Muna Ali, Rachel Gurofsky, and Juby Lee

SOCI 358H and WMST 383H

Professor Mary-Jo Nadeau

May 24, 2008

Annotated Bibliography on the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP)

Basok, Tanya. "Diasporas, Cultural Divides, Social Encounters: Mexican Worker and Their Rights." *Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean Homepage* September 2003. 21 May 2008 <http://www.yorku.ca/cerlac/migration/Tanya_Basok.pdf>.

In this paper, Basok argues that the social exclusion of migrant workers contrasts greatly to the way that immigrants are provided for. Workers are denied social inclusions that then affect their access to legal rights (such as health care, benefits etc). Generally, the workers then socialize with each other and rarely are included in the larger Canadian community. Basok points out the workers regularly contribute to the Canadian economy but are always viewed as temporary 'sojourners.'

---. *Tortillas and Tomatoes: Transmigrant Mexican Harvesters in Canada*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2003.

This book looks at the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) and presents the conditions and experiences of people who migrate to work under the

program. There is an overview of the labour shortage in Canada and the conception of the program, as well, the vulnerability of the workers in a sector that deals with perishable food. The second part addresses some of the experiences of some of the Mexican workers, looking why they migrate, what benefits it brings to their families and the conditions they live under while in Canada. This book is a good overview of the program and the people that come under it.

---. "Free to be Unfree: Mexican Guest Workers in Canada." *Labour, Capital and Society* 32.2 (1999): 192-221.

In this paper, Basok defines the term 'unfree' and argues that workers under the SAWP are simultaneously free and unfree. She goes on to discuss how the exploitation within the system; workers are pushed to migrate because of deteriorating economic conditions in Mexico, as well, political-legal constraints are utilized, for example keeping employees bound to one employer who can repatriate the workers at anytime. Lastly, the employers manufacture consent by using a paternalistic approach (such as providing 'extras' like rides into town, protection from violence, sponsoring festivities) that provides incentives to keep the workers here in Canada until they are no longer needed.

Bauder, Harald. "Landscape and Scale in Media Representations: The Construction of Offshore Farm Labour in Ontario, Canada." *Cultural Geographies* 12.1 (2005): 41-58.

Bauder's article examines the representation of seasonal agricultural migrant workers in the economic and cultural landscape of rural Ontario. This representation plays a pivotal role in the ideological justification of current labour practices within the SAWP that constrain workers freedoms. Bauder believes that the representation of the rural landscape plays an important role in the marginalization of migrant workers. In essence, Bauder argues that migrant workers are pushed into the background of the imagination of the rural landscape. The author uses a cultural geographic perspective in his study of seasonal agricultural workers. In addition, he gathers information from local Ontario newspapers to examine the representation of migrant workers.

Del Carmen Fuchs, Erika. "Social Crisis in Mexico: Fight Back or Migrate." *Justicia for Migrant Workers* 2006. 21 May 2008 <http://www.justicia4migrantworkers.org/resources/socialcrisis.pdf>.

Del Carmen Fuchs' article discusses how both Canada and Mexico benefit from the SAWP. The author argues that the Mexican government's implementation of neoliberal policies that favour free markets and open borders for goods (not people) contributes to the increasing poverty, insecurity, lack of decent and secure work, and displacement of people that forces Mexicans to leave home and participate in SAWP in order to support their families. As a result of her work with Justicia for Migrant Workers (J4MW), Del Carmen Fuchs uses a J4MW analysis in her articles.

Grez, Evelyn Encalada. "Justice for Migrant Farm Workers: Reflections on the Importance of Community Organizing." *Relay: A Socialist Project Review* (July/August 2006): 23-25.

Grez's article discusses the challenges in organizing workers who participate in the SAWP. Grez argues that the globalized economy poses constant challenges to community labour organizing. She also identifies the constraints and problems with the Canadian labour movement. Grez uses a J4MW analysis in her articles. She uses the experiences of the members of J4MW to examine the labour movement, the global economy, and SAWP.

---. "Harvesting the Seeds of Resistance: The Plight of Migrant Workers in Ontario." *Women & Environments International Magazine* 68/69 (2005): 1-7.

Grez's article outlines the exploitation of migrant workers in Canada. She argues that migrant farm workers are controlled and structured as a gendered, racialized and heteronormative labour force by the SAWP. Grez specifically examines how women are exploited by SAWP and how the program is targeted at men because women are not seen as 'breadwinners'. Grez uses a J4MW analysis in her articles. As a co-founder of J4MW, Grez draws from her personal experience working with migrant workers in Ontario.

Gutierrez, Israel Gonzalez. "Protection of Migrant Agricultural Workers' Rights." M.S.W. thesis. McMaster University, 2006.

In his thesis, Gutierrez uses interviews with migrant agricultural workers and key informants from advocacy groups to discuss how relevant changing Canadian legislation has been for the workers. His thesis looks at the advocacy work done by J4MW and the United Food and Commercial Workers union and looks at the gains made be these parties. Later, the author scrutinizes the position of the workers in a Canadian welfare state and in a global context.

Kramer, Melanie. *Migrant Workers in Ontario: Growing the Food We Eat*. *Waterloo Public Interest Research Group Homepage* n.d. 21 May 2008 <http://www.wpirg.org/downloads/WPIRG_MigrantWorkersInOntario.pdf>.

An Ontario Public Interest Research Group publication, this booklet gives an accessible overview of the conditions of the SAWP. Used a tool to raise awareness of the presence of agricultural workers in Canada, especially in Ontario, this publication includes general information about the program itself, the benefits and the challenges. Useful tool to get the discussion going as it also lists advocacy groups, links, and "where to go from here" section.

Martinez-Salazar, E. "The 'Poisoning' of Indigenous Migrant Women Worker and Children: From Deadly Colonialism to Toxic Globalization." *Women Working the NAFTA Food Chain: Women, Food & Globalization*. Ed. Deborah Barndt. Toronto: Second Story P, 1999. 99-109.

Martinez-Salazar article links the affects of colonialism and globalization to the migration of Mexican women for work in the agricultural industry. The author

argues that trade liberalization, with its vast flows of capital, has deepened the economic exploitation, political exclusion, racial and patriarchal discrimination of Indigenous Mexican women. The article also examines the how international policies contribute to existence of agricultural workers' migration and discusses the affects of pesticides on women. The analysis used by the author is based on an examination of interlocking systems of oppression, and Martinez-Salazar uses scholarly sources and personal experiences.

McLaughlin, Janet. "Who is Responsible? Life and Death for Two Migrant Farm-Workers." *Juxtaposition* 1.2 (Spring 2006): 16-21.

McLaughlin's article examines the structural injustices embedded in the SAWP, taking as her starting point the supposedly isolated phenomena of migrant farm workers being struck and killed by motorists while biking into town. She argues that the responsibility for their deaths lies not only with the motorist but with the program itself, which does not guarantee basic services like phone access on farms or access to safe transportation to migrant farm workers. She backs up her argument with quotations from the murdered workers' families, and an analysis of the racialized political economy of the program.

Preibisch, Kerry and Leigh Binford. "Interrogating Racialized Global Labour Supply: An Exploration of the Racial/National Replacement of Foreign Agricultural Workers in Canada." *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 44.1 (2007): 5-36.

The topic of Preibisch and Binford's article is the racialized dimensions of the SAWP. They argue that "Canadian growers and government administrators hold racialized ideologies about the suitability of different nationalities to certain crops" (17), one reason why the number of Mexican migrant workers is now greater than the number of migrant workers from the Caribbean, though they also note that shifts in the global market demand for certain agricultural commodities have played a role. Preibisch and Binford support their argument with the in-depth interviews they conducted with growers, administrators, migrant worker advocates, labour organizers, and migrant workers (informally) between 2002 and 2004.

Satzewich, Vic. "Business or Bureaucratic Dominance in Immigration Policymaking in Canada: Why was Mexico Included in the Caribbean Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program in 1974?" *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 8.3 (2007): 255-275.

Satzewich's article focuses on the introduction of Mexican labour into the SAWP in 1974. Satzewich argues that because immigration bureaucrats faced a legitimacy crisis amongst Ontario farmers in the early 1970s after farmers began turning to undocumented workers to fill their farm labour shortages, and because the government wanted to undercut the bargaining power of Caribbean labour, the SAWP was expanded to include Mexico. He also argues that policy communities need to be taken into account as influential actors within political economy analyses. Satzewich supports his argument with excerpts from unpublished

documents from the 1960s and 1970s from the Canadian Department of Manpower and Immigration.

Sharma, Nandita. *Home Economics: Nationalism and the Making of 'Migrant Workers' in Canada*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2006.

Home Economics focuses on the institutionalization of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program. Sharma interrogates the nationalist and racist ideologies that underlie such concepts as 'migrant worker,' 'national border,' 'difference,' and 'home.' She argues that "nationality operates as a legitimate mode of discrimination" (18) and that we must reject the 'global apartheid' that the naturalization of differences (as opposed to diversity) engenders. After a theoretical review, Sharma performs a textual analysis of Canadian parliamentary debates and analyses statistics documenting the number of people admitted to Canada under differing classes (immigrant and non-immigrant) using a 'no-borders' and anti-capitalist analysis.

UFCW Canada. *The Status of Migrant Farm Workers in Canada 2006-2007. UFCW Canada Homepage* 2008. 11 May 2008 <http://www.ufcw.ca/Theme/UFCW/files/PDF 2007/StatusReportEN2007.pdf>.

This report provides an outline of current challenges and past victories for migrant worker advocacy from the organized labour perspective of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW). The UFCW argues that the SAWP and the new Low Skilled Temporary Foreign Worker Program must improve their

regulatory regimes in order to protect the rights and improve the representation of migrant workers, and the report concludes with fifteen policy recommendations that support the UFCW's argument. Though not referenced as a formal academic paper would be, the report includes anonymous anecdotal worker testimonies and case study evidence to back up its policy recommendations.

Muna Ali, Rachel Gurofsky, and Juby Lee

SOCI 358H and WMST 383H

Professor Mary-Jo Nadeau

May 26, 2008

Migrant Worker Kits: Next Steps

We have completed the resource booklet of places and services that seasonal agricultural workers in the Northumberland region might find useful. But there's a still a lot of work to do! The New Canadians Centre Peterborough (NCCP) will take the lead in the next stages of assembling the welcome kit.

Next steps and notes, in no particular order:

- The kits need to be reviewed by NCC staff and volunteers, and ideally some migrant worker contacts, to determine whether the information presently included is useful. The kits need to be made as user-friendly as possible (more information may need to be added re: how to fill out the attached government forms; more information could also be added to specific resources re: discounts, specific services available, etc.). The ideal deadline for this process is **the week of Monday June 2nd**, before the translation work begins.
- Sophia Ayala and Yazmin Hernandez have volunteered to work on translation during the first two weeks of June. The pages photocopied from "Health and Safety Issues for Agricultural Workers" have already been translated into Spanish and will be kept at the NCCP.
- A list of volunteer drivers is needed, so that workers can get rides into town in emergency situations or during times that are not their usual once-a-week time.
- We included some big brand name stores and banks because a) the workers will use them, and b) we can ask the stores for funding/donations for the kits. As well, we can place the kits in

areas where they will reach the most workers. The NCC will contact the "hotspots" to determine if the businesses are willing to cater to migrant workers, if their services are relevant.

- Emergency contacts and key info should be put onto key chains or magnets, or made into stiff cards to include at the back of the kits. We had the idea that the key chains could say "*Migrant* Farmers Feed Cities."
- Other items that could be included in the kits, which need to be sourced and priced:
    - Pocket Spanish/English Dictionary and/or Frontier College passport
    - Maps of Cobourg, Port Hope, and Brighton (available from tourism offices)
    - Band-aids
    - Bandanas
    - Sunscreen (though there are concerns that it would increase susceptibility to pesticide poisoning – follow up on this)
    - Durable water bottle
    - Gloves
    - International calling card
    - Disposable camera
    - Sunglasses
- We also had the idea of asking grocery stores that carry canvas/fabric bags to let us put our kit materials inside, so that the kits are less conspicuous coming back to the farms, so that the bags might be donated or discounted, and so that the grocery store feels like they're getting something out of distributing the kits (advertising, customer loyalty etc).
- The following information could be included in the kits in flyer form (Pat and NCC volunteers will confirm details as the summer continues):
    - A network of volunteer drivers coordinated through the NCC's Cobourg office at Horizons

- ESL classes if there is a demand for them
- A community dinner in August
- A trip to buy clothes at Horizon's thrift shoppe
- Self-defence classes for women workers
- General assistance from the NCC office in Cobourg on various issues

*** We advise that a meeting be called at the NCCP during the week of June 2nd to discuss the next stages of putting together the kits.**

Resources for SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS in the Northumberland Region (Cobourg, Port Hope, and Brighton)

Photo credit: Adam Perry

DRAFT

Assembled by the New Canadians Centre Peterborough
Summer 2008

Emergency Contact Numbers

Police, Ambulance and Firefighters: 911

Poison Information Centre: 1-800-268-9017

Northumberland Hills Hospital Crisis Line: 1-888-294-7579
1000 DePalma Drive
Cobourg, ON
Phone: (905) 372-6811

Telehealth Ontario (Free 24 Hour Health Advice): 1-866-797-0000

Northumberland Distress Centre (Emotional Support):
1-800-363-5919

Northumberland Services for Women: 1-800-263-3757
32 Swayne Street
Cobourg, ON

Northumberland Community Legal Centre: 1-800-850-7882
1005 Elgin Street, Suite 301
Cobourg, ON
- Provides legal advice on Employment Insurance

Legal Aid Ontario: (905) 372-2432
240-C Division Street
Cobourg, ON
- Serves individuals who need a lawyer but cannot afford one

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board: 1-888-259-4228

If you *lose* your Health Card: 1-800-664-8988

If you *lose* your SIN Card: 1-800-206-7218 x 3

Cobourg

GROCERY STORES

No Frills
500 Division Street
Cobourg, ON
Phone: (905) 372-6976
Hours: Monday-Sunday, 8:00 am to 9:00 pm

FOOD BANKS

Northumberland Fare Share
775 Division Street, Northam Industrial Park, Unit 17 South
Cobourg, ON
Phone: (905) 372-5308
Hours: Wednesday, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm and 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

The Help Centre
1005 Elgin Street West, Suite 301
Cobourg, ON
Phone: 1-888-698-3382

BANKS

BMO Bank of Montreal
62 King Street West
Cobourg, ON
Phone: (905) 372-6833
Hours: Monday-Wednesday 9:30 am to 5:00 pm, Thursday and Friday 9:30 am to 6:00 pm

RBC Royal Bank
66 King Street West
Cobourg, ON
Phone: (905) 372-2101
Hours: Monday to Thursday 9:30 am to 4:30 pm, Friday 9:30 am to 5:30 pm

Scotiabank
68 King Street West
Cobourg, ON
(905) 372-3361
Hours: Monday to Thursday 9:30 am to 5 pm, Friday 9:30 am to 6:00 pm

Cobourg

WALK-IN CLINICS

Fast Track Walk-In Clinic
1000 DePalma Drive
Cobourg ON
Phone: (905) 372-6811
Hours: Monday-Friday 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm

After Hours Clinic/Walk in Clinic
1060 Burnham Street, Unit 5
Cobourg, ON
Phone: (905) 373-8333
Hours: Monday-Friday, 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm, and Saturday, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

TAXI COMPANIES

Van Taxi
Phone: (905) 373-8850

Road Runner Taxi
Phone: (905) 372-0888

Cobourg/Port Hope Taxi
Phone: (905) 373-9449

A-1 Taxi
Phone: (905) 372-4449

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Cobourg Transit
55 King Street West
Cobourg, ON
Phone: (905) 372-4555
Schedule: Monday to Friday 6:15 am to 9:45 am, Saturday and Sunday 8:15 am to 6:45 pm

LAUNDROMATS

Kathy's Quick & Clean Coin Laundry
55 Albert Street
Cobourg, ON
Phone: (905) 372-1226
Hours: Monday-Saturday 8:30am to 9:00 pm, Sundays 9:30am to 8:00 pm

THRIFT STORES

Horizons of Friendship
50 Covert Street
Cobourg, ON
Phone (Toll-Free): 1-888-729-9928
Hours: Monday-Friday 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Northumberland Humane Society Thrift Store
46 Covert Street
Cobourg, ON
Phone: (905) 372-8451
Hours: Monday-Saturday 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

PUBLIC INTERNET ACCESS

Village Legion
21 University Avenue East
Cobourg, ON
Phone: (905) 372-2355

LIBRARY

Cobourg Public Library
200 Ontario Street
Cobourg, ON
Phone: (905) 372-9271
Hours: Monday-Thursday 10:00 am to 8:00 pm, Friday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, and Saturday 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

RECREATION CENTRE

Cobourg YMCA
339 Elgin Street West
Cobourg, ON
Phone: (905) 372-9247
Hours: Monday-Friday 5:30 am to 10:00 pm, Saturday 6:30 am to 8:30 pm, Sunday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, and Holidays 7:00 am to 5:00 pm

Port Hope

GROCERY STORES

A & P Food Store
125 Hope Street South
Port Hope, ON
Phone: (905) 885-8194
Hours: Monday-Sunday 24 hrs/day

Sun Tree Foods
19 Ontario Street
Port Hope, ON
Phone: (905) 885-9900
Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:00 am to 5:30 pm, Friday 9:00 am to 7:00 pm, and Saturday 9:00 am to 5:30 pm

BBC Convenience
99 Walton Street
Port Hope, ON
Phone: (905) 885-9722
Hours: Monday-Sunday 7:00 am to 10:30 pm

Your Independent Grocer
20 Jocelyn Road
Port Hope, ON
Phone: (905) 885-1867
Hours: Monday-Sunday 8:00 am to 10:00 pm

FOOD BANKS

Northumberland Fare Share
34 South Street
Port Hope, ON
Phone: (905) 885-6674
Hours: Wednesday 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

BANKS AND CREDIT UNIONS

BMO Bank of Montreal
70 Walton Street
Port Hope, ON
Phone: (905) 885-4531
Hours: Monday-Wednesday 9:30 am to 5:00 pm, Thursday-Friday 9:30 am to 6:00 pm

RBC Royal Bank
85 Walton Street
Port Hope, ON
Phone: (905) 885-6306
Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:30 am to 4:30 pm, Friday 9:30 am to 5:30 pm

Scotiabank
69 Walton Street
Port Hope, ON
Phone: (905) 885-6311
Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:30 am to 4:00 pm, Friday 9:30 am to 6:00 pm

TD Canada Trust
113 Walton Street
Port Hope, ON
Phone: (905) 885-6361
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 am to 6:00 pm, Saturday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Ganaraska Credit Union
17 Queen Street
Port Hope, ON
Phone: (905) 885-8134
Hours: Monday-Wednesday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Thursday and Friday 9:00 am to 6:00 pm

WALK-IN CLINICS

Port Hope Walk-In Clinic
249 Ontario Street
Port Hope, ON
Phone: (905) 885-0611
Hours: Monday-Friday 1:00 pm to 8:00 pm, Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays 10:00 am to 6:00 pm

TAXI COMPANIES

Classic Cab
7 Queen Street
Port Hope ON
Phone: (905) 885-8088

Port Hope/Cobourg Taxi
Phone: (905) 885-7264

Port Hope

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Port Hope Transit
56 Queen Street
Port Hope, ON
Phone: (905) 885-4544
Schedule: Monday to Saturday: Westbound 7:58 am to 4:58 pm, Eastbound 8:20 am to 5:20 pm

LAUNDROMATS

Port Hope Coin Laundry/Dry Cleaners
103 Peter Street
Port Hope, ON
Phone: (905) 885-7185
Hours: Monday-Sunday 9:00 am to 9:00 pm

THRIFT STORES

My Sister's Closet
92 Walton Street
Port Hope ON
Phone: (905) 885-8823
Hours: Monday-Saturday 9:30 am to 5:00 pm

Salvation Army Community Thrift Store
34 Walton Street
Port Hope, ON
Phone: (905) 885-6518

LIBRARY

Mary J. Benson Public Library
31 Queen Street
Port Hope, ON
Phone: (905) 885-4712
Hours: Monday-Thursday 10:00 am to 8:00 pm, Friday 10:00 am to 6:00 pm, Saturday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

RECREATION CENTRE

The Town Park Recreation Centre
62 McCaul Street
Port Hope, ON
Phone: (905) 885-7908
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 am to 10:00 pm, Saturday 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, Sunday 8:00 am to 5 pm

Brighton

GROCERY STORES

Sobeys
14 Main Street
Brighton, ON
Phone: (613) 475-0200
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 am to 9:00 pm, Saturday and Sunday 8:00 am to 8:00 pm

No Frills
155 Elizabeth Street
Brighton, ON
Phone: (613) 475-4019
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 am to 9:00 pm, Saturday and Sunday 8:00 am to 8:00 pm

FOOD BANKS

Brighton Fare Share
23 Prince Edward Street
Brighton, ON
Hours: Last two Wednesdays of the month 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

BANKS

CIBC
48 Main Street
Brighton, ON
Phone: (613) 475-2054
Hours: Monday-Friday 9:30 am to 5:00 pm

RBC Royal Bank
75 Main Street
Brighton, ON
Phone: (613) 475-0951
Hours: Monday-Friday 9:30 am to 5:00 pm

TAXI COMPANIES

Action Bellamy Taxi
RR 4
Brighton, ON
Phone: (613) 475-1682

Brighton

Brighton Taxi
22 Prince Edward Street
Brighton, ON
Phone: (613) 475-1119

LAUNDROMAT

Brighton Laundromat
64 Elizabeth Street
Brighton, ON
Phone: (613) 475-2939
Hours: Monday-Sunday 6:30 am to10:30 pm

BARGAIN STORES

The Bargain Shop
41 Prince Edward Street
Brighton, ON
Phone: (613) 475-9520
Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 am to 9:00 pm, Saturday 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, Sunday 11:00 am to 5 pm

The Dollar Choice
31 Main Street
Brighton, ON
Phone: (613) 475-0958
Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, Friday 9:00 am to 7:00 pm, Saturday 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, and Sunday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

LIBRARY

Brighton Public Library
35 Alice Street
Brighton, ON
Phone: (613) 475-2511
Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9:30 am to 4:30 pm, Thursday 12:00 pm to 7:30 pm, and Saturday 9:30 am to 3:00 pm

RECREATION CENTRE

YMCA of Brighton
170 Main Street
Brighton, ON
Phone: (613) 475-2887
Hours: Monday-Thursday 6:00 am to 9:30 pm, Friday 6:00 am to 8:00 pm, Saturday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, and Sunday 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

In this section:

- **Health Card information**
- **Legal information**
- **How to apply for parental leave benefits**
- **How to file your income tax**
- **Health and safety information**
- **Key contact list**
- ***Forms*: Registration for Ontario Health Coverage, Request for Record of Employment (ROE), Social Insurance Number Application, and WSIB Form 6 – Worker's Report of Injury/Disease**

Copied from ***Health and Safety Issues for Agricultural Workers* (2006),** produced by the Workers Health and Safety Centre and the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers for farm workers
A Canadian Labour Congress "Global Justice Care Van" Project

BEATS 4 JUSTICE!

