept a foreign government interfering with the Canadian judicial process, the Government of Canada cannot interfere in the judicial affairs of another country."

New Democrat Foreign Affairs critic Paul Dewar believes that consular assistance for Canadians abroad is inconsistent and unreliable. He is drafting legislation that he says would make the Minister of foreign Affairs directly responsible for consular services, and would clarify the responsibilities of the Canadian government towards its citizens abroad. It would also create an office to ensure that the law is applied consistently and objectively.

Held captive by kidnappers in Somalia for 15 months, Amanda Lindhout was released in November, 2009 after her family and two Calgary businessmen paid a reported \$600,000 ransom. In terms of how much the government did in her case, Lindhout said that "I accept that they did what they could within the confines of Canadian law. Naturally there are certain policies that I do feel should change." Photo: Lindhout family



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CANADA CANCELS DEBT OWED BY THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO

In May Canada cancelled nearly \$24 million owed by the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville). Canada has now cancelled close to \$1 billion of debt owed by the world's poorest and most heavily indebted countries.

The Republic of Congo is the 14th country to get 100% debt relief from Canada. \$1.3 billion in debt, almost entirely to Export Development Canada, once all eligible countries have completed the process. Cancellation of debt owed to Canada requires completion of the IMF and World Bank-led Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and compliance with its conditions.

Since January 2001, Canada has suspended payments on the debts of several impoverished countries, pending HIPC Initiative cancellation. In May the government also announced this now includes Côte d'Ivoire, which was not in the program because of the country's conflict and political turmoil.

DEBT RELIEF FOR ONE CONGO, BUT NOT THE OTHER

In the wake of the 2009 suspension of a Canadian mining company's copper project in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Canada has withdrawn its support for DRC debt relief through the HIPC initiative.

Finance officials representing Canada at the Paris Club last November temporarily slowed the HIPC debt relief process and the DRC's associated IMF program, in an attempt to raise concerns over wider governance problems and issues facing foreign investors in the DRC in general. The Canadian representative also fought against debt cancellation by the World Bank, and then abstained from the vote at the World Bank Board of Directors when it was apparent there was no support for delaying the debt relief.

Canadian finance official pointed to the limited rule of law, weak governance, and lack of accountability in the Congolese extractive sector as reasons behind Canada's reluctance to forgive DRC's debt.

The DRC claims it cancelled the Kolwezi project because the main owner Canadian mining company First Quantum Minerals, violated an agreement. First Quantum invested \$750 million dollars in the mining project. First Quantum is seeking arbitration in an international forum.

Canadian International Development Agency cuts funding to Canadian NGOs and international health programs

Predictions that cuts to the Canadian NGOs Kairos and Alternatives late last year were warning signs of more cuts to come have been proven correct.

CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

CIDA funding to the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC), the national network of development groups, ended in July. The proposal presented by CCIC in October for 2010-2013 was not accepted by Bev Oda, Minister of International Cooperation.

“Unfortunately, it’s hard not to see de-funding as yet another example of the ‘political chill’ message this government has been sending to the development community,” said Gerry Barr CCIC’s president and CEO. “What we’re experiencing here is punishment politics. Speak out against government policy and risk losing your funding.”

The CCIC funding cuts have caused alarm among the Canadian NGO community.

“Dialogue between the government and civil society is a fundamental element of democratic life in Canada. In its absence, the freedom of expression of the entire Canadian population is threatened. If nothing is done to reverse this trend, the cuts facing the CCIC and other organizations will result in a significant loss of quality of public debate in Canada,” Brian Barton, president of L’Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale, wrote in *Le Devoir* 10 June. “The funding of organizations such as CCIC pales in comparison with the billion dollars that the federal government is spending just to provide security during the three days that the G8 and G20 meetings will last. Is that not a contradiction on the part of a government that wishes to increase the effectiveness of ODA?”

MATCH INTERNATIONAL

On April 30, CIDA announced that it would not renew MATCH International’s funding. MATCH is an international woman’s organization that works for the empowerment of women and the practical enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms through civil, political, economic, social and cultural justice.

“On April 30th, CIDA informed MATCH International that our funding would not be renewed for our next cycle of projects. As CIDA funding represents seventy five percent of our total budget, this news came as a shock after a constructive relationship for more than three decades. In tandem with our partners and CIDA, we have collectively created a legacy of change for women and their families across the globe since 1976.” - MATCH International web site.

INTERNATIONAL PLANNED PARENTHOOD

The International Planned Parenthood Federation has been waiting for a year for a decision on whether funding will be renewed. CIDA has funded IPPF continuously for decades, most recently providing \$18 million for the three-year period ending December 2009. IPPF asked for a renewal of the same amount.

“We haven’t received any indication yet as to when we might receive a response. We continue to fund the shortfall from our reserves and so far services and programmes have not been effected, however, there is only a certain amount of time that we can maintain this from reserves before we have to start making hard decisions about reducing money to frontline services. Canadian funding accounts for approximately 7% of our total funds.

Our experience with the US Government’s Global Gag Rule under President G.W. Bush is that it is inevitable that services will be effected. Indeed, we had to close clinics and end major community-based primary healthcare programmes in Africa and Asia as a consequence.” - Paul Bell, Senior Communications Officer, IPPF

INTERNATIONAL AIDS VACCINE INITIATIVE

The International AIDS Vaccine Initiative, one of the world's largest AIDS vaccine development groups, has also apparently been quietly dropped from CIDA funding. CIDA provided \$80 million in support from 2001 to 2008.

«IAVI has not received any funding from CIDA since our previous agreement, which ended in March 2009. IAVI has yet to receive a response to our funding renewal request, and we continue to await further information on future plans from CIDA,» said Rachel Steinhart, IAVI spokesperson

In February the government scrapped plans to build an \$88-million HIV vaccine pilot manufacturing facility in Canada. This was to have been the main project in the \$111-million Canadian HIV Vaccine Initiative announced three years ago by the government and the Gates Foundation. The decision to cancel the project frustrated researchers, and drew criticism from agencies like the Canadian Association for HIV Research.

Note: The Social Justice Committee of Montreal, publisher of the Upstream Journal, does not depend on funding support from CIDA. The SJC receives financial support from the Province of Quebec, and relies heavily on donations from individuals and communities.

The Minister of International Cooperation is Bev Oda.
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Anti-Israel or anti-Semitic? Drawing the line between political criticism and prejudice in Canada

BY EMMA QUAIL AND LAURIE DRAKE

The creation of the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism (CPCCA) in 2009 sparked debate over the meaning and implications of the “new anti-Semitism.” Critics wonder where the line will be drawn between legitimate criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism. The coalition was formed to confront and combat anti-Semitism in Canada. According to the CPCCA “new anti-Semitism” is exemplified by individuals and governments who call for the destruction of the State of Israel and its inhabitants.

The Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) is among organizations that support the CPCCA. In its submission to the committee they wrote that “anti-Semitism may now no longer speak of a goal to make a country cleansed of Jews but instead it may aim for a world that is cleansed of a Jewish State.”

Independent Jewish Voices (IPV), on the other hand, regards the views endorsed by CPCCA and its supporters as problematic because they conflate anti-Semitism with anti-Israeli sentiment.

“The Jewish right has a very warped definition of new anti-Semitism,” IPV member Scott Weinstein said. “It claims that pro-Palestinian human rights activists and people who criticize Israel for abuses of Palestinians are, *ipso facto*, the new anti-Semites.”

Government finally releases details of relief funds for January earthquake in Haiti

CIDA will not provide relief organizations with direct dollar-for-dollar matching funds. The \$220 million Canadians donated to Haiti relief is being matched instead by a commitment to spend this amount through a separate fund CIDA has established. The government has been slow in clarifying when and how much relief organizations will receive.

In June CIDA announced that “The Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund is separate from the donations collected by registered charities and will be administered separately by the Government of Canada. This means that the organization declaring the amount of donations collected will not receive a matching dollar from the government.

Registered charities fundraising for the January 12 Haiti earthquake response do not have privileged access to the relief fund. Allocation decisions will be based on CIDA's humanitarian and development assistance guidelines.”

Weinstein is concerned that, in the long term, actions of the CPCCA will translate into a climate that will ultimately diminish freedom of speech.

"I think their intention is to fertilize the grounds for the various governments in provincial and federal states to then incorporate this definition of new anti-Semitism in various laws."