FUNDRAISER FOR THE ARDOCH ALGONQUIN FIRST NATION

LAL

DJ SHEENA

DAVE HUDSON

UNITY SINGERS

HESPER PHILIP-CHAMBERLAIN

FRIDAY MARCH 14 @ 9 PM

THE RED DOG

189 HUNTER ST WEST

$10 WAGED/$5 UNWAGED/PAY-AS-MUCH-AS-YOU-CAN

WHYGREENISNTENOUGH.BLOGSPOT.COM

SPONSORED AND SUPPORTED BY: Community and Race Relations Committee of Peterborough; CUPE Local 3908; Fair Trade Trent; Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Native Studies; Kawartha World Issues Centre; New Canadians Centre Peterborough; OPIRG-Peterborough; Peterborough-Kawarthas Chapter of the Council of Canadians; Peterborough Coalition Against Poverty; Sustainable Trent; Roy Brady; Theatre Trent; Trent Central Student Association; Trent Centre for Community-Based Education; Trent Environmental Students Society; Trent University Faculty Association; Trent University's Canadian Studies, Environmental and Resource Studies, Politics, Sociology, and Women's Studies Departments; Trent University's Champlain, Gzowski, Lady Eaton, Otonabee, and Traill College Cabinets; Trent University Graduate Student Association; and Trent University's Environmental Issues and Women's Issues Commissioners.

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM
AND THE SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS PROGRAM (SAWP)

WITH
CHRIS RAMSAROOP

Justicia for Migrant Workers

JANET MCLAUGHLIN

PhD Candidate, Anthropology, University of Toronto

ALLAN

Participant in the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program

SATURDAY, MARCH 15 at 12 pm
PETERBOROUGH PUBLIC LIBRARY
345 AYLMER ST NORTH

SPONSORED AND SUPPORTED BY: Community and Race Relations Committee of Peterborough; CUPE Local 3908; Fair Trade Trent; Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Native Studies; Kawartha World Issues Centre; New Canadians Centre Peterborough; OPIRG-Peterborough; Peterborough-Kawarthas Chapter of the Council of Canadians; Peterborough Coalition Against Poverty; Sustainable Trent; Roy Brady; Theatre Trent; Trent Central Student Association; Trent Centre for Community-Based Education; Trent Environmental Students Society; Trent University Faculty Association; Trent University's Canadian Studies, Environmental and Resource Studies, Politics, Sociology, and Women's Studies Departments; Trent University's Champlain, Gzowski, Lady Eaton, Otonabee, and Traill College Cabinets; Trent University Graduate Student Association; Trent University's Environmental Issues and Women's Issues Commissioners; Trent Women's Centre; and the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union.

whygreenisntenough.blogspot.com

BEATS 4 JUSTICE!

Fundraiser for the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation

FRIDAY MARCH 14 // 9 pm - 1 am
@ THE RED DOG (189 Hunter)

~ Featuring ~

LAL

DJ SHEENA

DAVE HUDSON

THE UNITY SINGERS

HESPER PHILIP-CHAMBERLAIN

$10 waged/$5 unwaged
or pay-as-much-as-you-can

Part of the WHY GREEN ISN'T ENOUGH Conference

whygreenisntenough.blogspot.com

WHY GREEN ISN'T ENOUGH

An Anti-Racist Anti-Colonial Environmentalism Conference

March 14 &15 - Peterborough Public Library
Free - No registration - Everyone welcome!

Featuring talks on:

Environmental Justice in Canada
(Friday March 14 at 7 pm)

Environmental Racism and the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP)
(Saturday March 15 at 12 pm)

Effects of Energy Extraction and Climate Change on Indigenous Peoples
(Saturday March 15 at 2:30 pm)

For the list of speakers, sponsors, and more info, visit

whygreenisntenough.blogspot.com

EFFECTS OF ENERGY EXTRACTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

WITH
PAULA SHERMAN

Co-Chief, Ardoch Algonquin First Nation

LEANNE SIMPSON

Former Director of Trent's Indigenous Environmental Studies Program

CLAYTON THOMAS-MULLER

Indigenous Environmental Network

SATURDAY, MARCH 15 at 2:30 pm
PETERBOROUGH PUBLIC LIBRARY
345 AYLMER ST NORTH

SPONSORED AND SUPPORTED BY: Community and Race Relations Committee of Peterborough; CUPE Local 3908; Fair Trade Trent; Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Native Studies; Kawartha World Issues Centre; New Canadians Centre Peterborough; OPIRG-Peterborough; Peterborough-Kawarthas Chapter of the Council of Canadians; Peterborough Coalition Against Poverty; Sustainable Trent; Roy Brady; Theatre Trent; Trent Central Student Association; Trent Centre for Community-Based Education; Trent Environmental Students Society; Trent University Faculty Association; Trent University's Canadian Studies, Environmental and Resource Studies, Politics, Sociology, and Women's Studies Departments; Trent University's Champlain, Gzowski, Lady Eaton, Otonabee, and Traill College Cabinets; Trent University Graduate Student Association; Trent University's Environmental Issues and Women's Issues Commissioners; Trent Women's Centre; and the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union.

whygreenisntenough.blogspot.com

STORIES LESS TOLD
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND RACISM IN CANADA

WITH DR. ANDIL GOSINE

Author of *Environmental Justice and Racism in Canada: An Introduction*

and

KAREN OKAMOTO

Contributor to *Environmental Justice and Racism in Canada: An Introduction*

FRIDAY, MARCH 14 at 7 pm
PETERBOROUGH PUBLIC LIBRARY
345 AYLMER ST NORTH

SPONSORED AND SUPPORTED BY: Community and Race Relations Committee of Peterborough; CUPE Local 3908; Fair Trade Trent; Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Native Studies; Kawartha World Issues Centre; New Canadians Centre Peterborough; OPIRG-Peterborough; Peterborough-Kawarthas Chapter of the Council of Canadians; Peterborough Coalition Against Poverty; Sustainable Trent; Roy Brady; Theatre Trent; Trent Central Student Association; Trent Centre for Community-Based Education; Trent Environmental Students Society; Trent University Faculty Association; Trent University's Canadian Studies, Environmental and Resource Studies, Politics, Sociology, and Women's Studies Departments; Trent University's Champlain, Gzowski, Lady Eaton, Otonabee, and Traill College Cabinets; Trent University Graduate Student Association; Trent University's Environmental Issues and Women's Issues Commissioners; Trent Women's Centre; and the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union.

whygreenisntenough.blogspot.com

table of contents

what the Youth Environmental Network is all about

The Youth Environmental Network (YEN) was created in 2001 by a collection of Canada's leading youth environmental groups to address issues essential to the success of the youth environmental movement. From the ground up, they constructed a national youth environmental capacity building organization.

YEN seeks to increase the effectiveness of the Canadian youth environmental movement in its efforts to raise awareness of environmental issues, effect policy and promote lifestyle changes.

YEN is mandated to: provide tools, resources and support to YENGOs; outreach to and network YENGOs nationwide; promote youth involvement in policy development; and build bridgesconnecting groups working on mainstream environmental issues with those working on issues not traditionally considered as environmental such as social justice, human rights and Aboriginal rights.

The YEN is your network - we're here to help your organizations and campaigns grow!

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO GET INVOLVED WITH YEN PLEASE CONTACT US AT:

Email: info@yen-rej.org
www.yen-rej.org

300-945 Wellington
Ottawa, On K1Y 2X5
(613) 728-9810 (33)
Fax: (613) 728-2963

DIRECTIVES OF THE YEN

- securing access to capacity building resources for youth environmental non-government organizations (YENGOs);
- developing a strong collective voice on issues of importance to YENGOs;
- creating opportunities for joint projects;
- examining how to effectively interact with government and government youth programs;
- engaging and empowering youth in environmental and sustainable policy development;
- creating a youth presence in policy processes;
- maintaining organizational continuity in YENGOs; and developing a national YENGO network.

what the Green Justice Retreat is all about

THE VISION INSPIRING THIS PROJECT:

The Green Justice Project embodies a bold and inspiring challenge to the mainstream environmental movement to actively examine and address the way racism and other intersecting oppressions both are reflected in and affect organizing tactics, strategies, priority issues, and the composition of the movement itself.

THE CORE GOAL FOR THIS PROJECT:

To build skills and initiate action by youth within environmental organizations and to challenge individual and institutional racism within the environmental movement.

BACKGROUND ON THE GREEN JUSTICE RETREAT:

From the beginning, the YEN has acknowledged the lack of anti-racism work within the environmental movement and has sought to change that. We see this work as a continual learning process for the network and its members. In addition to staff anti-oppression training and numerous informal discussions on this issue, at the Capacity Building Retreat in 2003, issues of 'race' and anti-racism were addressed in various ways through workshops and activities. Following the retreat, however, it was recognized that there is still much work to be done to make the network, and the environmental movement more generally, take a more critical anti-oppression stance. In 2004, with Green Justice, we are prioritizing an anti-racism, environmental justice agenda by making this the central retreat theme.

WHAT THE KIT IS ALL ABOUT

Welcome to the Green Justice Resource Kit! This kit has been designed as a workbook in order to put your thoughts and questions at the centre while we challenge mainstream environmentalisms and environmental agendas. These are just suggestions, bits of information that we hope you'll find useful in your own work and struggles. We also want your feedback on the kit: what you like, don't like, and any changes or additions that you would recommend and suggest.

This is the first installment of the kit. The kit is divided into two parts: the first part deals with some background information on environmental justice; the second part will cover anti-oppressive organizing strategies.

KEY THINGS THIS KIT WILL HELP YOU DO

1 Challenge common conceptions of the environment and environmentalism.

2 Connect personal experiences of privilege and marginalization to systemic oppression in environmental movements

3 Develop and/or strengthen anti-oppression analysis in an environmental context

4 Understand how to work effectively in solidarity with Aboriginal communities

5 Gain the concrete tools necessary to do anti-racist/anti-oppressive environmental work within our organizations

6 Build alliances, networks and support amongst anti-racist/anti-oppressive youth environmental organizers across Canada.

This kit was developed by Karen Okamoto, and designed by Ryan Cherewaty

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to Lawrence Angeconeb, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, Helen Luu, Rebeka Tabobondung, the YEN staff and the Green Justice planning committee for their feedback and support.
Thank you to the Laidlaw Foundation for funding the resource kit, and thank you to the following retreat funders:

Defining 'Environment' & 'Environmentalism'

How do you define 'environment' and 'environmentalism'?

What are some of the words and images that first come to mind when you see or hear the word 'environment'?
What is your definition of the word 'environment'?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How did you arrive at this definition? Are there specific experiences or things that you have read about, seen, and/or encountered that shape how you define the term?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What does environmentalism mean to you? List images, protests, people, books anything that you associate with environmentalism.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Keep re-visiting what you have written and note any changes to your definitions that you may want to make as you move along the kit and the retreat.

How do environmental organizations define 'environment'?

Let's investigate how environmental organizations define the words 'environment' and 'environmentalism'. Take a look at the literature, pamphlets, and/or images used by two self-identified environmental organizations or groups that you may know of and compare their definitions. How do they define the terms? If they don't define the terms explicitly, what sort of ideas of the environment and environmentalism do they seem to have? You can look at their campaigns, the language they use, the images on their webpage and pamphlets to get a sense of their understanding of these words.

You might be wondering why the focus on definitions. There are many reasons for beginning with and considering definitions:

1 The above exercise may have pointed out that different or at least varying definitions exist.

2 Because many definitions exist, we can imagine how different definitions may compete with or challenge one another for authority, that is, to be the main definition above all others. Definitions, in this sense, can be contested and challenged.

3 Definitions are created by people and for this reason they are invested with interests, assumptions, and tied to different contexts (i.e. time periods, geographical locations, etc.). All too often, we rely on dictionaries to provide us with the definition of a term but we should also keep in mind that people have written and therefore made decisions when writing terms in dictionaries. How we define terms, then, is a political issue.

4 If definitions are written by people, definitions can also change over time.

5 Not only does the way we define terms dictate how we think about the world, these definitions also influence how we act in the world

Definitions of environment and environmentalism, then, can be an important place to start as we attempt to challenge mainstream environmentalism. The environmental justice movement has shown us how the struggle over definitions is important. Take a look at the Principles of Environmental Justice below and compare how 'environment' is talked about here with what you found in the above exercise.

Principles of Environmental Justice

www.ejrc.cau.edu/princej.html

PREAMBLE

We the people of color, gathered together at this multinational People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, to begin to build a national and international movement of all peoples of color to fight the destruction and taking of our lands and communities, do hereby re-establish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of our Mother Earth; to respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages and beliefs about the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves; to insure environmental justice; to promote economic alternatives which would contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods; and, to secure our political, economic and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression, resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our peoples, do affirm and adopt

A TIMELINE OF SELECT EVENTS IN CANADIAN HISTORY

1872 – Residential schools are established.

1876 – The Indian Act is passed to carry out the assimilation of aboriginal peoples.

1879 – The Bison have almost disappeared from the Canadian plains.

these **Principles of Environmental Justice**:

1 Environmental justice affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.

2 Environmental justice demands that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias.

3 Environmental justice mandates the right to ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living things.

4 Environmental justice calls for universal protection from nuclear testing, extraction, production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes and poisons and nuclear testing that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water, and food.

5 Environmental justice affirms the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination of all peoples.

6 Environmental justice demands the cessation of the production of all toxins, hazardous wastes, and radioactive materials, and that all past and current producers be held strictly accountable to the people for detoxification and the containment at the point of production.

7 Environmental justice demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.

8 Environmental justice affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment, without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment. It also affirms the right of those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.

9 Environmental justice protects the right of victims of environmental injustice to receive full compensation and reparations for damages as well as quality health care.

10 Environmental justice considers governmental acts of environmental injustice a violation of international law, the Universal Declaration On Human Rights, and the United Nations Convention on Genocide.

11 Environmental justice must recognize a special legal and natural relationship of Native Peoples to the U.S. government through treaties, agreements, compacts, and covenants affirming sovereignty and self-determination.

12 Environmental justice affirms the need for urban and rural ecological policies to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring the cultural integrity of all our communities, and providing fair access for all to the full range of resources.

13 Environmental justice calls for the strict enforcement of principles of informed consent, and a halt to the testing of experimental reproductive and medical procedures and vaccinations on people of color.

14 Environmental justice opposes the destructive operations of multi-national corporations.

15 Environmental justice opposes military occupation, repression and exploitation of lands, peoples and cultures, and other life forms.

16 Environmental justice calls for the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experience and an appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives.

17 Environmental justice requires that we, as individuals, make personal and consumer choices to consume as little of Mother Earth's resources and to produce as little waste as possible; and make the conscious decision to challenge and reprioritize our lifestyles to insure the health of the natural world for present and future generations.

ADOPTED TODAY, OCTOBER 27, 1991, IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

A TIMELINE OF SELECT EVENTS IN CANADIAN HISTORY

1880–1884 – The Canadian Pacific Railway recruits thousands of underpaid Chinese labourers.

1885 – Authorized under the Chinese Exclusion Act, immigrants from China are required to pay a $50 Head Tax

1900 – The Head Tax on Chinese immigrants is increased from $50 to $100.

1903 – Chinese Head Tax increased to $500. $18 million was obtained from Chinese immigrants from 1901 to 1918, in contrast to the $10 million spent on promoting Europeans to immigrate to Canada.

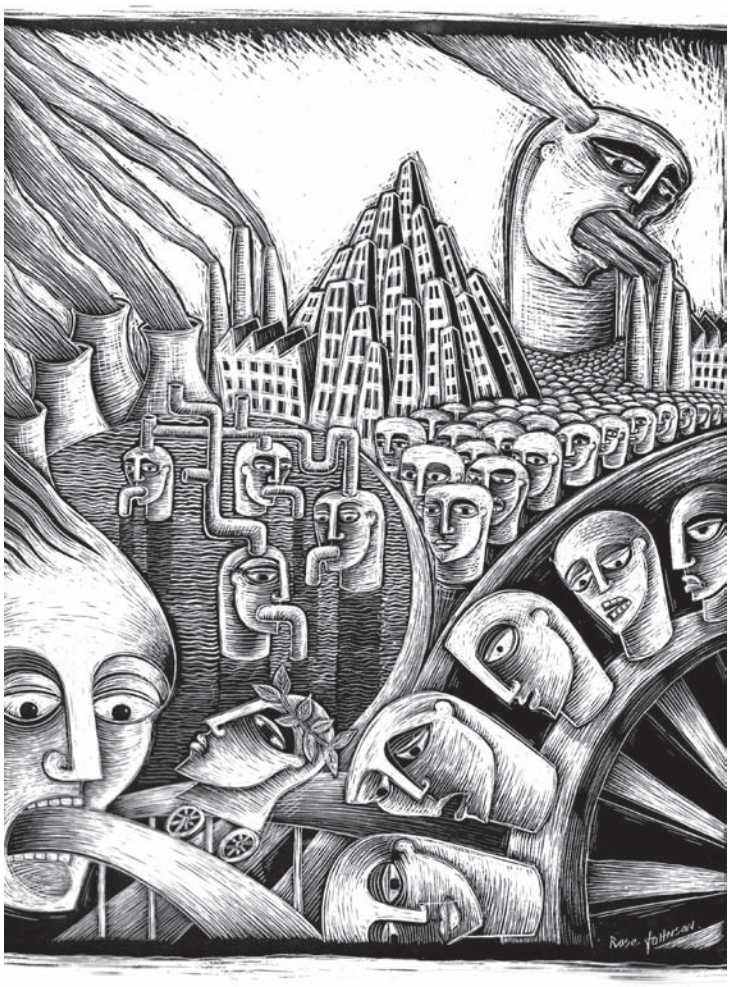
1908 – The Continuous Journey immigration policy prevents South Asians from immigrating to Canada.

The beginnings of the Environmental Justice Movement

The environmental justice movement began in the mid-1980s in the United States. Anti-toxics community groups, which were committed to struggles for social justice, formed two national anti-toxics coalitions by 1984: The National Toxics Campaign and the Citizens Clearinghouse on Hazardous Waste. However it was the 1982 protest by African American residents of Warren County (NC) against the siting of a PCB landfill that is said to have launched the movement. Following this action, other protests against the siting of waste treatment and other toxic facilities in Central Los Angeles and East Los Angeles took place. In 1987 a study by the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice found that race determines where hazardous waste facilities are located and the study named this practice 'environmental racism'. Also at this time, environmental justice groups wrote two open letters to mainstream environmental organizations focusing on the racism in their hiring practices and their narrow focus on wilderness issues. In 1992 the Indigenous Environmental Network held its third annual meeting which had 400 delegates. A year before this meeting, the People of Color Environmental Leadership conference was held in Washington D.C. and drew 500 participants. The Principles of Environmental Justice that you read above were adopted at that conference. In October 2002, over 1,300 environmental justice activists and advocates converged in Washington, D.C. for the Second National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit.

To summarize, then, **environmental racism**:

• brings attention to how systemic racism is a key factor in environmental planning and decision making processes as they are carried out by governments,and economic and legal institutions, as well as the main stream environmental movement. People of colour are often excluded from or restricted within decision-making bodies that are responsible for creating and implementing environmental policies, programs and permits.



• recognizes that indigenous peoples, people of colour, working class and poor people suffer disproportionately from environmental hazards and risks such as industrial toxins, polluted air, unclean water, deleterious work conditions, and the location of dangerous, toxic facilities such as landfills, incinerators and toxic-waste dumps. In contrast, white communities have an unequal advantage when is comes to accessing healthy, clean, safe physical environments and accessing protection from environmental hazards.

1 See "introducing equity" by peter montague. Alternative journal, winter 2003, pages 19-20.

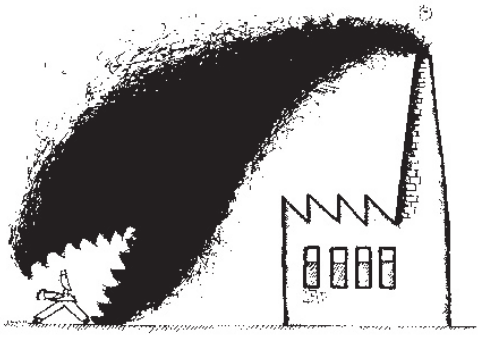
A TIMELINE OF SELECT EVENTS IN CANADIAN HISTORY

1910 – Black Oklahoman farmers wish to immigrate to Canada to escape escalating racism at home. Several boards of trade ask Ottawa to prevent black immigration. Canadian government agents refuse people entry based on "strict interpretation" of medical and other examinations.

Of the 1 million Americans who are estimated to have immigrated to Canada from 1896 to 1911, less than 1000 were African Americans.

1914 – The Komagata Maru ship arrives in Vancouver whose passengers are South Asian men. The boat is turned away as a result of the Continuous Journey policy.

1923 – The Chinese Exclusion Act is brought into effect, banning Chinese immigration from 1923 to 1947.



For example, nobody wants toxic facilities in their neighbourhoods; this is referred to as not-in-my-back-yard or NIMBY. However, race- and class-privileged communities are able to enforce NIMBY while some communities are not. These communities are most often communities of colour, First Nations and low income communities. We can also say that NIMBY-ism occurs between countries. Wealthy countries in the North have been known to dump their garbage on countries in the South.

Environmental justice is about taking action against environmental racism. In addition to the Principles of Environmental Justice outlined above, environmental justice:

- recognizes that environmental struggles and social justice struggles are not separate struggles.
- creates a space for organizing that is ignored by mainstream green organizations which focus mainly on conservation and resource management issues.
- recognizes the social, economic and political dimensions of environmental issues and challenges social inequities and systems of power and domination to create a new agenda for environmental and social change.
- merges the following six strands: the civil rights movement; occupational safety and health movement; indigenous peoples' and native land rights movements; the toxics movement; human rights movements and Third World environmental activism; and community based activists working on social justice issues[1].

Breaking things down (concepts exercise):

DICHOTOMIES, DICHOTOMOUS THINKING AND DICHOTOMOUS OPPOSITIONS

What is a dichotomy?
A dichotomy is something that consists of two parts or components. "Dichotomous thinking" denotes a way of organizing things, ideas and so on into two components or parts.

The environmental justice movement questions the dichotomous thinking that informs definitions of the 'environment' in mainstream environmentalism. Mainstream environmentalism mobilizes around an idea of environment as 'nature' or the 'natural world' which is considered to be in opposition to 'humans' or the 'human-constructed world'. The consequences of creating and using this dichotomous opposition of nature vs. human/culture are addressed by the environmental justice movement when they explain that humans are part of nature and not separate from it. Because humans are a part of nature, damages to the 'natural' environment have real effects on people and these effects have a greater impact on people of colour and Aboriginal peoples.

More broadly, dichotomous oppositions:

- create two distinct, separate components or terms (e.g. nature and culture)
- assume that the two terms are unrelated, self-contained units that are stable and never changing (e.g. nature is nature and it never changes over time, and the same goes for culture)
- create terms that are in opposition. In other words, nature is the antithesis of culture, or to put it in another way, culture is always up against nature. (e.g. nature vs. culture)

What are the problems with and consequences of this

2 This brief history of the American environmental justice movement draws from Marcy Darnovsky's article "Stories Less Told: Histories of US environmentalism." Socialist Review, 22:4, October-December 1992.

A TIMELINE OF SELECT EVENTS IN CANADIAN HISTORY

1939 – Canada and other countries in the Americas refuse to accept 930 Jewish refugees on the St Louis which sailed from Germany. The ship is forced to return to Europe; three-quarters of those on board die under the Nazis.

1941 – After the bombing of Pearl Harbour, Japanese Canadians are sent to detention camps in remote areas of BC, southern Alberta, and Manitoba.

1947 – South Asians in BC win the right to vote in federal and provincial elections (1948 for municipal elections)

1952 – The government is able to limit or prohit the entry of immigrants on the basis of nationality, ethnicity and so on with the new Immigration Act.

dichotomous thinking?
- it simplifies the world into two polar opposites as if there is nothing in between them, like a gray region (e.g. male and female. Assumes there are no other genders, but also assumes that genders can be categorized into two distinct terms)
- one term is valued over the other and this points to issues of power (e.g. male is considered superior to female)
- one term cannot be defined without the other (e.g. 'male' cannot be defined without there being something called 'female' which gives meaning to what it is to be male)

Below are some dichotomous oppositions that are widely used in Western thought and culture.
A) Find pairs of words that you think are dichotomous opposites.
B) Which terms are valued and considered 'superior'? Which terms are treated as 'lesser than'?