The CJC claims that while not all criticism of Israel is anti-Semitic, delegitimizing, demonizing, and calling Israel an apartheid or a Nazi state crosses the line between criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism.

"There is no attempt to diminish freedom of speech here and there is no attempt to criminalize criticism of Israel," Vernon said. "Instead, you can take the criticism of Israel only up to a certain point, which then carries over into unprotected speech."

Vernon claims that the intentions of the CPCCA are important for combating anti-Semitism as well as other forms of discrimination in Canada.

"We see this not only as important for combating this particular manifestation of hate but as a template to combat other social pathologies. We see this as being a benefit to all Canadians who agree that Canada should be a racism-free zone."

Weinstein predicted that the creation of a coalition to combat new anti-Semitism will ultimately result in real anti-Semitism.

"New anti-Semitism separates Jews from other people," he said. "Fanaticism for Israel is promoting anti-Semitism because it shows the world that Jews have a standard that no one else has."

The committee has independently reviewed evidence, heard witnesses, and attended briefings

from a variety of sources. Mario Silva, Liberal MP for Davenport in Ontario and chair of the CPCCA said that they hope to release report based on its findings and present it to the Government of Canada for a response by September.

THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE FOR COMBATING ANTI-SEMITISM

In February 2009, international parliamentarians attending the Interparliamentary Committee for Combating Anti-Semitism endorsed "The London Declaration for Combating Antisemitism," calling on governments around the world to recognize and address the problem of anti-Semitism, especially its manifestations in the media and academia.

Under the leadership of Citizenship and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney, and International Steering Committee Chair Professor Irwin Cotler, a delegation of eleven Canadian Members of Parliament attended the conference in London. They returned with the desire to form a Canadian coalition to fight antisemitism here. The CPCCA was formed in 2009 and brought together 21 MPs from all Canadian parties.

In March 2010, the Bloc Québécois withdrew its two MPs, Luc Desnoyer and Ève-Mary Thériault, from the committee, claiming that there was an inequality of opinions being presented.

Emma Quail studies History and Middle East studies at McGill University. Laurie Drake studies International Development and History at McGill University.

World Bank lending at record high, mainly loans to middle-income countries rather than aid to poor countries

In a fiscal year-end communiqué, the World Bank vaunted its financial commitment of "\$72 billion in fiscal year 2010, an unprecedented level of assistance for developing countries as the world faces a fragile and uneven recovery." However the Bank failed to point out that almost all of the growth in 2009-2010 has been in the form of interest-bearing loans to middle-income countries.

Commitments from the Bank's interest-bearing lending division grew by 34 per cent, whereas interest-free loans and grants issued by the division that provides assistance to the Bank's 79 low-income member countries grew by only 3.6 per cent.

A similar leap in loan financing to middle-income countries took place in 2008-2009, while assistance to poor countries grew at a much slower rate.

- Peter Bakvis, International Trade Union Confederation/Global Unions, Washington Office

Prices of main food staples rise rapidly in South Asia and parts of Sub-Saharan Africa

Food price inflation was at 20% in India in early 2010. In Burundi, the price of beans increased by 58% from November to February. Sharp increases in the price of staples have also occurred in Zimbabwe, Sudan, Chad, Haiti and Somalia over the past quarter and in Tanzania, Chad, Mali and Kenya.

- Source: Poverty Reduction and Equity Group, World Bank



Experts assess compliance by Department of Finance with law requiring human rights in international aid

BY LAURIE DRAKE

In 2008, the Canadian government passed the Official Development Assistance (ODA) Accountability Act in order to increase the effectiveness of Canadian aid money in developing countries. The Act stipulates that through its ODA, Canada must contribute to poverty reduction, take into account the perspectives of the poor, and be consistent with international human rights issues.

10% of Canadian ODA is channeled to the World Bank by way of the Department of Finance. While the World Bank claims that it informally supports human rights, there is no operations policy that enforces them; the Bank claims that human rights is a political issue that falls beyond the scope of its mandate.

So, how does Department of Finance plan to uphold the Act with regards to human rights standards?

Michael Horgan, Deputy Minister of the Department of Finance, in a letter to the Social Justice Committee, wrote: “By supporting greater transparency, good governance, country-led and community-driven development programs, and independent judiciary, and informed reporting by the media, the World Bank contributes to a climate where human rights can be advanced.”