RICH **'CIVILIZED'**
'DISABLED' **'FIRST WORLD'**
HETEROSEXUAL **POOR** **HOMOSEXUAL**
US **BODY**
'SAVAGE' **'ABLE-BODIED'** **THEM**
'THIRD WORLD' **MIND**

Can you think of other pairs of dichotomous opposites? Include them below:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Writing the history of the U.S. environmental movement[2]

When you think of the history of the environmental movement, what comes to mind? Are there certain people, places, time periods and actions that spring to mind?

Histories, like definitions, are also written by people who have particular interests and assumptions about the world. For this reason, it's necessary to be critical of capital 'H', dominant History by noting the following points about written History:

- the statement 'history is written by the victors' brings attention to issues of power. The victors or those who have power over others are ultimately the ones who write History. Those who do not exercise ruling power do not have access to writing dominant History and are silenced.

4 This section draws on the following works:
Kafarowski, Joanna. "How Attitudes and Values Shape Access to National Parks." The George Wright Forum, vol. 20, no. 4, 2003, 53-63.
National Aboriginal Forestry Association and the Wildlands League. Honouring the Promise.
Waiser, Bill. Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada's National Parks, 1914-1946. Saskatoon, SK : Fifth House, 1995.

3 See reference information above for the article "Stories Less Told".

A TIMELINE OF SELECT EVENTS IN CANADIAN HISTORY

1960 – Aboriginal peoples are allowed to vote. Before this time, registered aboriginal persons residing on reserves could not vote.

1971 – Multiculturalism Policy introduced.

1982 – The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is put into effect.

1985 – The Indian Act is amended to end discrimination against status native women who marry someone who is non-status or non-Indian. Native women can retain their status whoever they marry.

1986 – Federal Employment Equity Act is passed to improve access to employment for women, aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities, and people of colour.

• although History is written by the victor, this does not mean that less dominant histories do not exist alongside and in opposition to dominant history. In this sense, it is more fitting to talk about histories in the plural, even though these histories are excluded and silenced.

• the writing of histories is linked to the formation of identities. For example, what is known as Canadian history (which might include the history of the creation of federal and provincial governments), defines and gives meaning to what we may know as a "Canadian identity".

• the way in which the past is written tells us something about the present. Present day interests, politics and collective desires shape and form how histories are written and told. The dichotomy of past and present, in this sense, ultimately dissolves since the past and present are very much intertwined with each other. This also points out that the past is not something that is over; it continues to live in and shape the present.

This last point about the links between the past and the present can be seen in how the history of the environmental movement, specifically in the U.S., is actively written and talked about, leading to the exclusion of other histories of environmental struggles. Marcy Darnovsky's article "Stories Less Told"[3] has pointed out that recent histories of U.S. environmentalism refer back to the work of early 20th century wilderness protection advocate, mountaineer, nature writer and Sierra Club founder John Muir. Muir's work has been associated with "preservationism" and American environmentalism has ultimately become linked to Muir's wilderness preservation work, especially with Muir's idea that wilderness is something separate from (in dichotomous opposition to) human societies.

What this emphasis on the wilderness ignores is the history of colonialism in North America (see 'colonialism' in the glossary). When indigenous peoples are mentioned, however, as in an essay by Henry David Thoreau (a figure celebrated by mainstream environmentalists), they are associated with 'nature' but in colonial terms as 'primitive' and 'savage' and as not harmful to the environment. Other writings on indigenous histories in America challenge the romanticization of indigenous peoples and the notion that any human actions on 'nature' are necessarily destructive. These writings point out that some indigenous peoples managed the land through, for example, regular prescribed burnings of the land. What Darnovsky's essay also points out is the exclusion of urban reform movements from the history of environmentalism that focused on public health, nutrition, workplace safety, and sanitation issues.

In other words, if present day environmentalists write that environmentalism begins with wilderness protection figures like Muir, mainstream environmentalism today not only forgets other histories of environmental struggles, it ultimately defines itself and its agenda in terms of wilderness protection based on the nature vs. culture dichotomy. This dichotomy is questioned by the environmental justice movement as it seeks to bridge and get rid of this division between 'nature' and humans by emphasizing that humans are part of nature.

5 Cases of environmental injustice in New Brunswick have often affected rural Acadian communities. For example, there are two controversial projects affecting Acadian communities today: the Belledune toxic waste incinerator and the Sainte-Marie Mega pig farm.

6 There are many other cases of environmental racism in Canada. Cases that you can look further into include: the Oka struggle (Quebec); Ipperwash and the killing of Dudley George (Ontario); and the Secwepemc struggle in B.C.

7 This summary draws on Ward Churchill's Struggle for the Land.

A TIMELINE OF SELECT EVENTS IN CANADIAN HISTORY

1988 – Living Japanese Canadian victims of the WWII internment receive compensation.

1990 – The Oka conflict erupts in Quebec between the Quebec police and Mohawk demonstrators.

1995 – The government imposes the Right of Landing Fee (Head Tax) to immigrants but not refugees. The fee of $975 is used to increase the federal budget.

1995 – Unarmed aboriginal protesters demonstrate peacefully at Ipperwash Park (Ontario) against the appropriation of their land by the military and Ontario government. Hundreds of riot police confront the 30 protesters and shoot three demonstrators, one of whom, Dudley George, is killed. An inquiry into his death continues today.

REVISITING CONCEPTS:

Canadian parks and dichotomous thinking

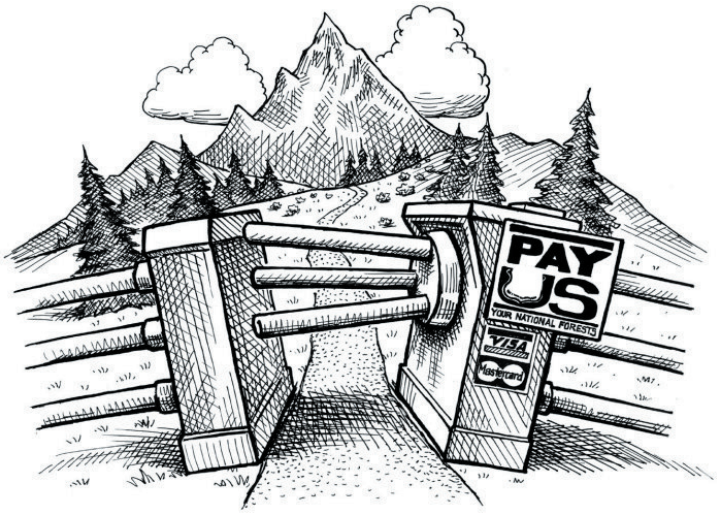
National parks and nature reserves are considered by many to be the primary symbols and spaces of pristine nature. As such, they often become the focus for mainstream environmentalist concerns. This environmentalist attention on national parks draws on the nature vs. culture/humans dichotomy. To challenge this dicotomy, we will consider issues of power and racism that are part of the building of Canada's national parks.[4]

A NOTE ON PARKS

Parks were established on the Western assumption of parks as being separate from humans; the view that parks are not places to live and work. They were consciously built to preserve 'pristine landscapes' for recreational uses while industrial development destroyed these very lands in other locations. Historically, the establishment of parks entailed the forced removal of Aboriginal communities. Traditional activities such as hunting, trapping and fishing were no longer allowed in these protected areas. This prompted Aboriginal communities to ask:

What are these spaces being protected from?
Who are these spaces being protected for?

These key questions beg us to examine the greater issue of who has power in our society. Who has the power to decide to create a park and displace and remove Aboriginal peoples? Although there are many inherent contradictions involved here, the most obvious is that of displacing communities in order to preserve 'nature' while preventing Aboriginal peoples from practicing their traditional way of life which has promoted sustainable land use since time immemorial.



Examples of parks and discriminatory practices

- Kouchibouguac National Park in New Brunswick was established by removing local Acadian residents for the construction of "pristine" nature.[5]
- During World War II, Japanese Canadian men were separated from their families and brought to Jasper National Park to build roads into the Park and to keep these men out of Canadian society.
- Today, park user fees prevent low income people from using parks, and physical barriers make parks inaccessible for people with disabilities - parks were built for young, able-bodied, class-privileged people.

8 This summary draws from the following: Izzard Allen, Denise. "Ghosts of Africville: Former residents of Africville are still fighting municipal planning decisions in Nova Scotia." Alternatives, Winter 2003, vol. 29, no. 1, 18-19; and McCurdy, Howard. "Africville: Environmental Racism." In Laura Westra and Peter Wenz (eds.) Facing Environmental Racism Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995, 75-91.

A TIMELINE OF SELECT EVENTS IN CANADIAN HISTORY

1996 – The Nisga'a Tribal Council, the Government of Canada and the Government of Fritish Columbia sign an agreement to negotiate the first modern treaty in B.C..

2000 – Two aboriginal men are left on the outskirts of Saskatoon by police and freeze to death.

2001 – Quebec City demonstration against the Summit of Americas meeting.

Select cases of environmental racism in Canada

Below are summaries of three cases of environmental racism in Canada[6]. Following each summary jot down why you think these are cases of environmental racism and injustice.

LUBICON TERRITORY (ALBERTA): LAND RIGHTS, ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE AND CORPORATE GLOBALIZATION[7]

The Lubicon Lake Indian Nation is a small aboriginal society living in northern Alberta, Canada that has been struggling for over sixty years to gain recognition of aboriginal land rights to traditional territory. In the late 1800's, the Lubicons were overlooked by crown agents who were signing Aboriginal nations to Treaty 8. They were just too far in the bush, away from major rivers, and so the Lubicons were left alone to pursue their traditional hunting and trapping lifestyle. As a result they never signed away or lost their lands in war, and retain Aboriginal rights to those lands to this day. Although they were recognized in 1939 by the federal government and promised a reserve settlement, both bureaucratic bungling and racist policies kept a settlement waiting and the Lubicons were forgotten once more. In fact, they were left pretty much alone until 1979, when an all-weather road was built into their territory.

Massive oil and gas deposits were discovered in the area since the 1950s and, armed with provincial government leases, several major oil and gas companies (including Petro-Canada, Royal Dutch Shell, Shell Canada, Exxon, Gulf and Standard Oil of California) moved in drilling at least 400 oil wells within a fifteen-mile radius of the Lubicon community of Little Buffalo.

Industrial development completely devastated Lubicon society. Moose, the staple of the Lubicon diet, fled the area along with most of the smaller animals which formed the basis of the trapping trade. Practically overnight an intact and self-sufficient community was reduced to dependency on welfare. Society began to break down; skills passed from old to young had no value any more; alcoholism surfaced; the Lubicons experienced their first suicides; babies were still-born and a widespread tuberculosis epidemic swept through the community.

Meanwhile over $8 billion (Cdn) in oil and gas revenues have been sucked from Lubicon territories. To date the Lubicons have not received a cent of oil or gas royalties. The community lives in extreme poverty, and many Lubicon homes are over-crowded, have no running water, and lack adequate sewage disposal. Additional assault to the Lubicon and their land came in 1988 when the Premier of Alberta entered into negotiations with the Japanese forestry corporation Daishowa and allowed them to cut trees and build a pulp mill on Lubicon land. The Lubicon have so far resisted this through a successful boycott campaign of Daishowa products as well as use of the courts and negotiations.

From this brief overview of the Lubicon struggles, why do you think this is a case of environmental racism?

_____

_____

_____

_____

9 Summarized from "Myths of Diversity" by Andil Gosine in Alternatives Journal, Winter 2003, vol 29, no 1, 12-17.

10 Also summarized from "Myths of Diversity" by Andil Gosine in Alternatives Journal, Winter 2003, vol 29, no 1, 12-17.

A TIMELINE OF SELECT EVENTS IN CANADIAN HISTORY

2003 – RCMP arrest, detain and subsequently deport twenty Pakistani men and one south Indian man under "Project Thread".

Two men from Toronto are arrested in Florida because they were Muslims on a flight to the United States on the anniversary of Sept. 11. Racial profiling intensifies after '9-11' in Canada.

Continue to add to this timeline yourself!

AFRICVILLE (HALIFAX): HISTORIC AND CONTINUED ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE[8]

Before recent changes to Canada's immigration policies, Nova Scotia had the largest African-Canadian population in the country. The first large-scale immigration of black people to Nova Scotia took place between 1782 and 1785 when 2,300 black loyalists (those who fought for the British during the American Revolution) migrated north. As well, 1,200 slaves came to Nova Scotia with 30,000 white loyalists. The black loyalists received fewer acres of land and poorer quality land relative to their white counterparts. By 1838 many began to settle in an area outside of Halifax named Africville.

When Africville was first established it resembled most other communities surrounding Halifax which had no paved roads, electricity or water and swage services. However, over the years this situation changed; the municipal government began offering necessary services to all communities in the region with the deliberate exception of Africville where no development occurred. Over the years, Africville residents encountered a variety of environmental hazards, including: railway construction through Africville subjecting residents to soot and noise pollution; installment of an oil plant/storage complex, fertilizer plant, rolling mill, two slaughter houses, a coal factory, a tar factory, a tannery, a shoe factory, stone crushing facilities, a foundry, a waste plant, Rockhead prison, an infectious disease hospital, a Trachoma hospital and exposure to raw sewage. In the 1950s the city dump was relocated to the edge of Africville. The city of Halifax did not provide basic municipal services: there was no garbage collection, no paved roads and limited access to clean water in Africville even though residents paid taxes. By the 1960s, Africville was a national scandal, exposing segregated living conditions in Canada. Soon hereafter, the residents of Africville were uprooted and relocated to a public housing complex elsewhere in Halifax. Their belongings were moved in garbage trucks and their houses bulldozed, sometimes without prior notice. Today, the relocated Africville residents are fighting municipal government plans to locate a sewage treatment plant in their neighbourhood.

From this brief overview of the story of Africville, why do you think this is a case of environmental racism?

_____

_____

_____

_____

SOUTH RIVERDALE (TORONTO): HOW ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE INCLUDES INNER CITY STRUGGLES

South Riverdale is a predominantly residential neighbourhood in Toronto. In the 1970s, residents of South Riverdale became concerned about the presence of lead in their neighbourhood. The nearby Canada Metal Company melted batteries into other lead products and generated harmful stack emissions containing lead. Blood tests of children in the area showed high levels of lead. The Ministry of the Environment linked the lead levels to the Canada Metal Company and forced it to close down. It did close, but reopened only days later after appealing the decision. Residents continued to lobby against the company. In 1977, residents won their battle and the lead-lined soil in the neighbourhood was replaced. Canada Metal is still in operation today but they are not emitting lead through their stack. Still, lead is an important concern in the area. Long term exposure to lead can cause anaemia and damage the nervous system. Also, young children easily absorb lead compared to adults and they are more vulnerable to its harmful effects.

From this brief overview of the story of South Riverdale, why do you think this is a case of environmental racism? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

11 Bookchin, Murray. Which Way for the Ecology Movement? Edinburgh, Scotland; San Francisco: AK Press, 1994.

12 This argument is interestingly made in "Environmental Orientalism" by Suzana Sawyer and Arun Agrawal. Cultural Critique, 45, Spring 2000, 71-108.

13 This section draws on Sociology, Environmentalism, Globalization: Reinventing the Globe by Steven Yearley. London; Thousand Oaks [Calif.] : SAGE Publications, 1996.

Myths of diversity and other myths in mainstream environmentalism

Below are four select myths that exist in mainstream environmentalist politics that allow us to avoid challenging the racism that exists within the mainstream movement. The first two myths deal with issues of diversity and confronting racism in the movement. Myths 3 and 4 deal more specifically with how two particular environmental issues are imbued with racism.

1. Myth of diversity: People of colour don't care about environmental issues (or have better things to worry about)[9]

The emergence of the environmental justice movement, as it was initiated by indigenous peoples and people of colour, demonstrates to the mainstream environmental movement that people of colour are involved in environmental struggles. People of colour have been left out of the mainstream movement because of how environmental issues are framed (see 'Breaking things down' section below on framing practices). As well, people of colour do not simply consider their work to be about taking care of 'the environment' – their work is understood to be about looking after their communities and themselves. 'It's about living practices, not joining a club' explains environmental health promoter M. Ann Phillips. The problem is that environmental issues are often too narrowly defined to include the work, voices and concerns of indigenous peoples and people of colour.

2. Myth of diversity: Environmentalists just need to recruit more "diverse" peoples (to do the same work)[10]

Attempts to address racism within mainstream environmental organizations in the U.S. lead many groups to seek greater employment diversity within their organizations. However, people of colour were hired simply to work on issues and campaigns that these groups had always pursued. In these cases, the organizations failed to change their agenda to include issues that were of greater relevance and concern to people of colour. Their failure to develop new priorities and initiatives based on the concerns of their new members results in a denial of racist and/or oppressive structures within the organization and the continued marginalization of these groups from the movement. Diversity initiatives maintain narrow and limiting definitions of environmentalism which not only under-represent the concerns and work of people of colour but they also place limits on imagining inclusive, creative and more democratic environmental agendas.

3. The population myth[11]

The fear of a population explosion articulated by many mainstream environmental organizations is a racist fear that the earth will be 'overpopulated' by people of colour[12]. During the Industrial Revolution in Britain, British economist Thomas Malthus formulated the 'law of population' which states that population will outgrow food supplies. Malthus surmised that population can be kept in check only through wars, famines and disease. Malthusian theory was actually used to justify exploitative actions carried out by the English elite and industrialists against the poor and disenfranchised – a practice that continues today.

There are several problematic issues that are worth noting with regards to this type of argument, the most obvious being that Malthus and his followers didn't acknowledge the advances in modern agricultural practices that have taken place in the last four decades. Currently there is a surplus of food produced globally and we have the ability to produce far more. The global problems of hunger, poverty and malnutrition result from ineffective and often economically motivated distribution policies and practices that place profits before people. Malthus and neo-Malthusians such as Paul Ehrlich who wrote The Population Bomb (1968), reduce human lives to a set of arithmetic equations and do not question the power relations that support the unsustainable consumption and production patterns in the 'developed world' and completely neglect the larger issue of resource distribution. The fear of a population bomb and the powerful interests of large pharmaceutical companies have lead in the past to often destructive and intrusive population control initiatives targeted at people living in the Global South.

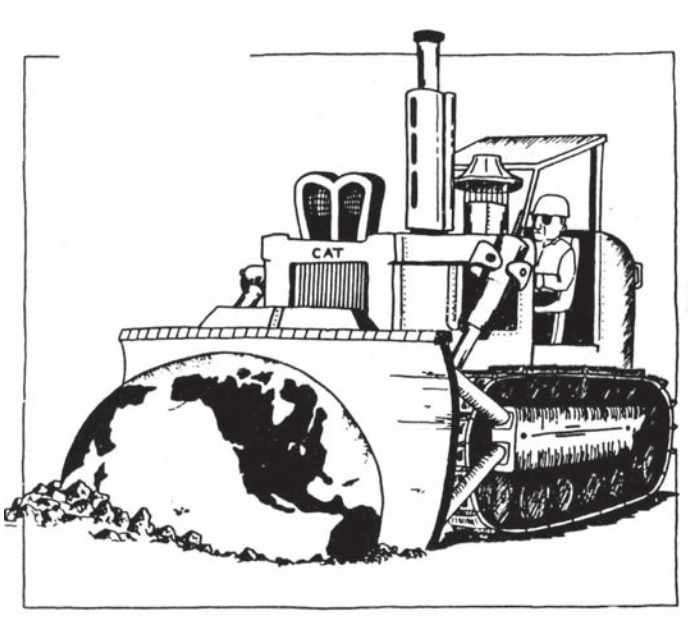
4. The myth of shared, global environmental problems: We're not all in this together[13]

While there are global physical environmental problems that are shared by all people of the world, such as climate change and the potential for nuclear accidents,

14 See the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) Climate Justice workshop manual.

15 This timeline has been compiled from the following sources:
Canadian Labour Congress. Aboriginal Rights Resource Too Kit.
The United Nations Association in Canada. The Kit: A Manual by Youth to Combat Racism Through Education. March 2002. www.unac.org/yfar

mainstream Western environmentalists have tended to ignore the power and access inequalities between countries when they claim that particular environmental problems are shared globally. For example, to say that pollution is a global environmental problem glosses over the complexities of how pollution is generated and spread across the globe. Polluting corporations and industries may locate themselves in the Global South because of weaker environmental and labour protection laws, thus spreading pollution to other parts of the globe while siphoning off profits to the North. Also, countries in the Global South may be desperate for income because of debts owed to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (international money-lending institutions based in the U.S) and for this reason they are willing to import waste from the North. Ozone depletion is said to have global impacts however different regions and people will be affected differently and they will have varying degrees of protection from these impacts. Also, in the arena of global environmental politics and international meetings (e.g. the Earth Summit held in 1992) the questions of who sets the global environmental agenda and which issues are considered global need to be considered. Western environmental interests claim that CO_2 emissions are a pressing global concern, but for the Global South debt and poverty are the major priorities. The idea of global environmental problems fails to acknowledge the complexities of global power inequities that shape large scale political, economic and environmental issues.



Breaking things down (concepts exercise): Framing and framing practices

The environmental justice movement brings attention to how environmental issues are framed by mainstream environmental organizations. What does it mean to 'frame' an environmental issue? Let's consider how visual images are framed to give us a sense of how environmental issues may also use framing techniques. Take a look at the following image:

The above photographic image is itself framed (that is, the photographer has only captured part of the building which we see a proportion of here), but we'll use this image to take a look at how framing practices are used. If we were photographers or artists we may decide what part of the above scene we want to capture. In other words, we will place a frame around what we want to take a picture of like so:

Frames A, B, and C are the possible pictures that we may want to take. The contents within each frame are different. For example, frame A shows a balcony, frame B a balcony and a clothes line, and frame C part of a window and the side of a building. Each frame then gives us different information about the larger building. These frames do the following:

- They select what information, images, etc. ought to be put inside a frame.

- Frames also decide what information, images etc. will be left out.
- Frames are also a type of boundary that decide for us what information is worth knowing or what images (in the above example) are worth seeing.
- Also, what remains inside the frame gives us a particular image of something. For example, a picture of living conditions in the building above, or in our case, a picture of environmentalism which we will turn to below.

Let's look at one specific issue that is considered a popular environmental issue: climate change. Below is a box full of words and concepts surrounded by two different frames:

FRAME ONE:
CARS
GLOBAL SOUTH REDUCE EMISSIONS
POLLUTERS: EVERYONE
EQUAL GLOBAL IMPACTS
IMPLEMENT EMISSIONS TAX

FRAME TWO:
POLLUTERS: FIRST WORLD, CORPORATIONS, ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS (WORLD BANK)
GLOBAL SOUTH, POOR, PEOPLE OF COLOUR WILL BARE THE CONSEQUENCES
CORPORATIONS, ETC. MUST REDUCE EMISSIONS
POWER ISSUES ARE CENTRAL
U.S.-BRITISH WAR AGAINST AND OCCUPATION IN IRAQ

Frames one and two contain a different 'picture' of climate change. Frame one considers climate change a worldwide issue that everyone is involved in and affected by equally. Frame two is a climate justice frame or framework[14]. This frame considers the different power relationships and unequal impacts of climate change on different people.

Again, depending on how an issue is framed, certain concerns and information will be left out and not considered while others will be given priority. Challenging mainstream environmentalism means questioning what remains inside and what is left out of the frames that mainstream environmentalists use and create to talk about environmental concerns.