To evaluate the five principles identified by Finance and determine whether they are consistent with international human rights standards, I

spoke with three experts: Nancy Thede, professor in the Faculty of social sciences at the Université du Québec à Montréal, Margot Salomon, Senior Lecturer in the Law Department and the Centre for the Study of Human Rights at the London School of Economics, and Lucie Lamarche, George F. Henderson Chair in Human Rights at University of Ottawa.

The consensus was that while the first two principles are ambiguous, the last three are in line with human rights standards. Although they are in line with human rights standards they only reflect civil and political rights. “None address social and economic rights that might be valuable to developing countries,” Salomon said.

TRANSPARENCY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

“Good governance and transparency are not expressions used in a human rights framework, but they do help to protect and promote human rights,” Lamarche said.

She said that while it is reasonable that the Department of Finance would focus on avoiding corruption, adding value to its dollar, and working towards projects that are accepted by the community, asking for greater adherence to international human rights law would pose a challenge.

“When asking a body like Department of Finance to be consistent with human rights standards you run the risk of forcing it to pick and choose. Because all human rights principles are equally interdependent and interrelated, picking

and choosing would give certain principles priority.”

COUNTRY-LED AND COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT

The experts agree that the third principle, country-led and community-driven development, integrates human rights standards. Salomon and Lamarche believe that this principle refers to the right to participation, while Thede adds that it reflects the right to development, whereby the receiving country should be in the driver’s seat.

INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY

The fourth principle, independent judiciary, is a classic component of civil and political rights. According to Lamarche, the last principle, informed reporting by the media, refers to freedom of the press and freedom of expression. So, while there may be no direct reference to human rights here, there is an implicit one.

Contributing to a climate conducive to the advancement of human rights and applying human rights law are two different things, Thede said. “The main concern when Finance uses this kind of language is not human rights, it’s about how human rights are forced into a good governance framework that is consistent with the revised neo-liberal agenda.”

REPORTING RESULTS

Under the Bretton Woods and Related Agreements Act, Finance must produce an annual report to Parliament on Canada’s involvement with the IMF and the World Bank. In its 2009 report, it included a section on the ODA Accountability Act.

“The report is in compliance with the letter of the act but not with the spirit of the act,” Thede said, although she acknowledged that Finance was the first department to comply with the Act by undertaking a consultation and producing its report on time.

The report dedicates four paragraphs to the Act at the end of the 117-page report, in an annex, but does not mention human rights in any other section. Finance was asked for information and clarification about how it implements and evaluates its compliance with the Act, but its spokespersons were unable to provide any.

Lamarche said that she is not cynical about the ODA Accountability Act, and believes that Canada is working towards a policy of accountability. “The real

answer is that this is a work in progress.”

Even so, she warns about the risk of a “check-list approach” to human rights, whereby boxes are ticked whenever actions superficially comply with the requirements of a human rights based approach. And she cautions that the Act is not policy. According to her, its requirements need to be applied on the basis of qualitative analyses on the ground.

“We can’t just use rights as documents or formulas. There’s no free lunch, no short cut to human rights.”

A human rights approach to development

Excerpts from the United Nations “Statement of Common Understanding”

A set of programme activities that only incidentally contributes to the realization of human rights does not necessarily constitute a human rights-based approach to programming, where the aim of all activities is to contribute directly to the realization of one or several human rights.

The application of good programming practices does not by itself constitute a human rights-based approach, which requires additional elements.

The following elements are necessary, specific and unique to a human rights- based approach:

- a) Assessment and analysis identify the human rights claims of rights-holders and the corresponding human rights obligations of duty-bearers, as well as the immediate, underlying, and structural causes when rights are not realized.
- b) Programmes assess the capacity of rights-holders to claim their rights and of duty- bearers to fulfill their obligations. They then develop strategies to build these capacities.
- c) Programmes monitor and evaluate both outcomes and processes guided by human rights standards and principles.
- d) Programming is informed by the recommendations of international human rights bodies and mechanisms.

In addition, it is essential that:

People are recognized as key actors in their own development, rather than passive recipients of commodities and services.

Participation is both a means and a goal.

Strategies are empowering.

Efforts to make human rights matter in World Bank are moving forward, despite reluctance of governments

BY DEREK MACCUISH

In the absence of a comprehensive human rights policy to protect the people affected by the World Bank's development programs all over the world, two initiatives at the World Bank have taken rights protection into their own hands.