How would you construct a frame around the following issue of poverty in your province or territory? Circle words that would be included in your frame. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers; simply circle words that you would consider. After doing this, what do you think would be included in the environmental justice frame?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Glossary

These definitions are just a starting point for exploring other ideas, concepts and issues around environmental justice struggles. Please research, compare and formulate your own definitions and understandings of these terms. Again, do keep in mind that definitions are open to change and contestation. These terms and definitions have a history and they are always being debated.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

The descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. The Canadian constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal People – Indians, Metis people and Inuit.
Source: www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/info/info101_e.pdf.

COLONIALISM

A process whereby one powerful nation or people subjects another to its own authority.
Source: "Young Women Connect", Tiny Giant Magazine, Spring 2002.
In this kit, we refer specifically to a period of European colonization from Columbus (1492) onwards in the Americas, Asia and Africa. Colonialism has taken on different forms from settler colonies like Canada to non-settler colonies such as India during British rule. Colonialism is also different across colonializing nations and across time; French colonialism had different policies compared to the British. Modern colonialism has been referred to as 'globalization' or corporate globalization, which includes the exploitation of labour and natural resources by transnational corporations and the expansion of free trade agreements and blocs. This is a large term that simply cannot be summarized in a short paragraph: do read up on and explore this historical and present process further. Suggested reading: All Our Relations by Winona LaDuke.
Also see: Genocide

FIRST NATIONS

A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word "Indian", which many people found offensive. Although the term First Nation is widely used, no legal definition of it exists. Among its uses, the term "First Nations peoples" refers to Indian people in Canada, both Status and Non-Status. Many Indian people have also adopted the term "First Nation" to replace the word "band" in the name of their community.
Source: www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/info/info101_e.pdf. Several definitions are available at this site including definitions for Status and Non-Status Indian.

GENOCIDE

The United Nations Convention on Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, genocide is defined as any of the following acts which are committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group: Killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measure to prevent births in the group; forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. Cultural genocide works to create conditions which lead to the disappearance of identifiable human groups even if every individual member were to survive.
Source: Struggle for the Land by Ward Churchill.
Flagging attention to the term genocide may be useful when thinking about colonialism and environmental destruction. In mainstream environmental movements, we often hear about ecocide. What if we were to think of both genocide and ecocide as tied to one another?

PEOPLE OF COLOUR

A term used to refer to nonwhite people, used instead of the term "minority," which implies inferiority and disenfrancisement. The term emphasizes common experiences of racial discrimination or racism.
Source: http://colours.mahost.org/faq/definitions.html

POWER, POWER RELATIONS OR RELATIONS OF POWER

Firstly, the term 'power' can mean different things depending on the situation or context. At different times and in different places it can mean the following:
a) control over or access to government owned/sponsored institutions (i.e. systems, resources, processes, structures, and so on);
b) defining what is considered normal, and convincing others that this is true;
c) being able to decide what you want and being able to take action accordingly
Source: Fire It Up: A Tool Kit for Youth Action, by the Youth Action Network. www.youthactionnetwork.org/rac/Fireitup/FireItUp.pdf

The term 'relations' in the larger concept 'power relations' emphasizes that power is not simply a 'thing' that one possess. Instead, we can think of power as working through relationships between groups of people. For example, with issues of race, relations of power would point to how different groups of people are formed on the basis of race, usually in a binary like 'black' and 'white', and how power is conferred onto white people because black people are treated as 'lesser than white' in this power relationship. It is also important to point out that power can be considered in positive terms, such as the power to organize, resist and change social structures.

RACISM

Refers to a set of beliefs that asserts the superiority of one racial group over another (at the individual as well as institutional level), and through which individuals or groups of people exercise power that abuses or disadvantages others on the basis of skin colour and racial or ethnic heritage. At the same time, discriminatory practices protect and maintain the advantageous position of the dominant group(s). The term racism is useful as a shorthand way of categorizing the systematic mistreatment experienced by people of colour, but should not mislead us into supposing that human beings belong to biologically different groups. Systemic racism is institutionalized discrimination. For example, hiring and promotion procedures or entrance requirements may have the effect of excluding various racial groups and supporting members of the dominant group.
Source: The United Nations Association in Canada. The Kit: A Manual by Youth to Combat Racism Through Education. March 2002. www.unac.org/yfar

More definitions will be included in the second kit! Please stay tuned.

Resources

This is just a suggested list of resources. Do search for further information and pass this information onto others!

Organizations and websites in Canada

AFRICVILLE

For more information on Africville, visit the CBC Archives and click on Life & Society: Africville: http://archives.cbc.ca/

On the Africville Genealogy Society Annual Picnic held on the former lands of Africville:
www.multiculturaltrails.ca/level_3/number97.html

Anti-racist Environmentalist Coalition (Toronto)
Includes an environmental justice bibliography (under "Tools" link).
www.yorku.ca/arec

BOREAL FOREST NETWORK (WINNIPEG)

The Boreal Forest Network is an organization of environmentalists, indigenous peoples and scientists concerned with the protection and sustainable use of the boreal forest, one of the three great forest systems of the world.
www.borealnet.org
2-70 Albert Street,
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 1E7
T: 204-947-3081, F: 204-947-3076

BUS RIDERS UNION (VANCOUVER)

"The Vancouver Bus Riders Union represents the mass transit and public health needs of the transit dependent. The Bus Riders Union fights to put the needs of transit dependent people, overwhelmingly working class, and disproportionately people of colour, at the centre of public policy."
bru.resist.ca/home
#407-119 W. Pender
Vancouver, BC V6B 1S5
T: 604-215-2775, bru@resist.ca

CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS

The CLC has a number of useful manuals, kits and documents available through their Anti-Racism & Human Rights department. Their website is bilingual.
www.clc-ctc.ca
2841 Riverside Drive
Ottawa, ON K1V 8X7
T: 613-521-3400, F: 613-521-4655

COLOURS OF RESISTANCE

"A grassroots network of people who consciously work to develop anti-racist, multiracial politics in the movement against global capitalism." Their website has several useful organizing tools and articles.
http://colours.mahost.org/
c/o Student-Worker Solidarity
QPIRG at McGill, 3647 University Street, 3rd Floor
Montréal, Quebec H3A 2B3
cor@mutualaid.org

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AT GRASSY NARROWS FIRST NATION

Includes background information on the struggles at Grassy Narrows.
www.envirowatch.org/gnfnindex.htm
General Delivery
Grassy Narrows, ON P0X 1B0
Toll free: 800-668-1790, F: 807-925-2649

FIRST NATIONS ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK

"A national organization of individuals, non-profit groups and Nations who are actively working on environmental issues."
www.fnen.org
P.O. Box 394
Tofino, B.C. V0R 2Z0
T: 250-726-5265, F: 250-725-2357, councilfire@hotmail.com

FRIENDS OF GRASSY NARROWS

"Friends of Grassy Narrows are organizing to support Grassy Narrows First Nation's on-going resistance to colonialist aggression by the Canadian/Ontarian governments and Abitibi-Consolidated."
www.friendsofgrassynarrows.com

FRIENDS OF THE LUBICON (TORONTO)

A group that organizes in solidarity with the Lubicon struggles.
www.tao.ca/~fol/
PO Box 444 Stn D,
Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X4
T: 416-763-7500, F: 416-535-7810

GWICH'IN STEERING COMMITTEE

"The Gwich'in Nation of Northeast Alaska and Northwest Canada have a unified longstanding position to seek permanent protection of "Iizhik Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit" The Sacred Place Where Life Begins, the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge."
www.alaska.net/~gwichin/index.html
122 1st Ave, Box 2
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
T: 907-458-8264, F: 907-457-8265

JUSTICIA FOR MIGRANT WORKERS (J4MW)

J4MW is a volunteer driven political non-profit collective comprised of committed activists from diverse walks of life based in Toronto. J4MW strives to promote the rights of seasonal Caribbean and Mexican migrant workers that annually participate in the federal government's Caribbean & Mexican Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (known as SAW). The J4MW collective is motivated by relations of trust, experiences shared and lessons learned from migrant farm workers over the course of more than three years of community outreach in rural Ontario.
www.justicia4migrantworkers.org
P.O. Box 1261 Station K
Toronto, ON M4P 3E5
Voice Mail /Pager: 416.329.6844, info@justicia4migrantworkers.org

MINING WATCH CANADA (MWC)

MWC is a pan-Canadian initiative supported by environmental, social justice, Aboriginal and labour organisations from across the country. It addresses the urgent need for a co-ordinated public interest response to the

threats to public health, water and air quality, fish and wildlife habitat and community interests posed by irresponsible mineral policies and practices in Canada and around the world.
www.miningwatch.ca
Suite 508, City Centre Building
880 Wellington St.
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 6K7 Canada
T: 613- 569-3439, F: 613-569-5138,
canada@miningwatch.ca

NATIVE YOUTH MOVEMENT

For news on the Native Youth Movement:
www.turtleisland.org/news/news-aboriginalrights-nym1.htm

REDWIRE MAGAZINE NATIVE YOUTH MEDIA SOCIETY (VANCOUVER).

"Redwire Magazine published its first issue in April '97 with the support of the Native Youth Movement, a grass roots Native youth group and The Environmental Youth Alliance. Redwire Magazine is a quarterly magazine, distributed nationally. Redwire, published by Redwire Native Youth Media Society, is the first-ever Native youth run magazine in Canada and continues to stay committed to operating with Native youth staff, writers, artists and publishers." Their website includes a useful links page.
www.redwiremag.com
PO Box 2042 Station Main Terminal, Vancouver, BC V6B-3R6
T: 604-602-7226, F: 604-602-7276, info@redwiremag.com

SECWEPEMC STRUGGLES

"Sun Peaks Resort and Delta Hotels are built on Secwepemc territories that have never been ceded or surrendered. Land and Water BC disregarded the Secwepemc, who said NO to expansion in stakeholder meetings, and in June 2001 obtained a court injunction to forcibly remove Secwepemc from their homelands." More information can be found on the following site:
http://apc.resist.ca/skwelkwekwelt

TORONTO NATIVE YOUTH

(TNY): a newly formed group of young First Nations people dedicated to resisting colonialism and exposing the racism of canada against First Nations people.
www.freewebs.com/tny/, tny@rebelyouth.ca

TURTLE ISLAND NATIVE NETWORK RESOURCES

An excellent website for news and resources.
www.turtleisland.org

Organizations and websites in the U.S.

ASIAN PACIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK

"APEN was founded in 1993 to bring together a collective voice among the diverse and unique histories and cultures of native-born, immigrant and refugee Asian and Pacific Islander communities in the United States."
www.apen4ej.org
310 8TH Street, Suite 309, Oakland, CA 94607
T: 510-834-8920, F: 510-834-8926, apen@apen4ej.org

THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN, POPULATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

A multi-racial alliance of feminist activists, health practitioners and scholars. We are
committed to promoting the social and economic empowerment of women in a
context of global peace and justice; and to eliminating poverty, inequality, racism, and environmental degradation.
cwpe.org
P.O. Box 16178, Baltimore, MD 21218, USA

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE RESOURCE CENTER AT CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY (ATLANTA, GEORGIA)

"The EJRC at Clark Atlanta University was formed in 1994 to serve as a research, policy, and information clearinghouse on issues related to environmental justice, race and the environment, civil rights, facility siting, land use planning, brownfields, transportation equity, suburban sprawl, and Smart Growth." This site has a wealth of information on ej struggles. A must see!
www.ejrc.cau.edu
223 James P. Brawley Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30314
T: 404-880-6911, F: 404-880-6909, ejrc@cau.edu

ERJC PEOPLE OF COLOR ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS DIRECTORY (2000)

This is an excellent source, though a bit out-of-date now.
www.ejrc.cau.edu/poc2000.htm
The directory is free. Copies can be obtained from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation's Publication Request Line at (800) 645-1766 or by visiting their Web site at www.mott.org.

BUS RIDERS UNION (LOS ANGELES)
The L.A. Bus Riders Union (BRU) inspired organizers in Vancouver to form their own BRU.
The BRU, "a project of the Labor/Community Strategy Center, is a membership organization that represents the mass transit and public health needs of the transit dependent. The Bus Riders Union seeks to promote environmentally sustainable public transportation for the entire population of Los Angeles, on the premise that affordable, efficient, and environmentally sound mass transit is a human right."
www.busridersunion.org
3780 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1200 Los Angeles, CA 90010
T: 213-387-2800, F: 213-387-3500, info@busridersunion.org

COMMUNITY COALITION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (SEATTLE)
The CCEJ was "formed in 1993 a by a diverse group of individuals and organizations which included the Black Women's Health Project, Asian Pacific Women's Caucus, Rainbow Coalition and others. We are a people of color-led, multiethnic nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization working on social, economic and environmental health issues that disproportionately impact people of color, refugee, indigenous, immigrant, and low income communities."
www.ccej.org
2820 East Cherry, Seattle, WA 98122
T: 206-720-0285, F: 206-720-5241, justice@ccej.org

GREENACTION FOR HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
"Greenaction mobilizes community power to win victories that change government and corporate policies and practices to protect health and to promote environmental justice."
www.greenaction.org
One Hallidie Plaza, Suite 760, San Francisco, CA 94102
T: 415- 248-5010, F: 415- 248-5011,
greenaction@greenaction.org

INDIGENOUS ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK
"A network of Indigenous Peoples empowering Indigenous Nations and communities towards sustainable livelihoods, demanding environmental justice and maintaining the Sacred Fire of our traditions."
www.ienearth.org
PO Box 485, Bemidji, MN 56619
T: 218-751-4967

JUSTICE AND THE ENVIRONMENT: A DIRECTORY OF BAY AREA NONPROFITS
Includes an introductory essay on environmental justice.
http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/EnvirPol/organizations/alpha.html

WEST HARLEM ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION (WE ACT)
WE ACT is an environmental justice organization committed to empowering the community to become a vocal, informed and proactive force that determines and implements its vision of what its environment can and should be
www.weact.org
271 West 125th Street, Suite 308, New York 10027-4424
T: 212-961-1000, ext. 301 (Office Manager), F: 212-961-1015

Global-oriented websites

GLOBAL ANTI-INCINERATOR ALLIANCE/GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR INCINERATOR ALTERNATIVES (GAIA)
"GAIA is an expanding international alliance of individuals, non-governmental organization, community-based organizations, academics and others working to end the incineration of all forms of waste and to promote sustainable waste prevention and discard management practices."
www.no-burn.org

RAINFOREST ACTION NETWORK
RAN "has been working to protect rainforests and the human rights of those living in and around those forests. From the beginning, RAN has played a key role in strengthening the worldwide rainforest conservation movement through supporting activists in rainforest countries as well as organizing and mobilizing consumers and community action groups throughout the United States."
www.ran.org
221 Pine St., Suite 500,

San Francisco, CA 94104 USA
T: 415-398-4404, F: 415-398-2732, rainforest@ran.org

Immigration-related organizations and websites

Project Threadbare came together in response to the arrest and detention of twenty Pakistani men and one south Indian man in August 2003.
threadbare.ca

STATUS is a broad coalition of individuals and organizations advocating for the regularization of status of all non-status immigrants living in Canada.
ocasi.org/status
110 Eglinton Avenue, Suite 200, Toronto, ON M4R 1A3
T: 416-322-4950 x239, status@ocasi.org

DRUM (Desis Rising Up and Moving) is a community-based social justice organization of working class and poor South Asian immigrants and immigrant detainees and their families in New York City. Their mission is to organize low-income immigrant detainees and South Asian immigrant communities for racial justice, immigrant rights, and an end to detentions & deportations. The long-term vision of DRUM is to build a social justice movement amongst South Asian immigrants in the United States that is led by poor and working class South Asians, progressive and people of color identified, and rooted in global justice.
drumnation.org
72-26 Broadway, 4th Floor, Jackson Heights, NY 11372
T: 718-205-3036, F: 718-205-3037, drum@drumnation.org

No One Is Illegal (NOII) UK was formed in September 2003 to campaign for the total abolition of immigration controls.
noii.org.uk
Bolton Socialist Club, 16 Wood Street, Bolton, BL1 1DY

The No Border Network is a tool for all groups and grass root organizations who work on the questions of migrants and asylum seekers in order to struggle alongside with them for freedom of movement, for the freedom for all to stay in the place which they have chosen, against repression and the many controls which multiply the borders everywhere in all countries.
noborder.org

Books and articles

There is a plethora of websites containing environmental justice bibliographies. The following are just a few sites. Books and articles by Robert Bullard and Winona LaDuke, for example, are a good place to start in the environmental justice literature. A particularly useful Canadian text, cited again here, is the Winter 2003, Vol. 29, No. 1, Alternatives Journal, "Colours of Green" (www.alternativesjournal.ca/issues/291/default.asp).
Alternatives Journal
Faculty of Environmental Studies
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G1 Canada
T: 519-888-4442, Toll free: 866-437-2587, F: 519-746-0292, info@alternativesjournal.ca

Environmental Justice: An Annotated Bibliography 1980-1998
www.ejrc.cau.edu/annbib.html

Fighting Enviromental Racism: A Selected Annotated Bibliography
www.mapcruzin.com/EI/ejigc.html

'Race'-Racism in Environmentalism: A Selected Bibliography With Comments
www.yorku.ca/arec/biblio.htm

Three relatively recent books not included in the above bibliographies are:

Adamson, Joni, Mei Mei Evans, and Rachel Stein (ed.). The Environmental Justice Reader: Politics, Poetics and Pedagogy. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2002.

Faber, Daniel (ed.). The Struggle for Ecological Democracy: Environmental Justice Movements in the United States. New York, London: Guilford Press, 1998.

Timmons Roberts, J. and Melissa M. Toffolon-Weiss. Chronicles from the Environmental Justice Frontline. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Videos

Similar to books, there are sites containing a list of environmental justice videos:
Environmental Justice Video Archive
www.ejrc.cau.edu/videoarch.html

Environmental Justice Videos
www.yorku.ca/arec/videos.htm
A few videos not cited in the above listings include:
"As Long As the Rivers Flow". Dirs. Kahehti:io and Kyle Diabo.
A documentary film that tells of the blockade that the Anishinaabek Community of Grassy Narrows erected on December 3rd, 2002. Now over a year into the blockade, the people of Grassy Narrows continue to defend their Traditional Land Use Area from clearcutting by the Montreal based pulp and paper corporation, Abitibi Consolidated, and struggle against the Ontario and Canadian governments' failure to act in accordance with there own colonial laws and treaties.

"Bones of the Forest." Dirs. Heather Frise and Velcrow Ripper, 80 min, 1995, Canada.
A documentary on the environmental devastation of the ancient temperate rainforests of the west coast of Canada placed in the wider context of global economic and political greed.

"Original Summit Journey to the Sacred Uprising." Dirs. Rebeka Tabodondung and Adrian Kahgee, 43 min, 2002, Canada.
Filmed during the FTAA Summit in Quebec City in 2001, this resistance documentary examines the roots of globalization from an Indigenous perspective, uncovering a legacy of sacred uprising. Includes interviews with Native writer and activist Ward Churchill, respected Elder Dr. Lillian McGregor and the late visionary and activist Rodney Bobiwash.
Text Source: Vtape. www.vtape.org

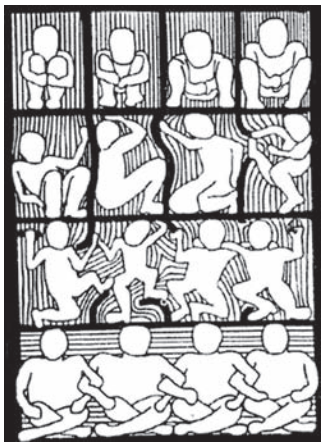
"Welcome to Africville." Dir. Dana Inkster, 15 min,1999, Canada.
"1999 is the 30th anniversary of the destruction of [Africville]. Dana Inkster's Welcome to Africville is the first fiction film to be set in this historical site. This short film gives a glimpse into the hearts and minds of four Africville residents on the eve of destruction of their community." This video importantly talks about queer lives as part of the life and destruction of Africville. Text source: Vtape. www.vtape.org. Available through Vtape.
401 Richmond Street West, Suite 452, Toronto ON M5V 3A8
T: 416-351-1317, F: 416-351-1509, info@vtape.org

The IMAGeNation 6th Annual Aboriginal Film and Video Festival (Vancouver)
"IMAGeNation also honours the film and video makers who continue to produce work that makes a difference and which adds immeasurably to the body of work that has been done in the past." This site features information on the 2004 festival and lists many helpful works.
www.imag-nation.com/2004_fest/04_reelwarriors.html
1965 Main Street
Vancouver , B.C. Canada V5T 3C1
T: 604-871-0173, F: 604-871-0191, imag@telus.net

The National Film Board of Canada also has a bilingual online catalogue of NFB films and videos. You can provide your own search terms. Some titles that may be of interest include (synopses are available on the website): A Place Called Chiapas on the Zapatista uprising in Mexico; Cree Hunters of Mistassini; Blockade: It's about the Land and Who Controls It; Battle for the Trees; Power: One River. Two Nations. www.onf.ca
P.O. Box 6100, Station Centre-Ville, Montreal QC H3C 3H5
Toll free: 1-800-267-7710

table of contents

Welcome to **Part Two** of the **Green Justice** resource kit!



Following the first half of the Green Justice resource kit, which introduced the concepts of environmental racism and environmental justice, part two looks at anti-oppressive organizing strategies to consider when organizing for more inclusive, anti-racist environmental agendas. Put these methods into effect and your organization will be rockin!

What does 'oppression' mean?

Oppression has been defined as the following[1]:

- It is institutionalized power that is historically formed and perpetuated over time;
- It allows certain 'groups' of people to assume a dominant position over 'other groups' and this dominance is maintained and perpetuated at an institutional level.

In other words, oppression is embedded in institutions such as the government and education systems, and it confers power and a position of dominance to a group of people over other groupings of people.

Sometimes you will hear the term 'systems of oppression'. This term points out that A) there are multiple forms of oppression and B) it refers to the pervasiveness and systemic nature of oppression. Systems of oppression permeate our language and shape the way we act and do things in this culture. Because systems of oppression have a history – that is, they have formed over time in specific political, economic and social contexts – we cannot eliminate systems of oppression over night. It will take strategic anti-oppressive organizing as well as an understanding of histories of oppression.

Also, systems of oppression are built around what are understood to be 'norms' in our social world. What is a norm? A norm denotes what is 'normal', acceptable, and desirable. 'The norm' is something that is valued and supported in a society. It is also given a position of dominance, privilege and power over what is defined as non-dominant, abnormal and thus invaluable or marginal. Recall that in Part One of the kit we discussed dichotomies. Norms are also considered to be stable or unchanging over time and they produce dichotomous pairs that define what is normal and what is not normal.

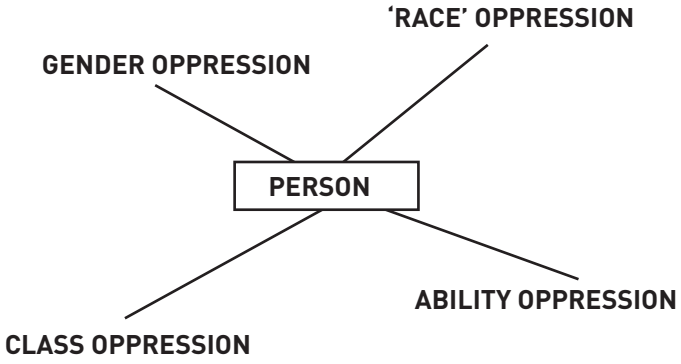
Take a look at the following chart of select forms and systems of oppression:

System or form of oppression:	'Race' oppression	Gender oppression	Class oppression	Sexual oppression	Ability oppression	Age Oppression
Assumed norm:	White	Male-bodied	Middle-upper class	Heterosexual	'Able'-bodied	'Adults'
What is considered to be marginal or not the norm:	Non-whites or people of colour, Aboriginal people, mixed race people	Female, and transgendered, transsexual and intersex people	The poor and working class (i.e. specifically blue collar workers. This category does not include people who are simply working)	Homosexual or queer folks	'Disabled' people	Children, youths, and the elderly (seniors)

1 This definition draws on the Y-Files: The Ultimate Youth Resource Guide.

Name of the discrimination based on this system of oppression:	Racism	Sexism and transphobia	Classism	Heterosexism, homophobia, bi-phobia, and transphobia	Ableism	Ageism
Your turn - list some of the discriminatory practices that may fall under each system of oppression:						
History:	'Race' and racism in the West developed during European colonialism (1492 onwards).	There are different accounts of how gender oppression developed. Some attribute it to the beginnings of capitalism and private property.	The development of capitalism and private property in Europe. There are varying dates for this.	In the European context: 1800s when modern medicine named the 'homosexual'.	Tied to the development of modern medicine (1800s) when 'disability' was medicalized as an illness.	(The historical development of ageism was not readily available at the time of printing this kit. If you do find a history do share it with others.)

Although this chart separates out each form of oppression and places each one into its own column, it is important to understand how all forms of oppression are linked and how they intersect. How are oppressions linked? Take for example the forms of discrimination a woman of colour may experience at her workplace. She may be earning less than her white coworkers (which includes both white men and white women) and less than her male co-workers of colour. She faces both racism and sexism simultaneously. As well, she cannot separate the racialized part of her identity from the 'gendered' part of her identity. We can visualize this by drawing lines that represent each form of oppression. The lines intersect at a centre point; this centre point represents a person who experiences these forms of oppression.



By acknowledging that systems of oppression are linked we **avoid ranking oppressions** or creating a **hierarchy of oppressions**. What does it mean to rank oppressions? Ranking oppressions means treating systems of oppression as separate from one-another and then placing different forms of oppression in an order according to what one considers to be the most severe form of oppression to the least harmful form of oppression. For example, someone might rank oppressions by claiming that classism is the worst form of oppression when compared with racism and sexism. Also the practice of ranking oppressions can shape personal and

organizational priorities around combating discrimination. Returning to the example of the woman of colour and workplace discrimination, the woman of colour's employer may prioritize working on issues of sexism because the employers believes that sexism is a serious issue which must be dealt with. The employer may ignore racism and classism because he or she may believe that these forms of oppression are not serious or important to challenge.

The practice of ranking oppressions, then:

- Leads to disputes over which forms of oppression are the worst and least severe;
- Fails to recognize how different forms of oppression **intersect** or work together to oppress people;
- Avoids looking at structures of power and privilege because people end up spending time arguing over which forms of oppression are the worst instead of focusing on how power structures divide struggles against racism from struggles against sexism (e.g. 'divide and rule' strategies);
- Overlooks the fact that all forms of oppression are harmful and unjust, and it fails to recognize that the best strategy to end oppression involves tackling all forms of oppression at once.

Power and privilege

In order to effectively confront systems of oppression we must also address issues of power and privilege. It is often easier to focus on how people are oppressed, disadvantaged and discriminated against than it is to address how we as individuals may have privileges and as a result are able to exercise our power at the expense of others. Often times this means looking at ourselves and how we each have different forms of privilege; this sort of self-scrutiny is difficult. When we focus on how people are oppressed we tend to think that forms of oppression like racism is an issue that people of colour face alone and that it is not something that white people are also affected by. If we follow this line of thinking, people of colour are held responsible for eliminating racism and white people are left out of the picture. The truth is white people need to be part of the fight to end racism by confronting white privilege and power. Similarly, men need to be part of feminist struggles to end sexism.

WHAT IS POWER? [2]

The first part of the kit included a definition of power. We will revisit the term below:
Power is a relational term. It can only be understood as a relationship between human beings in a specific historical, economic and social setting. It must be exercised to be visible.

1. Power is control of, or access to, those institutions sanctioned by the state. (Definition by Barbara Major of People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, New Orleans)

2. Power is the ability to define reality and to convince other people that it is their definition.
(Definition by Dr. Wade Nobles)

3. Power is ownership and control of the major resources of a state; and the capacity to make and enforce decisions based on this ownership and control; and (Alternative definition to #1)

4. Power is the capacity of a group of people to decide what they want and to act in an organized way to get it.
5.(In terms of an individual), power is the capacity to act.

It is worth noting here the difference between forms of power that are 'power-over' and 'power-with'. Power-over is power that is used in a discriminatory and oppressive way: It means having power over others and therefore domination and control over others (e.g. through coercion and violence). Power-with is power that is shared with all people in struggles for liberation and equality. In other words, it means using or exercising one's power to work with others equitably, for example, in a social movement.

WHAT IS PRIVILEGE?[3]

Privilege is unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to ALL members of a dominant group (e.g. white privilege, male privilege, etc.). Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it because we're taught not to see it, but nevertheless it puts them at an advantage over those who do not have it.

Let's examine one form of privilege: white privilege. Below you will find several statements that mark an invisible set of privileges that are enjoyed by white people[4]. Most likely, however, you will also find that depending on who you are there are other forms of oppression and privilege that will influence the truth of these statements for you, for example, issues of gender, class,

2,3 This definition is from the Colours of Resistance website: http://colours.mahost.org/faq/definitions.html
4 Adapted from Peggy McIntosh's article "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack". www.utoronto.ca/acc/events/peggy1.htm

education and physical ability (again, all forms of oppression are interconnected and are not separate from each other). Place a check mark beside a statement if it holds true for you and keep in mind some of the questions below and how oppressions over-lap/intersect.
__ I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.

__ I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented. (How are they represented?)

__ When I am told about our national heritage or about 'civilization,' I am shown that people of my colour made it what it is. (How are they portrayed in relation to others?)

__ Whether I use cheques, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin colour not to work against the appearance of financial reliability. (What other aspects of your identity might also benefit you here?)

__ I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.

__ I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.

__ If a traffic cop pulls me over or if Revenue Canada audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.

__ I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared.
__ I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of race.

__ If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.

__ I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behaviour without being seen as a cultural outsider.

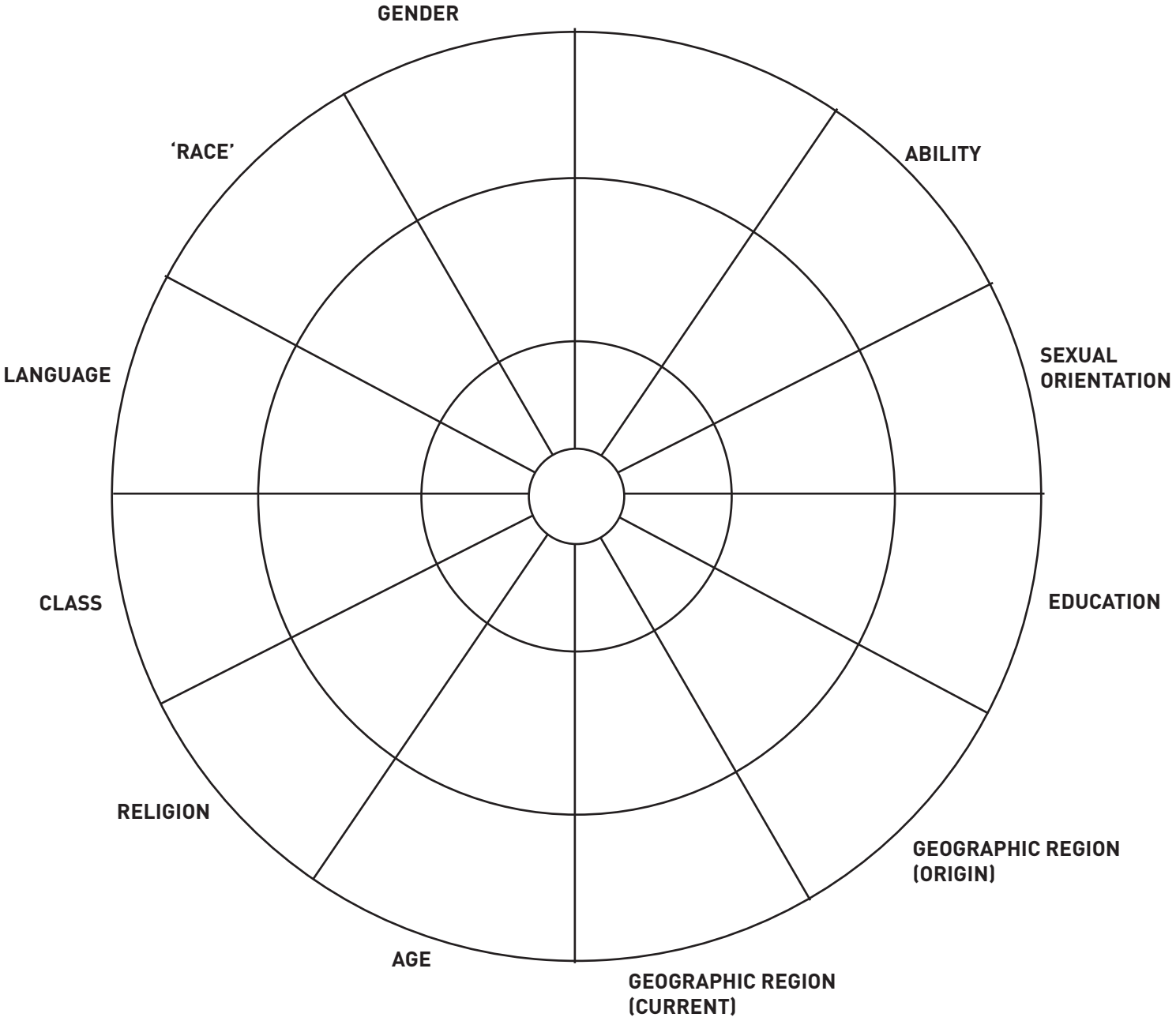
After reading the above statements, can you think of similar statements that can be made for gender privilege, class privilege and other forms of privilege? If so, list them in the following boxes:

_____ privilege. List of invisible privileges:	_____ privilege. List of invisible privileges:

Power flower

Take a moment to fill out the following power flower diagram. Each 'row' of petals represents a specific social identity based on gender, class and so on. The inner most petal is where you list your personal identities. In the middle petal write down the identities of the people who are in power in your organization. Lastly, in the outer most petal list the social identities of the people who hold power in the larger society.

This exercise tries to demonstrate, visually, how your personal identities compare with organizational and societal power structures and identities. How do your social identities relate to those who have organizational power and societal power? Do you share certain identities? What does this exercise illustrate about oppression and power structures? Who holds power and who does not? These are just some of the questions you may want to ask yourself after filling out the petals.



WHAT DOES ANTI-OPPRESSION MEAN?
WHAT IS ANTI-OPPRESSIVE ORGANIZING?

Anti-oppression means a refusal of all systems of oppression, power and privilege. You may come across the terms "anti-oppression analysis" or "anti-oppression lens". These terms mean that all systems of oppression and power are taken into account when examining and organizing against injustice. Also, an anti-oppression analysis acknowledges that all forms of oppression are linked and that the best way to organize against oppression is to take into account that oppressions are linked. An anti-oppression analysis is also an amalgamation of a number of strategies and analyses developed by various movements: feminist, anti-racist, queer liberation, and so on (check out the glossary for definitions).

Anti-oppressive organizing involves using an anti-oppression analysis or lens to challenge and reverse systems of power, discrimination and injustice. It also means confronting systems of power and privilege on an ongoing basis in your organizing; power relationships permeate our organizations and organizing practices. Anti-oppressive organizing involves being inclusive. Being inclusive can involve making meetings accessible to people with physical disabilities, or framing issues like pesticide reduction to include

the concerns of workers in pesticide factories. There are a myriad of ways to be inclusive in your organizing
• there is no one way to organize anti-oppressively.
Like all organizing strategies, anti-oppressive organizing practices will vary according to the issues you confront; they will vary across time, location, the people you are working with, the resources you have and so on. So there isn't one recipe for organizing anti-oppressively but there are some anti-oppressive concepts and tools that you can use. We'll look at two below: being an ally and doing solidarity work.

What does it mean to be an ally?

An ally is someone who actively supports and participates in struggles against systems of oppression. She or he is usually part of a dominant or privileged group; this privilege may be based on 'race', gender, etc. An ally works against these privileges by supporting the work of non-dominant groups. She or he understands that learning about one's self as a member of a dominant group is a starting point for being an ally. Learning about one's self as a member of a dominant group means being aware that:
- The experience of being part of a dominant group is hidden from you. This 'hidden-ness' is part of the invisible knapsack of privilege;
- You need to hear the experiences of people who are part of non-dominant groups and analyze things. You cannot see oppression as clearly as people from non-dominant groups and this can be an unsettling feeling. People from non-dominant groups will always know something more about the dominant groups than the dominant groups will know about non-dominant communities;
- The process of working against the privileges of being part of a dominant group is difficult and painful because it means that you must accept a shameful history that you inherited;
- One must balance the individual and collective dimensions of oppression. Individual feelings of guilt do not inspire action against oppression. As well, keep in mind that oppression works on a collective or social, structural level. Try not to over-personalize struggles against oppression, power and privilege.

There is no one way to be an ally. You will have to decide how to act as an ally, but there are several suggestions and things that you may want to keep in mind.[5]

1. Learn, reflect on, and understand the patterns and effects of oppression, take action with others, and take risks;

2. Work with members of your own group and help them understand oppression and make links with other forms of oppression;

3. Listen and reflect;

4. Remember that everyone in the dominant group is part of the oppression. Oppressive attitudes and systems are part of the air we breathe. It is inescapable. For this reason, members of a dominant group cannot claim that they are not sexist if they are men or not racist if they are white. Undoing oppression is an ongoing process. When someone, for example, claims that they are not racist, you know that they have barely begun the process of unlearning their privilege. Someone who has gone down the road of confronting racism will understand that this work is ongoing and they will claim that they are anti-racist rather than non-racist;

5. After accepting that every member of a dominant group is part of the oppression, try not to feel that you are a 'bad' person. Instead of feeling guilt for one's history, take on the responsibility of changing systems of oppression;

6. Keep in mind that as a member of a dominant group you are unable to see the oppression as clearly as members of a non-dominant group can. When someone points out your oppressive attitudes or language to you, your first response should be to believe it (i.e. listen and do not become defensive). Think about, reflect on and learn more about the oppression taking place in that particular situation. Try not to become defensive – this is an overpersonalized response.

7. List your privileges and help others see them. Reveal the invisibility of privilege.

8. When you hear an oppressive comment or see an example of oppression at work, school, anywhere, be the first one to speak up and don't wait for a member of the non-dominant group to speak up first.

9. Avoid thinking that you 'know what is good for them'. Do not take leadership. Members of non-dominant groups will know what is good for them and they can

These suggestions are from the following books: Becoming an Ally by Anne Bishop; and Uprooting Racism by Paul Kivel.

develop their own leadership to strengthen their organizations.

10. Do not take public attention or credit for a non-dominant group's process of liberation. Refuse to act as a spokesperson. News reporters may be interested in speaking to you because they are more comfortable with you or curious about you. Only speak in public if members of a non-dominant group ask you to speak from your point of view as an ally. Or speak on their behalf after getting their permission because speaking out will be dangerous for them.

11. Do not homogenize non-dominant groups. There are disagreements and differences within non-dominants groups just as there are differences within dominant groups. There is never complete agreement in any group or community – always expect debate and discussions on ideas and issues in all groups.

12. Learn as much as you can about the oppression. Your ignorance is part of the oppression. Members of a non-dominant group will not necessarily have the time, interest and energy to teach and answer your questions, so do some self-education.

13. Work with other members of your own group to unlearn the process of oppression. Share ideas and strategies around being an ally and avoid taking over the voice of non-dominant groups.

14. Do not to go to members of non-dominant groups for emotional support. They will need to focus their energies on their struggles.

15. Assume that oppression is everywhere, every day. Be aware of who is at the centre of attention and who is at the centre of power. Notice how oppression is denied, minimized and justified. Again, learn about histories of oppression and understand the connections between forms of oppression.

16. Do not be surprised if you are confronted with hostility (from non-dominant groups). There is a reason for this – think about your role in causing this to happen.

An interview with youth activist Nick (in Saskatchewan) on being an ally

Nick is currently working for the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and he is heavily involved with a project to start a young workers union. We asked Nick what his thoughts were on being an ally and on confronting one's privilege(s).

"For me being an ally is based on the recognition that liberation is not an individual exercise.[...] Due to how oppressions work together people of all groups need to work together to overcome them so we can struggle for a better world. Being a middle class white guy, this means that I must look at how I operate in the organizations that I belong to and in the groups that I work with to check myself to make sure I am not taking up too much space. I think the most important thing [when challenging one's own privileges] is to be conscious of your location, be conscious of your privilege, examine what you gain from it, and then make sure you don't rely on it."

WORKING WITH ALLIES WHEN YOU ARE A MEMBER OF A NON-DOMINANT GROUP

Again, there isn't a recipe for working successfully with allies. There are some things, though, that you will want to consider and ask yourself when choosing to work with allies. For example, clearly decide on why, when, and how you will work with allies. Do you want to work with allies at all? What can allies do that would be useful? It is easier to figure out what you don't want allies to do for you, but try to map out what you would like them to do. Decide on how open you will be with allies. Also, know who is a committed ally. Members of a dominant group who are domineering, who are unaware of their privileges, or are acting out of guilt will only make your work more difficult. Choose allies who are willing to do the work of self-education, who are aware of power dynamics, who challenge their privileges on a consistent basis and who are committed to struggles to end all forms of oppression. Allies may make 'mistakes' along the way. Being an ally, like fighting oppression, is an ongoing process, and a learning process. Again, decide on how you want to work with allies based on your organization's needs and the needs of the movements and struggles you are involved with.

DECOLONIZATION AND INTERNALIZED OPPRESSION

Decolonization is a huge term that can mean different things to different people. Decolonization for Aboriginal peoples may involve issues of self-determination, self-governance, cultural survival and gaining ownership and control of their land and exercising their sovereignty. Decolonization for people of colour can mean ending racism, colonial power relations and healing from internalized racism and other forms of internalized oppression.

What is internalized oppression? This term describes a process whereby people of a non-dominant group internalize or take in and do not challenge their oppression. They may accept their oppression and agree with the values, ideas and practices that dominant groups perpetuate against non-dominant groups. Non-dominant groups accept their inferior status and they accept the power and privileges exercised by dominant groups. Often, non-dominant groups perpetuate oppressive attitudes and practices against members of the same and other non-dominant groups.

Why should we consider issues of decolonization and internalized oppression? Because organizing anti-oppressively will require members of non-dominant groups to examine how they have been affected by systems of oppression and how these systems shape how they organize and work with each other. This is an ongoing process and struggle.

What is solidarity work?

Solidarity means a union of common interests, goals and responsibilities. It means co-operation and partnership. Solidarity work can be pursued by people who want to challenge their privileges by lending support to campaigns, initiatives and struggles initiated by a non-dominant group. Solidarity work requires members of a privileged group to learn about their privileges and take responsibility for the oppression that they are part of. The points listed above for being an ally also apply here to people doing solidarity work. The Friends of the Lubicon is one example of an organization that is working in solidarity with Aboriginal struggles, specifically the struggles of the Lubicon Cree of Northern Alberta.

WHAT DO OTHER ACTIVISTS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT DOING SOLIDARITY WORK?

We asked Lawrence, a tireless youth activist in Winnipeg, about his thoughts on how non-indigenous environmental activists can organize in support of and be in solidarity with Aboriginal peoples' struggles. Lawrence presently works for the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, a grassroots, urban Aboriginal political advocacy organization driven by the needs of the largest off-reserve Aboriginal population in the country. Lawrence provided two thoughts on doing solidarity work:

1. "Help us by leaving us alone and by making others aware of our presence, like oil companies, forestry companies, mining companies, water companies, sewage and waste companies, military companies, governments, telling them we have to find other ways to grow, develop and live that don't interfere with indigenous peoples way of living."

2. "[W]e have to have a great big sit down, saying 'okay, how are we going to continue to live together on this earth, 'cause there is a very good chance we ain't going to find another place like this.' And to those who won't sit down and listen we have to make them listen. To those who won't change we have to make them change because it's coming to a point of no return. [...] On all fronts we have areas we need to change as humans."

We also asked the Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement (IPSM), a Montreal-based collective, for their thoughts on and suggestions for doing solidarity work. What is the IPSM? The IPSM is a predominantly non-native group that has been engaged with a variety of work including: providing direct support for Indigenous communities in resistance, such as Kanehsatake, Grassy Narrows, and Secwepemc; raising awareness among other non-native people and organizations through educational forums; confronting the perpetrators of colonialism, namely the Canadian and provincial governments, multinational corporations, and international trade regimes such as the World Trade Organization; and making concrete links with other related issues, including the anti-war/anti-occupation movement, work being done by groups like No One is Illegal, and environmental, anti-racist, and workers' movements. The IPSM emerged out of an apparent need for settlers (non-native people) to organize in support of a decolonisation movement which would not only offer immediate support to Indigenous communities but would also fight against our own governments' systematic efforts to expropriate Indigenous lands and resources and to assimilate and exterminate native Communities.

IPSM's suggestions for doing solidarity work

• Develop a basic understanding of the different forms of oppression that exist, where they come from, and the ways that they manifest themselves in different situations; be aware of the ways in which you have experienced oppression, as well as the ways in which you have participated in oppression. Keep in mind that while anti-oppression workshops are helpful in providing a space for thinking about and discussing these issues, we must be able to put what we learn into practice in our everyday lives and organizing work

• Take some time to learn about the environmental justice movement, perhaps by reading a book, visiting a website, or, most importantly, talking with people who have first hand experience doing such work

• Working for social justice and fighting to protect the environment are not mutually exclusive; they are intricately linked. Having a better understanding of how oppression works in a capitalist society will help to make the links between the social and the environmental more clear, and will lend itself to developing effective strategies for fighting for social change

• Respecting the self-determination and autonomy of all communities which you work with is crucial. Oppressed and marginalized communities generally have a long history of having decisions made for them, and imposed on them by others, be they governments, corporations, rich people, white people, men, etc...Support community-based projects which encourage the participation of many community members and which allows for decisions to be made by the community

• Get involved! Find out about issues that are facing different communities in your area. Maybe you can offer to volunteer your time with an organization or group that is working on the issue. In reality, there are so many ways of getting involved in solidarity work.

• take your time to figure out what kind of work you want to contribute to.

Now let's take a look at how different groups and organizations have approached organizing anti-oppressively and/or inclusively. You will find below a list of points on how to organize democratically; this list was generated at a meeting on globalization issues. Following this is an article on the lessons learned by an environmental organization that attempted to change their campaigns and organizing practices to become more inclusive. Finally, we've included a success story from the Bus Riders Union in Vancouver. **Jemez Principles for democratic organizing** by Rubén Solís, Southwest Public Workers Union; and Chair of the SNEEJ Border Justice Campaign [published by the SouthWest Organizing Project, April 1997]

ACTIVISTS MEET ON GLOBALIZATION

On December 6-8, 1996, forty people of color and European-American representatives met in Jemez, New Mexico, for the "Working Group Meeting on Globalization and Trade." The Jemez meeting was hosted by the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice with the intention of hammering out common understandings between participants from different cultures, politics and organizations. The following "Jemez Principles" for democratic organizing were adopted by the participants.