The division of the World Bank that supports private sector investment, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), is working toward implementing clearer standards of social protection for the people its initiatives involve. IFC representatives say that the impetus for such standards comes from its business clients who are pushing for it to ensure their investments succeed.

Beyond the IFC, there is no similar effort to develop human rights policies within the World Bank. A serious difficulty with a rights-based approach is that some countries, like China, strongly oppose it, according to Cal MacWilliam, Senior Advisor to the Executive Director representing Canada on the World Bank Board of Directors. Many countries already have a problem with the basic governance indicators and the accountability required by the World Bank, MacWilliam continued, and many have problems with gender equality.

Country representatives are also largely unfamiliar with human rights policy, which may explain their neglect of rights-based approaches.

Another interesting development comes from a handful of progressive Nordic countries, which have kicked in \$20 million to create the Nordic Trust Fund. The Fund bypasses the lack of Bank-wide policy on human rights by strengthening rights protection at the project level. Participation is voluntary, and so includes projects led by individuals who already have an interest in observing rights standards.

When I spoke with Anders Zeijlon, Coordinator of the Nordic Trust Fund, about the program he described a "knowledge gap" between those who work on human rights and those who work on development. The Nordic Trust Fund is designed to

address this knowledge gap by educating Bank staff on rights rather than lobbying for changes in official World Bank policy. According to Zeijlon, World Bank staff isn't necessarily familiar with human rights, or what a rights-based approach might mean in practice – as in health provision in a particular country, for example.

Established with contributions from Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Finland and Sweden, the Nordic Trust Fund's stated objective is "to respond to the need for better internal knowledge and learning for Bank staff and management and to equip them to better understand how human rights relate to their work."

By using their experience to develop guidelines for use throughout the Bank, the Nordic Trust Fund hopes to generate greater awareness among Bank management and staff of how to implement a rights-based approach. They hope that this education will eventually broaden acceptance and use of human rights policy throughout the World Bank.

The establishment of the Nordic Trust Fund was contentious, and opposed by World Bank President Robert B. Zoellick, but other European countries came to its defence.

The Trust Fund will be working with about twenty project teams for a year or two, and translate the lessons learned into training material for World Bank staff. For example, one team is working in Colombia, where the highest court has ordered that health services be provided to all sectors of the community. The Nordic Trust is providing the funding to hire human rights expertise, and make this project, which has a clear human rights link, different.

LENDERS, NOT HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

A comprehensive human rights policy falls outside the scope of the World Bank's principal role as a lender and donor to developing countries, according to Cyprian Fisiy, the Director of the Social Development Department of the World Bank's Sustainable Development Network. In 2004 the World Bank doled out \$20.1 billion and offered financial and

technical advice for 245 poverty-reduction projects in developing countries around the world.

Fisiy views human rights in the World Bank context in terms of the distributional impacts of economic development their loans initiate – if the poor benefit as the result of a development project, their rights have been respected.

The World Bank is not an enforcer of international agreements on human rights to which countries are signatories, Fisiy told me, and it is an illusion to think that the World Bank can fight those battles on behalf of citizens.

“In terms of the rule of law, the World Bank approaches it very timidly,” Fisiy said, adding that the Bank focuses on building accountability, good governance and reducing corruption. “Greater transparency gives citizens the capacity to fight their own battles,”

Fisiy doesn’t see the development of a rights policy as practical.

“There are different systems of justice and interpretation. What does “justice” mean in different contexts, different communities? You are talking about a model of the state that isn’t universal.”

The knowledge gap also lies behind the Bank’s unwillingness to hold countries accountable to the international agreements they have signed on to, said MacWilliam. The World Bank’s Board of Directors are not up to speed on human rights agreements – even in the Canadian office there is no one with knowledge of rights-based development.

SMALL STEPS TOWARDS HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL

Despite these limitations, MacWilliam sees the Inspection Panel process as a step toward greater attention to human rights at the World Bank. Inspections investigate complaints of damaging environmental and social impacts and have increasingly included aspects of human rights. MacWilliam believes there is the possibility of improving these when the Bank conducts its policy review.

One review underway right now is of Performance Standards at the International Finance Corporation (IFC) division of the World Bank group.