#1 BE INCLUSIVE

If we hope to achieve just societies that include all people in decision-making and assure that all people have an equitable share of the wealth and the work of this world, then we must work to build that kind of inclusiveness into our own movement in order to develop alternative policies and institutions to the treaties and policies under neo-liberalism.

This cannot be achieved without diversity at the planning table, in staffing, and in coordination but always be careful that this does not lead to tokenism. It may delay achievement of other important goals, it will require discussion, hard work, patience, and advance planning. It may involve conflict, but through this conflict, we can learn better ways of working together. It's about building alternative institutions and movement building.

#2 EMPHASIS ON BOTTOM-UP ORGANIZING

To succeed, it is important to reach out into new constituencies, and to reach within all levels of leadership and membership base of the organizations that are already involved in our networks. We must continually build and strengthen a base which provides our credibility, our strategies, mobilizations, leadership development, and the energy for the work we must do daily.

#3 LET PEOPLE SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

We must be sure that relevant voices of people directly affected are heard. Ways must be provided for spokespersons to represent and be responsible to the affected constituencies. It is important for organizations to clarify their roles, and who they represent, and to as-

sure accountability within our structures.

#4 WORK TOGETHER IN SOLIDARITY AND MUTUALITY

Groups working on similar issues with compatible visions should consciously act in solidarity, mutuality and support each other's work. In the long run, a more significant step is to incorporate the goals and values of other groups with your own work, in order to build strong relationships. For instance, in the long run, it is more important that labor unions and community economic development projects include the issue of environmental sustainability in their own strategies, rather than just lending support to the environmental organizations. So communications, strategies and resource sharing is critical, to help us see our connections and build on these.

#5 BUILD JUST RELATIONSHIPS AMONG OURSELVES

We need to treat each other with justice and respect, both on an individual and an organizational level, in this country and across borders. Defining and developing "just relationships" will be a process that won't happen overnight. It must include clarity about decision-making, sharing strategies, and resource distribution. There are clearly many skills necessary to succeed, and we need to determine the ways for those with different skills to coordinate and be accountable to one another.

#6 COMMITMENT TO SELF TRANSFORMATION

As we change societies, we must change from operating on the mode of individualism to community-centeredness. We must "walk our talk." We must be the values that we say we're struggling for and we must be justice, be peace, be community.

Question:
What are some structures or processes that have been empowering and democratic in your organization or organizing work?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Seven Lessons learned by Greenest City[6]

Greenest City is a non-profit environmental organization based in Toronto. In recognizing that new Canadians and non-English speaking residents are excluded from environmental programming due to language and cultural barriers, Greenest City developed a Chinese Community Outreach Project in order to make environmental programming accessible to Toronto's sizable Chinese community. Through their experiences with this project and through work with other communities of colour, Greenest City has identified the following seven lessons learned from their attempts to diversify their environmental work:

1. Translate. Translating literature and presentations both linguistically and culturally reduces opportunities for misunderstandings and helps to remove barriers to participation in environmental actions. For example, Greenest City translated their composting resource literature into Chinese. However, Greenest City did not address the cultural component of translation, leaving Mandarin-speaking users of the compost resources wondering whether foods such as tofu (a staple in Chinese diet) could be composted.

2. Local Partnerships. Find and build partnerships with a trusted contact and champion from within a particular cultural community. This will help bridge cultural and linguistic gaps. A contact from within the community can provide valuable advice on approaches to distributing environmental information and ensuring that your work or project is culturally sensitive, timely and relevant. For example, Greenest City made contacts with a Sri Lankan-Tamil Seniors Group that helped them find tenants who were interested in community gardening.

3. Experiment. Be open to trying out different approaches and be willing to fail. Have trial projects and see whether they interest community members and if they are easy to implement.

4. One size does not fit all. There is no one 'multicultural' approach to environmental programming. Similar to doing translation work, environmental messages and approaches need to be tailored to each of the different cultural groups with which one works. For example in their community gardening work, Greenest City saw

6 This article was featured in the "Colours of Green" issue of Alternatives Journal, vol. 29, no. 1, Winter 2003.

differences in gardening techniques and preferences between Sri Lankan and Jamaican gardeners. They then had to meet the needs and preferences of these gardeners.

5. Good news travels. Try different modes of communication and outreach. Messages can be conveyed through art, word-of-mouth, music and other non-written (or less formal) methods of communication. Greenest City advertised workshops and environmental activities in Chinese for the Chinese Community Outreach Project through local Chinese media (community papers and radio) but these methods of outreach were not always effective. Word-of-mouth can be more effective but labour intensive.

6. Seek multiple benefits (or broaden your environmental 'frame'). Have a multidimensional strategy that has explicit social, health and environmental benefits and emphasize these benefits when talking about your project or work. Greenest City found that the issue of food access is a high priority for new immigrant families. While Greenest City was interested in the traditional environmental benefits of organic gardening, the physical and social benefits were more relevant to gardening participants as they need healthy food for their families.

7. No simple answers. Because environmental issues are linked to social issues, Greenest City learned that their best projects were those that connected environmental issues to political, economic and social inequalities that affect specific immigrant and racialized communities. According to Greenest City: "[T]he real lesson for both individual organizations and the broader environmental movement is to expand beyond program strategies (e.g., translating material or experimenting with different outreach methods) to approaches that are culturally and socially sensitive and inclusive." (Emphasis added) Moving beyond program strategies will transform:

- Who environmental groups work with;
- How environmental groups work with people;
- And which issues environmental groups address.

AN ORGANIZING SUCCESS STORY:

Night Owl Service is restored in Vancouver

In first half of the kit, we introduced the Bus Riders Union (BRU) through an interview with Aiyanas, a BRU organizer. We'll return to the BRU and highlight their organizing success story.

In October 2001 the Vancouver regional transit authority, Translink, eliminated their late-night bus service. Aiyanas explained that poor, working class people of colour and women who work late-night shifts as janitors, security guards, restaurant and bar workers, for example, were hit the hardest by the cut. In March 2004, after two years of struggle by the BRU, the Night Owl service was restored. Aiyanas said that this was a huge victory for the BRU, not only because they forced the transit authority to change policy for bus riders, but because it marked a commitment to acting on the needs of the transit-dependent.

It is helpful to note some of the organizing strategies behind the victory. Many publications produced by the BRU are translated into languages that reflect the transit-riding population. At meetings they provide childcare. They have an "on-the-bus crew" that rides on the buses to speak to riders. This direct contact is a crucial part of their organizing strategy. As well, the BRU have drafted a "Basis of Unity" (check out their basis of unity at http://bru.resist.ca/basisofunity) which outlines their commitment to fighting multiple forms of oppression. These select organizing strategies highlight how the BRU is organizing to meet the needs of the transit-dependent.

What do you think of the points, actions and/or suggestions outlined above? Do you agree with them? Do you find them helpful or not?

_____

_____

_____

The Greenest City and Bus Riders Union stories may prompt us to think about how we will develop our action plans to bring back to our organizations. The next section will take a closer look at making organizational changes through an anti-oppression lens.

Developing an action plan for anti-oppressive organizational change[7]

There are different ways in which you can go about making anti-oppressive organizational change. Your approach will depend on the current structure and needs of your organization. You may want to begin the process of creating organizational change by asking yourself the following questions:

- What is your vision of an organization, agency, department, committee that works towards ending systems of oppression and domination?
- How will you work toward your vision?
- What have you already achieved in your own organization?
- How will you know when your vision has become reality?

After asking yourself the above questions, you may want to consider the following steps when creating an action plan:

Step or task	What this task may entail
Identify key issues that you want to work on.	You can develop a needs assessment or checklist to assess how your organization is doing in terms of anti-oppressive work. We've included a sample checklist in the next section.
Goals	After identifying key issues that you want to work on, try to formulate a goal. For example, if you identified the issue of inclusiveness in your organization's promotional material as a key issue that you want to work on, you may set yourself a goal of re-vamping your organization's promotional literature.
Strategies	How do you plan to achieve your goals and vision? What resources will you need? Returning to the promotional material example, you may want to set out tasks such as researching how other organizations produce inclusive promotional materials, and then develop designs for promo materials.
Timeframe	When are you going to do this? What steps are involved and how long will each step take? When do you want to complete the project? What are the benchmarks?
Evaluation	How and when will you measure your results and/or assess and review your plans and goals? What are your outputs and indicators of success? You may want to review your work on a weekly basis and keep track of your work and successes along the way.
Evaluation	How and when will you measure your results and/or assess and review your plans and goals? What are your outputs and indicators of success? You may want to review your work on a weekly basis and keep track of your work and successes along the way.
Sustainability	How will your organization be sustained in the long term? How will it be sustained if its current members were to move on?

Needs assessment or organizational check-list[8]

You may want to identify key issues to work on by using the following organizational checklist for anti-oppressive change. Keep in mind that this checklist is far from complete. Add or change items on the list according to your knowledge of the organization and its needs.

Beside each item on the checklist, indicate whether your organization has implemented this item or not by placing a checkmark in the appropriate section.

7 This section draws on the following texts: Teach Me To Thunder: A Training Manual for Anti-racism Trainers by Alma Estable, Mechthild Meyer and Gordon Pon - this publication is available through the Canadian Labour Congress; Multiculturalism at Work: A Guide to Organizational Change by Barb Thomas; Anti-racism Workbook: Structural Change for Grassroots Organizations by OPIRG-Peterborough.

8 This checklist is adapted from Teach Me To Thunder: A Training Manual for Anti-racism Trainers by Alma Estable, Mechthild Meyer and Gordon Pon (1997)

I. System Administration and Management	Not considered at all	In process not yet fully implemented	In process not yet fully implemented
The organization has adopted a comprehensive policy on gender, race, sexuality, ability and equity more broadly.			
New policies are always being created with principles of anti-oppression.			
There are policies and procedures for preventing and correcting incidents of harassment based on race, gender, sexuality and other forms of oppression.			
There are mechanisms to ensure meaningful participation in decision-making of community members from all non-dominant groups.			
The organization's management and supervisory staff reflect your community (in terms of race, class, gender, age and so on).			
There is a senior staff person who ensures that anti-oppressive practices are carried out.			
All staff members know their roles and the procedures for carrying out anti-oppressive policies.			

II. Personal Practices	Not considered at all	In process not yet fully implemented	In process not yet fully implemented
A plan has been established to monitor and ensure that all levels of staffing continue to reflect the diversity of the communities you work with (in terms of race, language, etc.).			
Compared to white, Anglophone/Francophone staff, non-white, non-Anglophone/Francophone staff are as likely to be found in full-time, casual or part-time, managerial and supervisory as well as front-line positions.			
Outreach and hiring practices have been reviewed to ensure elimination of systemic barriers such as word-of-mouth hiring and so on.			
Hiring managers are able to assess equitably the qualifications, experiences and education of applicants who received their education outside of Canada and/or whose first language is not English or French.			
Hiring and promotion for all staff takes into account candidates' commitment to anti-oppressive service delivery, as well as other skills or qualifications.			

Anti-oppression training is integrated into staff, board of directors and volunteer orientation.			
Staff who are actively countering oppression are recognized, rewarded and supported, through resources such as training, materials, positive feedback, positive evaluation, promotion.			
All staff members, volunteers and the community give ideas and participate in developing and implementing anti-oppressive practices.			
III. Services and Programming	Not considered at all	In process not yet fully implemented	In process not yet fully implemented
The policies and practices for an anti-oppressive organization are communicated to all members and users of services, programs and facilities.			
The policies and practices for an anti-oppressive organization are communicated to all members and users of services, programs and facilities.			
Adherence to anti-oppressive principles is a condition of membership and use of services, programs and facilities.			
All members and users are protected from oppressive behaviour while using services, programs and facilities.			
All members and users know where to direct complaints regarding oppressive behaviour.			
Such complaints are dealt with seriously, quickly and fairly.			
Services and programs ensure accessibility for all members in the community, across differences.			
Participants in all programs reflect the diversity of the community.			
Systemic barriers to participation of members of oppressed groups have been identified and addressed as needed.			
Many new programs and activities have been developed to reflect the growing awareness of the needs and interests of previously excluded communities.			
Staff knows how to address clients and members from non-dominant groups in a respectful and consistent manner.			
Users or clients from non-dominant groups whose needs cannot be met from the organization are appropriately referred to other community organizations, and their needs are documented and reviewed to identify barriers and new program areas.			

Both formal and informal mechanisms for collecting feedback from users and/or members from oppressed groups are used effectively.			
Translation and/or interpretation services are available and easily accessible without cost to the user.			
Programs are delivered by staff who reflect the diversity of the community in the region.			
IV. Communications and materials	Not considered at all	In process not yet fully implemented	In process not yet fully implemented
Communication and publicity materials are routinely assessed for oppressive language and images, and revised accordingly.			
Community/multilingual press and media are routinely used in communication strategies.			
Communications are in non-official languages, as well as English and French.			
Images in communications, promotional and program materials show a diversity of people doing a wide range of routine tasks.			
Publicity for programs and services effectively reaches a diverse constituency.			
V. Organizational Norms	Not considered at all	In process not yet fully implemented	In process not yet fully implemented
There is recognition that anti-oppression is a goal of the organization and an integral value of the organization, its members and its staff.			
There is recognition that there is a wide range of acceptable and valuable individual approaches to the following: • Solving problems • Dealing with bureaucracies and authority • Participating in communities • Functioning effectively in the workplace			
There is recognition that not everyone may be equally comfortable in English especially in relation to colloquial expressions, and sensitive and respectful accommodation is made, where needed.			

There is recognition that not everyone is equally familiar and comfortable with traditional Anglo-colonial methods of governances (including, for example, Robert's Rules of			
Order to run meetings; voluntary Boards of Directors). There is an openness to consider different and equally effective ways of making decisions.			
There is recognition that systems of oppression exist in the organization as it does in other organizations and institutions in Canada, and for this reason staff are committed to anti-oppressive organizing.			

Did the above checklist help you identify key issues that you want to work on for your action plan? If so, what are some of these issues? If not, have you already identified issues that you want to work on? If there are, list them below. If you are looking for issues on which to take action maybe the next section can help.

_____

_____

_____

Six possible areas you may want your action plan to focus on

Here are seven areas or interventions that you may want to take on for your action plan. There are, of course, other interventions that are not included here. If you have thought of others that's great! Go through the necessary steps to make your action plan happen. We've included suggestions below on how carry out the following interventions. Good luck!

A. TRAINING FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS.

You may want to consider developing a series of training sessions for staff, board members and volunteers. Training for staff and volunteers can be part of an organizational change effort for the following reasons:
1. It prepares people to participate in and shape change in the organization.
2. It provides a forum for people to learn together, to raise questions and issues, and to contribute their knowledge of anti-oppressive organizing.
3. It allows people to express their fears, insecurities, ideas and hopes in terms of anti-oppressive organizational change.

There are several anti-racism, anti-oppression training manuals that you can consult for workshop ideas (see resources section of this kit). Also, you might want to use the films and videos listed in part one of the kit in your workshops. Several sections of this kit can be transformed into workshops as well. For example, the cases of environmental racism in part one can be used in a workshop discussion that introduces the concept of environmental racism and justice. The invisible knapsack of white privilege list, included above, can be used in a workshop on anti-oppressive organizing and confronting white privilege. We have also included two workshop activities at the end of this kit for you to consider and even modify according to your needs.

B. DEVELOP AN ANTI-OPPRESSION POLICY[9]

What is an anti-oppression policy?
An anti-oppression policy outlines a course or principle of action formulated on the basis of anti-oppression principles adopted or proposed by an organization. Policies, more generally, are guidelines for people involved in an organization and they document what the organization is trying to achieve and how. They help groups make decisions on how they will allocate resources and how they will develop their services and/or programs.

Why is it important to develop an anti-oppression policy? There are several reasons for doing so including:
- to protect and support anti-oppression principles;
- to promote inclusiveness, accessibility and equity in your organization;
- to show a written commitment to principles of human rights;
- to create an organization that is accountable to the

9 This section draws on Y-Files: The Ultimate Youth Resource Guide and the Policy Development Workbook: Diversity Policy Kit which is available on the Canadian Council for International Co-operation www.ccic.ca/e/007/pubs_gender.shtml (under resources, publications, Gender Issues and Diversity section).

populations you serve and that reflects the diverse reality of Canada;
- to work against systemic barriers to participation;
- to enshrine anti-oppression standards in the organization and create an atmosphere where all forms of discrimination are unacceptable.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN AN ANTI-OPPRESSION POLICY?

Some basic elements of an anti-oppression policy are listed below, but keep in mind that you can add or modify these elements according to the needs of your organization.

1. A statement of the issue or problem that the policy addresses and why the policy is important. Include definitions as well (for example, for racism, sexism, homophobia and so on).

2. A statement of goal(s). What does the policy hope to achieve?

3. An implementation strategy. Indicate how the above goals will be met and identify the steps involved in meeting these goals as well as organizational priorities, timelines and expected results.

4. Complaint and/or mediation procedures. Outline procedures for handling complaints. Who will be responsible for dealing with complaints and what sort of measures will be taken to resolve them?

5. Accountability and actions. Outline the responsibilities of staff, volunteers, members and so on in carrying out and upholding the policy. What sort of actions will be undertaken to do so?

You can view a sample policy on the Canadian Council for International Co-operation Policy Development Workbook: Diversity Policy Kit which is available online www.ccic.ca/e/007/pubs_gender.shtml (under resources, publications, Gender Issues and Diversity section). As well, there are sample policies in Anti-racism Workbook: Structural Change for Grassroots Organizations by OPIRG-Peterborough.

Keep in mind that policy development is an ongoing process. You will need to review your policy over time and make revisions. Also remember that you cannot take another organization's policy and make it your own. A policy should be developed in the context of your organization with the input and help of staff, volunteers and etc.

What an anti-oppression policy can do [10]	What an anti-oppression policy cannot do
It can put responsibility on the organization to address oppressive actions.	It cannot make individuals commit to anti-oppressive. The initiative should be present in the organization.
It can act as an educational tool.	It cannot ensure that people from non-dominant communities will readily join your organization.
It can act as a set of guidelines and procedures for addressing oppressive situations.	It cannot eliminate oppression from the structure and individuals in an organization. Oppression must be addressed and confronted on an ongoing basis,
It can publicize the organization's commitment to anti-oppression.	It cannot make your organization oppression-free.
It can encourage an organization to address oppressive situations outside of the organization.	It cannot replace the role of discussion and action on anti-oppression.

This chart is adapted from Anti-racism Workbook: Structural Change for Grassroots Organizations by OPIRG-Peterborough.

C. DECISION-MAKING AND MEETING PROCEDURES

You may consider making changes to your organization's decision-making and meeting procedures. A more democratic and perhaps inclusive way of making decisions that does not rely on the majority rule/voting approach is consensus decision-making. The consensus decision-making approach tries to work through the thoughts, ideas, concerns and perspectives of all members within a group. The group works toward a decision that is acceptable to everyone. Consensus decision-making will work in a group that is committed to principles of consensus: all group members actively listen to and respect and support each other. Consensus does not mean unanimity – there will be different opinions on an issue within a group but everyone accepts a decision in the end. An example of consensus decision-making at a meeting may involve someone proposing a new organizational program. Group members will have a moment to reflect on the idea and then each group member gives their opinion and thoughts on the idea. The group can check for agreement on the idea from everyone. If there are concerns about the proposed idea, the group can discuss them until an acceptable decision is reached.

In terms of making changes to meeting procedures, you may want to consider a number of things such as:

- designating a person at a meeting, perhaps the facilitator, to make sure that everyone's voice is heard. This role should be rotated among group members and group members should receive training on how to conduct meetings in an inclusive manner and on how to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate equally in the meeting;
- holding meetings on a day when everyone will be able to attend e.g. not on religious holidays for various religions;
- having meetings in an accessible venue, for example a space that is accessible for people with disabilities and a location that is accessible for people who rely on public transit;
- providing childcare and translation at meetings;
- being aware of everyday domination, oppression and power dynamics within a meeting is important such as being aware of who is speaking and whose ideas are taken seriously and listened to thoroughly at a meeting. You may want to read over some suggestions on how to end everyday domination from the following site www.xyonline.net/tools.shtml.

You will know best what your organization can do to change its meeting procedures and decision-making processes. The above are just a few suggestions. You can also read further ideas in the books listed in the resources section.

D. COALITION BUILDING

A coalition is a loose network of organizations and groups that have a common vision or interest. Organizations and groups come together to work on a specific issue, campaign or concern. There is greater power in numbers and organizations can share resources, ideas and knowledge with one another and for this reason coalition building can be attractive. You may want to consider building coalitions with other organizations that are involved in environmental justice work. Being in a coalition requires commitment, so if you are thinking about forming or joining a coalition consider what you can offer to the coalition and what your goals and visions are for being in the coalition. You can begin the process of forming a coalition by identifying what issues you want to work on. Then find organizations with similar interests. Come to a consensus with member organizations on how the coalition will run by perhaps drafting a basis of unity or coalition statement.

E. PROMOTIONAL AND PROGRAM LITERATURE REVIEW

An organization's pamphlets, website, leaflets, posters or promotional materials send a message about the organization's vision of environmentalism. Your action plan may include a review of your organization's promotional materials and suggestions for new designs for these materials. You will want to analyze the images included in these materials, specifically who is included in the images, what they are doing, how they are dressed, and what they look like in relation to other people in the image. You should also consider who is not in the images and ask questions around the language that is used in the materials. Will you include a statement on anti-oppressive organizing and a commitment to environmental justice in the literature? Are the materials translated? Where are the materials distributed? What sort of promotional materials do other organizations use? Design or suggest changes to your organization's literature and get feedback from a range of people and organizations on their impressions of your work. Look into expanding the types of promotional strategies that your organization uses e.g. using art as a medium.

F. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

Your action plan may evaluate the inclusiveness of your organization's programs, services and/or campaigns. You may even want to propose a new program which has an environmental justice focus to your organization. What you need to keep in mind when you review and propose a program is the issue of framing. Recall the discussion of framing practices in part one of the kit. You will want to ask yourself how your organization frames issues of environmentalism in their campaigns and programs. Try looking at the same campaigns and programs using an environmental justice frame. Also recall Greenest City's and the Bus Riders' Union's points about organizing inclusively and anti-oppressively: Organizations need to be aware of and listen to the needs, concerns, struggles and movements of non-dominant groups. By listening and involving people of non-dominant groups, organizations can get a better sense of how to develop a more inclusive and anti-oppressive program or campaign. Work on being an ally.

A note on outreach

Often times organizations that lack an anti-oppressive vision believe that they can change their organizations by outreaching to non-dominant communities without including them in decision-making processes (see 'tokenism' in glossary) and without taking a critical look at the organization's assumptions and beliefs about oppression, injustice and power issues. An organization must review its programs, policies and procedures and identify barriers that prevent members of non-dominant communities from wanting to participate in the organization in the first place. It could be that the organization is not framing issues in an inclusive manner or that staff are not as welcoming to non-dominant communities.

Workshop activity ideas

The following activities can be modified to suit your organizational needs and your training objectives. Remember to prepare well in advance for the workshop. Find out ahead of time how many people will be attending your workshop, what space you will be working with (how large is it?), what resources you will have (for example, a blackboard, overhead projector) and whether you will be working with another workshop facilitator. Most of the activities below focus on challenging common conceptions of environmentalism with the exception of one, 'Power Line', which focuses specifically on power and privilege.

ACTIVITY:

What does environmentalism look like?

Time: about 45minutes to an hour

Materials: - a variety of images culled from newspapers, books, magazines, websites, organization pamphlets, catalogues. Have at least 20 images (or more depending on the size of the group). Select images from mainstream environmentalist struggles and organizations, and find images of environmental justice struggles.

- tape to stick images on the wall
- flip chart paper and markers, or a blackboard and chalk, or white board and erasable markers
- a copy of the cases of environmental racism in Canada (in part one of the kit) to hand out to participants who will be in groups of 3 or 4

Method:

- first, place images on the walls of the room. Spread them out.
- welcome everyone. Have people sit in a circle and ask everyone to introduce themselves briefly (what is their name, their interest in environmentalism and what they want to get out of the workshop).
- tell participants that we will examine common conceptions of environmentalism, and then we will question these common conceptions by looking at the concepts of environmental racism and justice
- explain to participants that there are images posted around the room. Ask participants to take a look at the images and to stand beside an image that they think represents environmentalism. Give participants about 2-3 minutes to select an image. Then ask them why they think this image represents environmentalism. Write their responses down on the flipchart.
- then ask participants to select an image that they think represents anti-racism struggles. Give participants 2-3 minutes to do this. Then ask them why they think this image represents anti-racism. Record their responses.
- finally, ask participants if they can find an image that deals with both anti-racism and environmentalism. Give them 2-3 minutes to do this, ask why they chose their image and record their responses. Ask them what the experience was like selecting images. Was it difficult to find an image? What were they thinking when selecting images?

- return to the circle and explain what environmental racism and environmental justice is (you can use the definition in part one of the kit). While explaining the definitions, refer to participants' responses during the image selection activity. Did they identify principles of environmental justice in their responses? How do their responses compare with the principles of environmental justice?
- next, form groups of 3 or 4 and hand out one of the cases of environmental racism in Canada. Ask each group to read their case and have them discuss why this is a case of environmental racism. Return to the larger group and discuss each group's response.
- wrap up by asking if participants have any questions.

Activity modifications:
- You can substitute the cases of environmentalism with the myths of diversity and myths of overpopulation and global environmental issues from part one of the kit. Before splitting up into groups, explain what racism and anti-racism are (see glossary in part one and two). Also, before the group work, ask the entire group if they can explain what the concerns around overpopulation and global environmental problems are. Then split up into groups, have each group discuss what they think about the myths and return to the larger group for discussion.
- You can substitute the cases of environmentalism with pamphlets and literature (can also be print outs from websites) from mainstream environmental organizations and environmental justice organizations. Ask groups to examine how the mainstream environmental group defines environment and environmentalism, and do the same with the environmental justice literature. Discuss group findings in the larger group.
- You may also want to bring in a discussion of dichotomies and common definitions of environment when explaining the concepts of environmental racism and justice.

VIDEO SCREENING:

Stories from the front lines of environmental justice struggles

Time: depends on the length of the video you choose to show

Materials: – an environmental justice video (select one from the list of videos in part one of the kit, such as 'Remember Africville' or 'The Original Summit')
- T.V. and VCR
- flipchart paper and markers, or blackboard and chalk, or white board and erasable markers

Method:
- first, set up the T.V. and VCR and cue the video
- welcome everyone. Have people sit in a circle and ask everyone to introduce themselves briefly (what is their name, their interest in environmentalism and what they want to get out of the workshop).
- ask people to throw out terms or words that they associate with environmentalism. Record their response on the flipchart.
- tell participants that we will question common conceptions of environmentalism by looking at the concepts of environmental racism and justice. We will do this by watching the following video which tells a particular story of Aboriginal people and/or people of colour fighting for environmental justice. Introduce the video (the title, date of production, director) and give a brief summary of the video. Explain what environmental racism and environmental justice mean (see explanation in part one of the kit).
- play the video.
- afterwards ask participants what they thought of the video. Ask them to reflect on the ideas in the video and return to the flipchart paper with their ideas of environmentalism written on it. Have their ideas of environmental struggle shifted after watching the video? Discuss.

Activity modifications:
- You may want to focus specifically on Aboriginal struggles in Canada and colonialism. In this case, research and prepare to discuss Aboriginal rights and struggles in Canada and select a video on these struggles such as 'Hunters and Bombers' (NFB) or 'The Original Summit'.

• You might want to raise questions around solidarity work and how environmentalists can work in solidarity with the struggles discussed in the video. Explain what solidarity work is (see brief definition in this kit) and discuss some of the difficulties and possibilities of doing solidarity work.

DISCUSSING PRIVILEGE AND POWER:

The class-race exercise, step forward, step back

Time: about 30 minutes
Materials: • list of statements
• flipchart paper and markers, or blackboard and chalk, or white board and erasable markers

Method:
• welcome everyone. Have people sit in a circle and ask everyone to introduce themselves briefly (what is their name and what they want to get out of the workshop).
• explain what oppression is and explain what power and privilege are (see the beginning section of this kit for explanations).
• tell the group that we will examine invisible power and privilege with the following exercise: Step forward, step back (this exercise is available online: http://rantcollective.org/article.php?id=37).
• Everyone starts out on a line in the middle of the room facing one wall. Participants are asked to listen to each statement and to respond if it applies to them. They are asked to do the exercise silently so that they can notice the feelings that come up for them.

1. If your ancestors were forced to come to this country or forced to relocate from where they were living, either temporarily or permanently, or restricted from living in certain areas take one step backward.

2. If you feel that your primary ethnic identity is "Canadian" take one step forward.

3. If you were ever called names or ridiculed because of your race, ethnicity or class background take one step backward.

4. If you grew up with people of colour or working class people who were servants, maids, gardeners or babysitters in your house take one step forward.

5. If you were ever embarrassed or ashamed of your clothes, your house or your family car when growing up take one step backward.

6. If you have immediate family members who are doctors, lawyers, or other professionals take one step forward.

7. If pimping and prostitution, drugs, or other illegal activities were a major occupational alternative in the community where you were raised take one step backward.

8. If you ever tried to change your physical appearance, mannerisms, language or behavior to avoid being judged or ridiculed take one step backward.

9. If any women in your family, including yourself if you are female, were ever physically or sexually assaulted in any way by men in your family take one step backward.

10. If you studied the history and culture of your ethnic ancestors in elementary and secondary school take one step forward.

11. If you started school speaking a language other than English take one step backward.

12. If your family had more than fifty books in the house when you were growing up take one step forward.

13. If you ever skipped a meal or went away from a meal hungry because there wasn't enough money to buy food in your family take one step backward.

14. If you were taken to art galleries, museums or plays by your parents take one step forward.

15. If one of your parents was ever laid off, unemployed or underemployed not by choice take one step backward.

16. If you ever attended a private school or summer camp take one step forward.

17. If you received less encouragement in academics or sports from your family or from teachers because of your gender take one step backward.

18. If you or your family ever had to move because there wasn't enough money to pay the rent take one step backward.

19. If you were told by your parents that you were beautiful, pretty or good looking and therefore what you thought or did wasn't important take one step backward.

20. If you were ever discouraged or prevented from pursuing academic work because of your ethnicity take one step backward.

21. If your parent/s encouraged you to go to college take one step forward.

22. If you were ever given less support than the boys in your family for going to college or pursuing work goals because of your gender take one step backward.

23. If you grew up in a single parent household take one step backward.

24. If, prior to your 18th birthday you took a vacation outside of your home state take one step forward.

25. If you have a parent who did not complete high school take one step backward.

26. If your parent(s) owned their own house take one step forward.

27. If you commonly see people of your race or ethnicity on television or in the movies in roles that you consider to be degrading take one step backward.

28. If you ever got a good paying job or a promotion because of a friend or family member take one step forward.

29. If you were ever denied a job because of your race or ethnicity take one step backward.

30. If you were ever denied a job, paid less for comparable work or had less qualified men promoted over you because of your gender take one step backward.

31. If, as a white person, you ever worked in a job where people of colour held more menial jobs, were paid less or otherwise harassed or discriminated against take one step forward.

32. If you were ever paid less, treated less fairly, or given harder work than a white person in a similar position because of your race or ethnicity take one step backward.

33. If you were ever mistrusted or accused of stealing, cheating or lying because of your race, ethnicity or class take one step backward.

34. If you ever inherited money or property take one step forward.

35. If you primarily use public transportation to get where you need to go take one step backward.

36. If you generally think of the police as people that you can call on for help in times of emergency take one step forward.

• ask participants what they thought and how they felt about the exercise.
• if there is time and if you want to end the activity on an action-oriented note, discuss how people can confront systems of power and privilege (this is a huge question, but get people to brainstorm ideas). Record ideas on flipchart paper. If you want, you can also discuss briefly what it means to be an ally and how non-dominant communities can work with allies (see the beginning of this kit for a definition of ally work).

Glossary[11]

Ableism: The normalization of able•bodied persons resulting in the privilege of 'normal ability' and the oppression and exclusion of people with disabilities at many levels in society. Ableism involves both denying access to people with disabilities and exclusive attitudes of able-bodied persons.

Ageism: The normalization and privilege of people within the preferred age range in a society. This age range defines who is taken seriously, catered to by most goods and services, allowed to have an impact on decisions in the society, and valued as a human being. Results in invisibility of, and discrimination and inaccessibility faced by, people outside that age range.

Anti-racism: Strategies, theories, actions and practices that challenge and counter racism, and inequalities, prejudices and discrimination based on 'race'. Source: www.youthactionnetwork.org/rac/Fireitup/FireItUp.pdf

Classism: Refers to the ideological belief that people deserve the privilege or oppression of their class based on their 'merit', 'social status', level of education, job, work ethic, etc... Although many people suffer under capitalism, classism is relative, eg. student 'poverty'. Classism also refers to the social dynamic of privilege, or elitism. Access to knowledge or to education, the privilege to choose when to be an 'activist', when to be risk taking (eg. risk arrest), and the use of exclusive language (i.e. 'activist' language, acronyms, 'academic' language) are examples of elitism embedded in class privilege.

Feminism: Refers to theories, movements and actions that aim to challenge and eliminate sexism. Source: www.youthactionnetwork.org/rac/Fireitup/FireItUp.pdf

Heterosexism: 'The belief in the inherent superiority of heterosexuality and thereby its rights to dominance' (Canadian Council for Refugees). Describes an ideological system and patterns of institutionalized oppression which deny, denigrate, and stigmatize any nonheterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community.

Homophobia: The fear and persecution of queer people. Rooted in a desire to maintain the heterosexual social order, which relies on oppressive gender roles.

Reverse racism: A term created and used by white people to deny their white privilege. Those in denial use the term reverse racism to refer to hostile behavior by people of color toward whites, and to affirmative action policies which allegedly give 'preferential treatment' to people of color over whites.

Sexism: Norms, values, beliefs, structure and systems that marginalize and subordinate women while granting power, privilege and superiority to men.
Source: www.youthactionnetwork.org/rac/Fireitup/FireItUp.pdf

Tokenism: Presence without meaningful participation. For example, a superficial invitation for participation without ongoing dialogue and support, handpicked representatives who are expected to speak for the whole (socially oppressed) group (e.g. 'tell us how women experience this issue'). Tokenism is often used as a band•aid solution to help the group improve its image (e.g. 'we're not racist, look there's a person of colour on the panel.').

Transphobia: The fear and persecution of transgender/transsexual persons. Rooted in a desire to maintain the gender binary (i.e. the categories 'male' and 'female'), which obscures the reality of the fluidity of gender and invisibilizes the experience of persons who do not identify with either category.

Resources

Training manuals and resource kits

Anti-Racism Workbook: Structural Change for Grassroots Organizations. Contact: OPIRG-Peterborough, Trent University, Peterborough ON K9J 7B8, T: 705-748-1767, Email: opirg@trentu.ca.

Canadian Labour Congress Anti-Racism Integration Guide. For a copy, contact the Canadian Labour Congress Anti-Racism and Human Rights Director at anti-racism&hr@clc-ctc.ca, T: 613-521-3400 x262.

Change to Action: CLC Young Workers and Climate Change Project. Produced by the Canadian Labour Congress. Contact: The Canadian Labour Congress Education and Campaigns Director at T: 613-521-3400 x283, F: 613-521-5480, Email: education@clc-ctc.ca.

Fire It Up: A Toolkit for Youth Action. By the Youth Action Network (2002). This is available online at www.youthactionnetwork.org/rac/Fireitup/FireItUp.pdf or contact the Youth Action Network at: 176 John Street, Suite #307, Toronto ON M5T 1X5, T: 416-368-2277, F: 416-368-8354, Email: general@youthactionnetwork.org.

The Kit: A Manual By Youth to Combat Racism Through Education. For copies contact:
Anti-Racism Education, United Nations Association in Canada,
#900, 130 Slater Street, Ottawa, ON K1P 6E2
T: 613-232-5751, F: 613-563-2455, Email: yfar@unac.org.
The KIT is also available online at www.unac.org/yfar.

Multiculturalism at Work: A Guide to Organizational Change. By Barb Thomas. Toronto, ON: The YWCA of Metropolitan Toronto, 1987.

Teach Me To Thunder: A Training Manual for Anti-racism Trainers. For a copy, contact the Canadian Labour Congress Anti-Racism and Human Rights Director at anti-racism&hr@clc-ctc.ca, T: 613-521-3400 x262.

Y-Files: The Ultimate Youth Resource Guide. Contact yfiles_guide@hotmail.com or Dawood at 416-652-2273 for more information or to obtain a copy.

The Canadian Council for International Co-operation 'Policy Workbook': www.ccic.ca/e/007/pubs_gender.shtml (under resources, publications, Gender Issues and Diversity section)
1 Nicholas St, suite 300
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B7, T: 613-241-7007, F: 613-241-5302.

Canadian organizations and websites

Aboriginal Youth Network
The AYN is foremost an online resource created by youth for youth. They are accountable to youth through our youth advisory committee which meets in person twice yearly and twice again via teleconference.
www.ayn.ca
Box 34007 Kingsway PO
Edmonton AB T5G 3G4
T: 780-459-1058 or 1-866-459-1058, F: 780.419.7266 or 1.866.419.7266, Email:
siteadmin@ayn.ca.

11 The following terms have been culled from the Colour of Resistance website (Source: http://colours.mahost.org/faq/definitions.html), unless noted otherwise

Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF)
The Foundation is committed to building a national framework for the fight against racism in Canadian society.
www.crrf.ca
4576 Yonge Street, Suite 701
Toronto ON M2N 6N4
T: 1-888-240-4936 (toll free) or 416-952-3500, F: 1-888-399-0333 (toll free) or 416-952-3326, Email: info@crr.ca

Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN)
MSN is a Canadian network promoting solidarity with groups in Mexico, Central America, and Asia organizing in maquiladora factories and export processing zones to improve conditions and win a living wage.
www.maquilasolidarity.org
606 Shaw Street
Toronto ON M6G 3L6
T: 416-532-8584, F: 416-532-7688, Email: info@maquilasolidarity.org

Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs)
There are 23 PIRGs on university campuses across Canada including Calgary, Edmonton (University of Alberta), Waterloo, Simon Fraser, Victoria, Toronto, McGill, York, and Carleton. PIRGs are an excellent source for information on organizing anti-oppressively and inclusively. You may want to first contact the Waterloo PIRG for more information about PIRGs across Canada.
www.wpirg.org
University of Waterloo, Student Life Centre 2134/2135
Waterloo, ON N2L 3G1
T: 519-888-4882, F: 519-725-3093, Email: info@wpirg.org

Tiny Giant Magazine/The Students Commission (TG/SC)
TG/SC is a diverse, global-minded organization that is run by youth for youth across Canada. We strive to create opportunities for empowerment through innovative and educational processes and products. There are several offices across Canada. You can visit their website for more information at www.tgmag.ca.

American organizations and websites

Active Solidarity.
An online resource center for the struggle against white supremacy.
www.activesolidarity.net

Anarchist People of Color.Forums, readings and resources, organizing groups and connections, events and contacts, listserves, translation resources.
illegalvoices.org/apoc

JustAct
JustAct is a national, nonprofit organization promoting youth leadership and action for global justice.
www.justact.org
333 Valencia Street, Suite 325 San Francisco, CA 94103
T: 415.431.4204, F: 415.431.5953, Email: info@justact.org

RANT Trainers' Collective
RANT works to develop capacity within global justice movements to carry out creative, effective nonviolent direct actions to dismantle unjust systems, institutions and corporations while building power for our movements. They offer training and direct organizer support as well as educational pieces. Anti-Oppression Principles and Practices:
rantcollective.org/article.php?id=17

Student Environmental Action Coalition
A grassroots coalition of student and youth environmental groups, working together to protect our planet and our future. SEAC has an Organizing Guide which you can order at:
PO BOX 31909
Philadelphia, PA 19104
T: 215-222-4711, Email: seac@seac.org
www.seac.org/sog

WP is a free resource for antiracist education and activism; its editorial focus is analyzing and critically assessing racialized social privilege.
whiteprivilege.com

Tools for white guys who are working for social change and other people socialized in a society based on domination. A list of practical strategies for minimizing everyday domination from the "xy: men, masculinities and gender politics" website.
www.xyonline.net/tools.shtml

Why Bob Lovelace is in jail; A message is being sent to mining companies: Ontario is open for business

Kole | 03/13/2008 - 23:20
Posted on **Sumoud: A Political Prisoner Solidarity Group**

I know Bob Lovelace as a soft-spoken and self-reliant neighbour, devoted father and dedicated Queen's University teacher admired by his students and colleagues. He's the kind of guy who constructs a log house in the woods north of Kingston with his own skill and sweat; builds a box planter at the local swimming spot and keeps it stocked with marigolds and petunias; and provides venison for a potluck supper. He's as innately confrontational as a panda bear.

Yet much of the public knows Bob Lovelace as a nominally militant aboriginal prisoner now serving a six-month jail sentence and facing cumulative personal fines of nearly $400,000 for contempt of court. His transgression? Refusing to obey a judicial order not to continue his peaceful blockade at a proposed uranium mine site on lands Algonquin First Nations have never ceded title to under any prior treaty or land claim settlement.

Yet, as even the mine promoter's lawyer has admitted in court hearings, there is a vanishingly small chance a uranium mine will ever get built at the headwaters of the Mississippi River northwest of Sharbot Lake. Compared to other deposits in Saskatchewan, Australia, South Africa and Asia, the ore is laughably low-grade, and the cost to mine fatally high.

So how did it come to this?

In effect, Bob is in jail because he has quietly, but implacably, declined to concede that a provincial court has the ultimate authority to decide what happens on lands his Algonquin forebears have used without ecological abuse for thousands of years.

A key point is that these are not private lands in dispute. The collision has occurred because, for more than a century. Ontario governments have blithely assumed that all provincial lands are solely entrusted to it, and are thus subject to mining laws that allow any prospector or company, from anywhere, to stake out land and claim any mineral wealth below. Without asking anyone else's permission.

In this case, the provincial Ministry of Natural Resources handed out the permits to a fledgling outfit called Frontenac Ventures, and the company maintains that it can drill for uranium with the law on its side. Without First Nation approval.

On this, the company, a provincial court and the cabinet of Dalton McGuinty tacitly agree. That's why my neighbour is in prison as a kind of conscientious objector, his impoverished First Nation is facing additional cumulative fines of nearly $400,000, and

Frontenac Ventures has the sanction to drill for uranium deposits that will never prove profitable.

This makes no sense at all - unless the real issue here is far larger and more deceptive than a puny, potentially speculative mine play that may capitalize on gullible or greedy investors fixated on the spiking world price of uranium, and the venerable flim-flam tactic of selling them sizzle instead of steak.

My bet is that the Ontario government knows - just as well as Canada's major uranium companies know - that eastern Ontario is essentially bereft of profitable deposits. Compared to the mammoth, rich, easy-to mine uranium reserves in northern Saskatchewan, which are known as "elephants" in industry parlance, those from Sharbot Lake to Bancroft to Elliot Lake are like scattered mice.

Perversely, because these Ontario deposits would yield far few ounces of uranium per tonne of ore mined, the volume of radioactively contaminated waste rock and other lethal pollutants would be far greater. So the public pollution risk would be high, and the financial reward small to non-existent for a private company.

Evaluation for *Why Green Isn't Enough Conference*

Which of the following talks did you attend? Please circle:

Environmental racism in Canada Fri 7pm	Environmental Racism in the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program Sat 12pm	Effects of energy extraction and climate change on Indigenous Communities Sat 2:30pm	"Where do we go from here?" Sat 4:45pm

How did you hear about the conference? Please indicate:

email	poster	Friend	Other (please specify)

What did you like best about the talk(s)?

What needed improvement?

Additional comments:

To be eligible for the Zatoun Fair Trade Olive Oil please fill in the following. Your information will be for the draw only.

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Thank you! Your input is appreciated!

Green is not the only colour: Reflections on the state of anti-racist environmentalism in Canada

By Beenash Jafri & Karen Okamoto
Briarpatch Magazine
December 2007/January 2008

Can the environmental movement in Canada continue to organize on an agenda of "green" politics, devoid of any critical engagement with issues of race? Given Canada's multicultural reality and the long-standing history of colonialism and racism in this country, we think not. The history of environmental justice activism sends this clear message: the movement must evolve by linking environmentalism to counter-colonial, anti-racist struggles. In other words, there is a need to redefine "green." Eco-feminism has made significant changes to environmental politics, connecting feminism with environmentalism. We want to see a similar transformation towards an anti-racist grounding for the environmental movement.

Seven years have passed since we organized an anti-racism committee in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University, but our struggles go beyond these seven years of academic activism. As women of colour, we have been battling with Eurocentric education systems and organizing strategies in Canada for most of our lives. Today we continue to challenge white middle-class environmentalism and white environmentalist scholarship for their failure to systematically address racism and colonialism.

These problems are not new, nor are we alone in our fight. The centuries of indigenous struggle against the colonization of the Americas are part of anti-colonial environmental justice work. We also draw our strength from the work of our predecessors and contemporaries, from Africville activists in Nova Scotia to the Bus Riders Union organizers in Vancouver. In this article, we would like to reflect on our anti-racist organizing experiences in order to shed light on the complexities and challenges facing anti-racist environmentalists in Canada.

Storming the ivory tower: Environmental studies in the 1990s

The early '90s in Ontario were rife with political and cultural activity. The environmental movement was injected with new energy by the 1992 Rio Earth Summit; funding was available for the arts and community projects such as Desh Pardesh, a Toronto-based South Asian diaspora festival of culture and politics; and the NDP was in power provincially, funding anti-racist projects through an anti-racism secretariat.

This contributed to a productive period for environmental studies, reflects Dr. Andil Gosine. Now a professor at York University, at that time Gosine was an undergraduate

student in the newly established Bachelor of Environmental Studies program at York. He was drawn to the Global Development, Peace and Justice program and found that his experiences there were positive and enriching. “The program director was very committed to giving individual attention to each student. It was really an exciting time. Everyone in class was motivated by the work that was being done.”

The program and the broader field of environmental studies, however, were not willing to seriously engage questions of race and racism. Dr. Ann Phillips, a PhD student in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at the time, notes that both the program and the field were “still steeped in very traditional Western approaches to knowledge. Issues of race, class and gender were for the most part placed on the back burner and not seen as important factors in a truly environmental analysis.” Phillips sought to introduce the idea that population and development discourse were informed by questions of race and racism in her tutorial sessions, but found there was little interest or analysis of how racism and environmental issues were connected. She notes that “older white male professors . . . did not want to change the status quo in the faculty.”

This inertia and lack of academic interest in questions of race in environmental studies prompted some students to organize around the intersection of social justice and environmental issues. Gosine read Robert Bullard’s work on environmental racism for the first time while in his third year of the program. He wondered why environmental racism had not been mentioned earlier in the courses. He approached the curriculum committee about this, only to be told that environmental racism had nothing to do with environmental studies in Canada.