The performance standards for the IFC inspection include two aspects of human rights protection – labour rights and the rights of indigenous people. The consultation on performance standards now being conducted includes a review of the gaps in rights protection, and a reconsideration of how to

engage with local communities.

There is strong NGO pressure to change the World Bank’s current approach to creating and implementing development projects, which marginalizes knowledge and input from people the projects affect. While the Bank does require consultation with local communities, these consultations have been criticized for being ineffective in gaining the community’s consent. A new approach is being considered – “good faith negotiation” – that considers local people as participants rather than as variables.

MAINSTREAMING RIGHTS AS RISK MANAGEMENT

The IFC and its private sector clients see rights as part of risk management, Yann Wyss, a Projects Officer at the Environmental and Social Development Department said, but the rest of the World Bank considers rights to be a government responsibility. And when you involve governments, it becomes political.

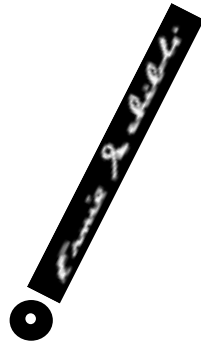
As it is, IFC policies on core labour rights actually go beyond the standards of the International Labour Organization, Wyss said, which are obligations for countries, because they include company responsibility.

“The challenge is really about how we can mainstream human rights language into the language we use now, which is social and environmental language, and what kind of changes that would lead to at the policy and project levels.”

These are not the first efforts to build rights language in World Bank practice. For several years there has been a team working to mainstream the rights of people with disabilities into World Bank programs, but with little success. The Poverty and Social Impact Assessment process that is supposed to guide projects from their outset has been much heralded but has done little to improve projects, let alone advance human rights protection.

Even so, the development of rights policies at the IFC and the efforts of the Nordic Trust are worth watching and supporting. It is long past time for Canada to participate in efforts like these to build respect for rights in World Bank programs.

Canada’s representative at the World Bank is
Executive Director Samy Watson
swatson1@worldbank.org



Years ago, the much-loved “bishop of the slums,” Brazil’s Dom Helder Camara, wrote that it was up to the people of the country themselves to take the steps necessary to achieve their freedom, democracy and social justice. No one else could do it for them.

On the other hand, he acknowledged that poverty in Brazil and other countries was, in part, caused by richer, more powerful countries and the institutions they controlled. He called upon the citizens of richer countries to act in solidarity with the world’s poor and oppressed.

I thought about this on a visit to Guatemala six or seven years ago, when members of the Movement of *Campesino* Workers took me to a place in the highlands, pointed to some holes in the ground. “This is where a company is about to construct a gold mine,” they said. “The people who live here do not want the mine. The company is Canadian, and we want you, as a Canadian, to do something about it.”

So began the SJC’s solidarity with the people of San Marcos opposed to the Marlin gold mine, owned then by Glamis Gold and now by Goldcorp.

Since then, there have been a number of ups and downs for the people of Sipakapa and San Miguel Ixtahuacan, the municipalities near the mine, as there have been for those Canadians working in solidarity with them.

The Guatemalans have seen their land devastated, their rivers and streams contaminated, their homes damaged, their communities fractured, their people arrested. On the other hand they have experienced the euphoria of many indigenous communities in the region uniting to oppose not only the Marlin mine but many other mines yet to be dug. They have found their voice, and in *consultas* (locally-organized consultations) have repeatedly shouted a resounding “no” to this and future mines. Their representatives have traveled the world garnering support for their struggle.

In Canada, the SJC and other organizations have experienced our own ups and downs. Like our Guatemalan counterparts, we found strength in unity as coalitions were formed on the local and national level. We participated in the government-sponsored round tables on extractive industries working abroad, rejoiced in the recommendations coming out of that process, and saddened when the federal government ignored the recommendations and installed toothless guidelines for the mining industry. We were buoyed when our education programs were well received and were equally dismayed when Goldcorp’s (and other companies) shareholders refused to listen to the people affected by this and other mines.

Now, both our Guatemalan friends and the Canadian solidarity movement have reached important moments in the struggle. A number of international studies on the effects of the Marlin mine on the environment and people’s rights have confirmed the reasons to be concerned about the mine. In May the Inter-American Human Rights Commission called upon the Guatemalan government to temporarily suspend mine operations to allow time to investigate the complaints of the local communities more fully.

In Canada, John McKay’s private member’s bill C-300, calling for better regulation of Canadian mining companies working overseas, continues to wend its way through parliament. The government is clearly against the bill but, being a minority, requires some support from deputies in the other parties. As expected, the mining industry and its friends are lobbying hard against the bill (something that the NGO community is allowed to do only in a very limited way.) Meanwhile, at Goldcorp’s AGM, shareholders rejected a call to suspend operations at the Marlin mine.

In both countries the battle lines are being strengthened. May justice prevail.

Ernie Schibli is a founding member of the SJC, and one of our most popular workshop animators. 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.

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Most articles are produced in the SJC office by volunteers and interns who are in training in journalism, with guidance and content input from the editor.

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Funding appeal

The Social Justice Committee is in financial trouble. We spend more than we take in.

Can we cut our spending? It's hard to when you publish this magazine, conduct 50 workshops - plus a theatre program - each year, train dozens of interns and volunteers, and engage in policy advocacy at the national and international levels. We pay for 2 employees, and rent on an office with a dozen networked computers. All for under \$120,000.

Can we raise more money? We're trying. But it's tough. There just aren't many options for an independent group providing education and advocacy on international human rights. Our funding comes almost entirely from individuals, religious communities, and the Province of Quebec.

Aren't there other groups that do the same work? No, there aren't. Many do great charity work like building schools and clinics. We explore the reasons why that charity is needed, and argue that what is needed even more are respect for human rights and justice, and the empowerment of the oppressed. Our programs focus on how Canadians can be better informed and effective in changing the world for the better.

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The *Upstream Journal* is seeking volunteers and interns in writing, design or magazine development.

Writing a story will introduce you to important issues of human rights efforts. You'll research the issues, talk with the people who are key to getting the full picture, and learn how to write as a journalist.

Working in design will give you experience in using photos and graphics in magazine layout.

Magazine development is the big picture - what kind of magazine do readers want? How can we improve the content, the design, the marketing?

If you are interested in volunteering or interning with us, contact the editor.

It is generally estimated that half a million people were exposed to the gas and 20,000 died as a result of their exposure.

In June 2010, seven Indian Union Carbide India Ltd. officials were convicted for their role in the Bhopal Gas Tragedy, sentenced to 2 years, and released on bail pending an appeal.

Warren Anderson, Union Carbide CEO, was arrested and then released on bail shortly after the tragedy. He left India immediately and never returned. In 1992 he was declared a fugitive by the Bhopal court. In 2003 the government made a formal request for his extradition from the US, which was refused.

The government of India has been criticized for allowing the plant in a heavily populated area in the first place, for impeding investigation into the disaster, and for accepting a settlement on behalf of people who were affected, blocking court action by victims.



Children from Prem Nagar, a neighborhood behind the factory affected by contaminated water.



Women from J.P. Nagar basti. This basti (slum) is across the road from the Union carbide plant, next to Qazi Camp, and was directly in the path of the poison gas.



Nikeeta, a child from Qazi Camp basti, plants medicinal Sadha Sugana flowers in the herbal medicine garden of the Sambhavna Trust Clinic. The garden produces fresh herbs to use in the Ayurvedic medicines dispensed by the clinic, which also trains people in organic gardening techniques and the use of medicinal herbs.

Shortly before midnight on 2 December 1984, thousands of pounds of deadly chemicals leaked from Union Carbide's pesticide plant in Bhopal, central India.

Around half a million people were exposed. Between 7,000 and 10,000 people died in the immediate aftermath.

More than 25 years later, the site has not been cleaned up, the leak and its impact have not been properly investigated, more than 100,000 people continue to suffer from health problems without the medical care they need, and survivors say they are still awaiting fair compensation and full redress for their suffering.



Protests outside the walls of the abandoned Union Carbide pesticide plant. As mothers, wives and daughters-in-law, often the only breadwinners of their families, women have suffered the most, both from a socio-economic standpoint, and with respect to their health. When Bhopali women began mobilizing and eventually protesting, many of them were taunted and discouraged by their husbands, and unsupported by their families. After years of the struggle, and numerous successes and achievements, Bhopali women are now some of India's strongest and most passionate activists.