Since, however, the program director was supportive, he gave Gosine the opportunity to give a lecture on environmental racism for a first-year course. The onus was ultimately placed on students to do anti-racism work that the faculty should have otherwise been prepared to take on. Groups such as the African Caribbean Environmental Studies Students and other ad hoc groups emerged to encourage the faculty to raise questions about race and racism in environmental studies. Contextualizing this activism within the larger political culture in Toronto, Gosine remembers that anti-racist undergraduates in environmental studies felt entitled to have the faculty address questions of race. These students participated on many committees to demand change.

What came out of this activity? An anti-oppression coalition that enveloped race concerns was established, recalls Gosine. Phillips also notes that the main accomplishment of this activity was having the faculty “bring in a pair of anti-racist consultants to facilitate a process of getting the faculty as a whole to look at race and anti-racism issues.”

Progressive gains in Ontario started to unravel by the mid ’90s with the election of Mike Harris’ Conservative government and the “Common Sense Revolution.” As undergraduate students, we saw the effects of cutbacks on the public education system—particularly in universities, with rising tuition fees, larger class sizes, and the increasing emphasis on technical, professional skills, rather than on critical thinking. We started our

studies at York in 1998 within this political climate. Little did we know that we would be taking up anti-racist struggles that had been ongoing in the faculty for many years.

We, the two co-authors of this article, each had different but convergent motivations for doing environmental studies. Beenash Jafri came to the Faculty of Environmental Studies because she was interested in international development, cities and sustainability. She was dissatisfied with her experiences in formal education and sought a place where she could think critically about learning and social change. Jafri had just come back from a seven-month exchange program in Manitoba and Cuba. As a result of some discomforting experiences during the exchange, she was starting to question Canadian nationalism and whiteness.

Karen Okamoto, meanwhile, knew of two environmental studies students who had started an organic community garden in her working-class Toronto neighbourhood of Jane and Finch, and was looking for an activist-academic program to support her political work. Okamoto also wanted to challenge mainstream white environmentalists who focused mainly on conservation issues while ignoring urban race, class and gender struggles.

It was a difficult but inspiring time to be a young activist of colour in environmental studies. By the late ’90s, the culture of neo-conservatism was being met with increasing resistance. In 1999, anti-globalization protesters rocked the Seattle meetings of the World Trade Organization; this was followed by the Quebec City protests against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas in the Spring of 2001. Many of us became politicized around those events—if not around the protests themselves, then around the anti-racist critiques of the anti-globalization movement that were being levelled by people of colour. Colours of Resistance, a Montreal-based group that “consciously work[s] to develop anti-racist, multiracial politics in the movement against global capitalism,” developed many of those critiques, providing not only solid analysis, but also unity for people of colour (and white allies) resisting capitalism through an anti-oppressive framework. The group drew attention to police brutality and racial profiling at protests, the privilege tied to the practice of “summit-hopping” (jumping from large-scale protest to large-scale protest without dedicating time to the thankless work of day-to-day organizing), and the false separation of the processes of colonization and globalization. While privileged anti-globalization activists often saw globalization as a new threat, many activists of colour understood it as the continuation and extension of the processes of colonization people of colour have been resisting for years. The connections made by Colours of Resistance supported and motivated our own work.

By 2000, students of colour who were already involved with activism and organizing outside the university—and who were disenchanted with the silence around environmental racism in the environmental studies field—decided to organize in the faculty itself. We called ourselves the Anti-Racism Committee and we met regularly to develop and implement our multi-pronged strategy. Some students joined the faculty’s curriculum committee and others tried to join the hiring committee. We pushed for curriculum change to include questions of race. We also wanted to hire more professors

of colour. It was an uphill struggle just to get a course on race, racism and environmentalism approved.

Progress was slow. It often felt like we were losing ground. The millennium arrived with the Mike Harris Tories still enforcing their "Common Sense Revolution." Neoliberalism was in full swing and funding for social programs and the arts was being cut back. York University was paralyzed by a 76-day long strike by part-time faculty and graduate assistants at the end of 2000. In these dismal times, we struggled for support from the Dean for our activities. We organized a speaker and video series on environmental racism through funds that we raised. The Dean wouldn't offer us support beyond free parking passes for our lecturers. Everyone was fighting for crumbs.

In 2001, the Anti-Racism Committee was often referred to as the "diversity committee" by some faculty members. To the members of the committee itself, their naming of anti-racism concerns as a diversity issue meant ignoring questions of power and domination, shifting the focus to a sterilized discourse of multiculturalism and plurality and a vacuous celebration of difference. Meanwhile, other faculty members were enthusiastic about anti-oppression workshops, but failed to comprehensively examine issues of race and racism in their research or course syllabi. To them, anti-racism was associated with politically correct behaviour rather than an intellectual, critical, extended engagement with questions of race and racism in the field of environmental studies.

To be fair, there were some faculty members who were more supportive. But, as Gosine remarks, "The university is slow to change . . . and the field [of environmental studies is], too." At the hiring level, he notes, changes could be made if professors who are doing work in environmental racism were hired. There is opposition, however, from those who want to preserve traditional, exclusionary environmental studies and conservation movements. Approval for a race and environmentalism course in the faculty in 2001 was a milestone. Other crucial developments have unfolded since. The Canada Research Chair in Sustainability and Culture at the Faculty of Environmental Studies recognizes the links between environmentalism, justice and equity issues. As well, recent deans for the faculty have been more supportive of environmental justice concerns. Change is possible, but slow.

Challenges & frustrations beyond the academy

By 2001, however, we were disenchanted by the faculty's lack of concrete commitment to anti-racist change, and had grown tired of doing what had begun to feel like grunt work for the program. The World Trade Centre attacks that year were followed by the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and at home against perceived Muslim and Arab "terrorists." In the face of all this, pushing for institutional change didn't always appear glamorous or sexy enough for other activists' even as anti-racism was gaining momentum in the lead-up to the 2001 UN World Conference Against Racism. For better or worse, state funding for youth anti-racism projects offered us new opportunities and avenues for our activism beyond the university's walls.

As a result of all this, we made the decision to refocus our efforts on the broader Toronto community, and became the Anti-Racist Environmental Coalition. The main goals of the Anti-Racist Environmental Coalition centred on movement building (providing spaces to facilitate mobilization, supporting environmental justice struggles and working in collaboration with other groups) and consciousness-raising (drawing attention to relevant issues and offering critical analysis). Although some of us kept up a presence at the faculty, our central project as the Anti-Racist Environmental Coalition was the Redefining Green! Conference. We organized the forum in Toronto for September 2002.

The conference was the first of its kind in Canada. For many of us, it was our first experience organizing such an event. We scraped together just enough funding to cover our costs. We built links with many different communities, bringing in supporters ranging from anti-racism groups to environmental groups, social justice organizations to unions. We were pushing the envelope, challenging popular conceptions of the environment and environmentalism, but also, we thought, creating a space where dialogue could happen.

Of course, that was easier said than done. Because we were speaking to the mainstream environmental movement, and the dominant voices in the movement were white, we saw more white people at the conference than we expected. We had not planned to pull out our anti-racist education hats, but this is what happened—not only to us, the organizers, but also to some participants of colour. They were there to learn and build links, but instead wound up as defacto facilitators of white environmentalists' education on issues of race.

We noticed similar patterns two years later at the Green Justice retreat, organized by the Youth Environmental Network. The retreat brought over 50 young environmentalists from across the country to Saskatoon to develop strategies to fight racism within the movement—a lofty but important goal. Anti-Racist Environmental Coalition members were invited by the Youth Environmental Network to take a leadership role in organizing the retreat. By then, we had learned from our experiences with Redefining Green! and were more forthright in naming white privilege as a system of power that reinforced the prioritization of particular issues, strategies and goals within mainstream environmentalism. In retrospect, however, we weren't prepared to really deal with the responses this would provoke. Our energy went mostly into dealing with the racism that manifested in interpersonal dynamics, leaving little time to look at how environmental institutions were perpetuating it, let alone strategizing to dismantle race-based systems of privilege.

Since 2003, the Anti-Racist Environmental Coalition has been on indefinite hiatus. Members have changed cities, started work on different projects and movements, and are dealing with the activist burnout that comes from expending energy while getting little in return. This, ultimately, leads to the big question: if people of colour are consistently caught in the role of educating white people on naming and dealing with their privilege, how can we possibly get around to actually building the environmental justice movement we so badly want and need—one that draws on a radical analysis of power, builds community, and is based on respectful solidarity with Aboriginal peoples?

We don't necessarily have the answer to that question, but we have some ideas. Reiterating some of the themes that we have raised in this article, we need to think about how to strategically manoeuvre our way around the systemic barriers that inhibit movement building, strategizing, and dialogue among people of colour. For example, activists of colour may want to re-evaluate our investment in and approach to educating and doing anti-racism and anti-oppression workshops, strengthen solidarity and the exchange of ideas with one another and with Aboriginal communities, and, lastly, attempt to build coalitions and lend each other support.

Conversely, it is also imperative for traditional environmental organizations to take a critical look at how they do environmental work and operate as organizations. This might involve:

- moving away from a denial of the existence of racism within environmental movements;
- making linkages between environmental activism and anti-colonialism in order to support Aboriginal struggles for self-determination;
- doing internal work and research that genuinely seeks to change the organization, and creatively strategizing how to do anti-racist, anti-colonial work within the confines of non-governmental organization funding structures and bureaucracies (particularly in the context of limited resources and institutional divisions between environmental work and social justice work);
- learning how to listen and how to be an ally;
- and finally, understanding that uniting our struggles will strengthen our movements, while failing to do so will make our goals impossible.

We are not interested in getting burnt-out again, but we are interested in connecting struggles taking place across the country and continent. There are obviously a limited number of support structures and frameworks from which to facilitate environmental justice movement building. Meanwhile, the issues remain as pressing as ever. As our struggles continue, we hope that critical dialogue can happen between the people and communities who are fighting for environmental justice in various spaces: on the ground, in the realm of theory, and within organizations.

Karen Okamoto is currently completing a Master of Library and Information Science at the University of Western Ontario. Beenash Jafri is a doctoral student in Women's Studies at York University. Karen and Beenash were two of the founding members of the Anti-Racist Environmental Coalition.

The authors would like to thank Andil Gosine and Ann Philips for their groundbreaking work in environmental justice struggles, and the members of the Anti-Racist Environmental Coalition for their commitment and dedication.

What is environmental racism?

Though it's seldom acknowledged in mainstream discourse, environmental racism is a reality in Canada. Wealthier, predominantly white communities are protected by the state and dominate and control the environmental movement, whereas communities of colour, First Nations, immigrant and low-income communities bear disproportionate environmental burdens. These communities face racial discrimination in environmental policy-making and the enforcement of regulations and laws; they are deliberately targeted for toxic waste facilities, have the life-threatening presence of poisons and pollutants officially sanctioned in their communities, and have historically been excluded from meaningful participation and leadership in the environmental movement.

Organizing against environmental racism, the anti-racist environmental justice movement believes that all people are entitled to a healthy environment and the right to develop, implement and enforce environmental laws, regulations and policies. The concept of environmental justice challenges the environmental movement to integrate issues of race and class by learning from and supporting the struggles of communities of colour, First Nations, immigrant and low-income communities.

Anti-racist environmental justice recognizes the social, economic and political dimensions of environmental issues—and creates a new agenda for change.

*Adapted from the website of the Anti-Racism Environmental Coalition (*http://www.yorku.ca/arec/ej.htm*).*

Resources for education and action

"Colours of Green," Alternatives Journal, 2003, volume 29, number 1.

A groundbreaking issue on environmental justice.

Anti-Racist Environmental Coalition (AREC)

www.yorku.ca/arec.index.htm

Although no longer updated, this site includes useful links and a bibliography on environmental justice.

Bus Riders Union

http://www.bru.vcn.bc.ca

A Vancouver-based labour/community organization working on public transit issues.

Environmental Justice Resource Centre

www.ejrc.cau.edu

Based in the United States, EJRC is "a research, policy, and information clearing house on issues related to environmental justice, race and the environment, civil rights, facility siting, land use planning, brownfields, transportation equity, suburban sprawl, and Smart Growth."

Environmental Justice Kit

http://www.youthactioncentre.ca/English/actionresources/guides.htm

A project of the Youth Environmental Network.

Indigenous Environmental Network

http://www.ienearth.org/

Established in the United States, IEN addresses economic and environmental justice issues.

Constructions of Environmental Justice in Canada

Edited by Julian Agyeman et al.

Forthcoming from UBC Press.

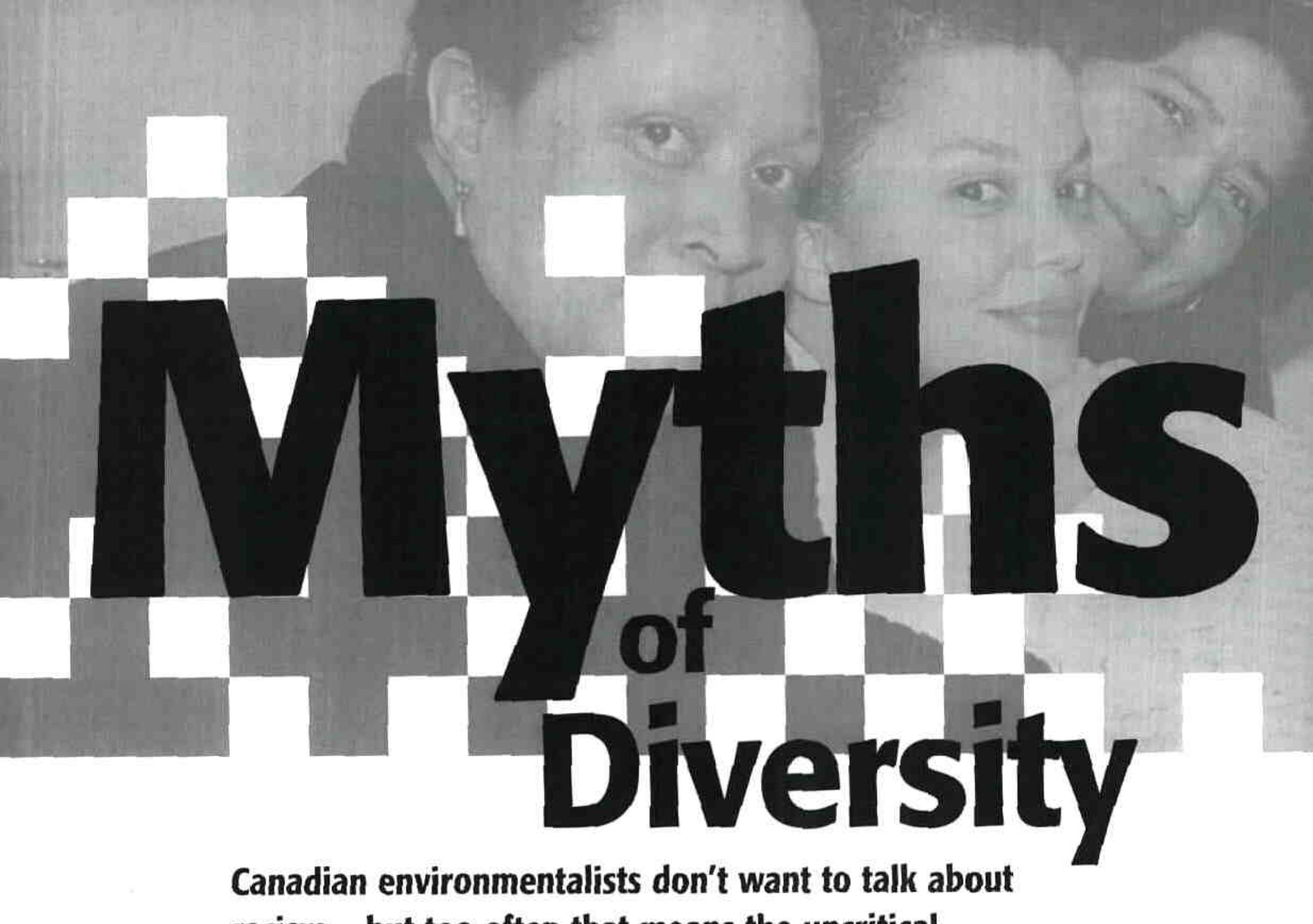
Stories Less Told: Environmental Justice and Racism in Canada

Andil Gosine and Cheryl Teelucksingh (eds).

Forthcoming from John Edmond Montgomery Press

Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices from the Grassroots

By Robert Bullard, 1993. South End Press.



Myths of Diversity

Canadian environmentalists don't want to talk about racism – but too often that means the uncritical acceptance of popular diversity myths.

Andil Gosine

I AM IN THE AUDIENCE at a panel talk on how Canada's environmental sector communicates its messages "in a diverse society." This event, hosted by the Sustainability Network in Toronto, is just one of a small but growing number of initiatives aimed at tackling the old but newly recognized themes of diversity, equity and social justice in Canada's environmental movement.

When the forum opens for audience participation, the first comment comes from a bright-eyed and apparently well-intentioned activist from a local green group, offering her own solution for diversifying the environmental movement. People used to say to her, she recalls, that she wouldn't know what it was like to be a mother until she became a mother. Similarly, she continues, "it's very difficult to be white-faced and know what it feels like to be a visible minority." She then pulls out a white, surgical mask and waves it to the crowd. "For those of you who have never known what it feels like to be stared at for the wrong reasons or to be ... abused verbally," the woman explains, "I have these masks, and you [should] put one on and see what it feels like to walk the streets and be a true visible minority." This solution, she beams, would give white-faced people like her a whole new "sensitivity" about being visible minorities. In fact,

she brought extra masks with her to give to others wanting to play "visible minority" too.

For many people, racism is understood to be the kind of personal experience that can be felt and appreciated through an exercise like the mask activity. Popular theories hold that racism is a bad behaviour practiced by good people who don't know better, and it's the job of anti-racists to flush offenders out and reform them. Wearing a surgical mask, then, is supposed to appropriately sensitize white people to the problem and so fix racism through education.

This emphasis on sensitivity training is consistent with the Canadian government policy of official multiculturalism and its notion of diversity, which addresses racism by encouraging various "races" to "get along." The problem with this approach is that it views race as a fixed, biological characteristic, not as a socially constructed category created for particular economic, cultural and political purposes. Anti-racist scholars put the term "race" in quotation marks to underline this point, and they treat racism not as a behavioural issue but as a system of power.

Activists in the US have considered the influence of racism in environmental planning and policy since the early 1980s, when several communities of colour began to organize against the siting of toxic dumps in their neighbourhoods. When Warren County, North Carolina, was selected for a PCB landfill site in 1982, its mostly low-income African-American population protested the "deliberate targeting of communities of colour" for the location of toxic waste dumps.[3] It was during these protests that the term "environmental racism" was coined, understood to be "an extension of the institutional racism many had encountered in the past – including discrimination in housing, employment, education, municipal services and law enforcement."[2]

Environmentalists in Canada have been considerably less brisk in attending to "race" and racism. No substantial body of environmental justice scholarship exists in Canada, and indeed, some have viewed any talk of racism with deep suspicion. David Orton repeated a familiar criticism at the 1995 annual meeting of the Environmental Studies Association of Canada: "The broad charge of environmental racism against environmentalists is really a form of psychological warfare," he said, "to put people on the defensive, and also ... to advance, quite often, a particular aboriginal agenda."[4]

But some important studies have emerged to show how racism has influenced planning decisions in Atlantic and Western Canada, and advocacy efforts by organizations like the Multiracial Network for Environmental Justice (MNEJ), the Quebec and Ontario Public Interest Research Groups (QPIRG and OPIRG), Desh Pardesh and various labour, student and aboriginal organizations have all pushed mainstream Canadian environmentalists to talk about "race".

No substantial body of environmental justice scholarship exists in Canada, and some have viewed any talk of racism with deep suspicion.

Some groups, like the Toronto Environmental Alliance, have engaged diversity counsellors to advise on some projects, while others limit their goals to identifying and weeding out bad racists from their organizations. But environmentalists should be wary of embracing an approach and analysis that has been soundly refuted by numerous anti-racist scholars. Many of them point out that this approach serves only to reinstate racist ideologies and assumptions, and does little to alleviate inequity and marginalization.[4]

Consider, for example, how these five popular myths about "race" in the Canadian environmental movement are left unchallenged when conversations are framed by the discourse of "diversity" and aspire to fixes as superficial as the surgical mask.

Myth 1 The environmental movement is white.

Toronto Environmental Alliance campaigner Gord Perks agrees that Canada's "professional" environmentalists are a "white middle class scene." In August 2002, I contacted several Toronto-based environmental organizations about the make-up of their staffs and membership. Of those willing to speak with me – and some were not willing to be interviewed for a piece about racism – the story was the same over and over again: all-white, or nearly all-white staffs, and mostly white memberships – in a city where white people are no longer a majority population. Greenpeace Canada, for example, boasted not a single person of colour among its 15 national campaign staffers, and of the 40-odd workers at the organization's downtown office, the only non-whites filled technical or clerical positions, or were shorter-term street canvassers. Similar situations existed in smaller groups, like the Toronto Environmental Alliance and the Sierra Club's Eastern Canada chapter (no non-white staff, but some volunteers).

Catherine Farquharson

M. Ann Phillips, Judith Andrade and Mercedes Umana are members of the environmental health committee at Women's Health in Women's Hands. The committee's work to intersect race, gender, the environment and health is environmental justice in action.

So aren't people of colour involved in Canada's environmental movement? The situation in Toronto's green sector is akin, I think, to the broader social organization of the city, where so-called "visible minorities" now outnumber the white population but remain largely excluded from participating in making decisions about the city in which they live. The Queen's Park legislature, the leadership of all its political parties, staff rooms for all the major dailies, radio and television stations, administrative offices for municipal, provincial and federal government bodies and corporate headquarters remain – save their janitors, cleaners and other low-waged workers – lily white. We might not see many brown or black (or yellow or red) people expressing environmental concerns on our TV screens, but that does not mean that there aren't as many of us as white people with principled environmental ideals. The problem isn't mere presence (we're already present) but power (we want to participate in creating visions and making decisions).

Although people of colour might not occupy many leadership positions or hold jobs in the Green movement, that doesn't mean we don't participate. Perks notes, "We have a constant stream of people from a variety of communities who always want to work on joint projects with us."

"All that talk about white people just happening to be the only ones who care about the environment is rubbish," adds Bernadette Arreola, a Canadian Filipina and former project coordinator of the Multiracial Network for Environmental Justice, "I am constantly meeting very passionate environmentalists of colour. Even my school's undergraduate program in environmental studies had a very large number of non-white students. Many immigrants bring to Canada environmental traditions from their own cultures and identify themselves as environmentalists."

Indeed, Mark Haslam, a South Asian journalist and anti-racist activist, founded Toronto's International Environmental Film Festival, and Ravi Singh, a recent Trinidad-born immigrant to Canada helped build EnerACT (the Energy Action Council of Toronto), where he is now project manager.

Myth 2 People of colour don't care about environmental issues (or have better things to worry about).

When I challenged the director of one environmental agency to explain why there were so few non-white members involved with his group, he argued that many people of colour simply don't realize the importance of environmental affairs to their everyday lives. And furthermore, he said, because they already have so many other problems to contend with, people of colour just don't have the time and energy to devote to environmental issues.

The composition of the Sustainability Network panel mentioned above certainly gave the impression that there actually aren't people of colour who work on environmental issues in the city. All but one of the four invited non-white speakers prefaced their talks with admissions that they didn't know very much about the environmental sector. The fourth was positioned as a "new" success story, giving the impression that there was no real history of environmental activism by people of colour in Canada which, as I have already noted, is quite simply not the case.

People of colour living in North America clearly haven't just become aware of environmentalist issues. As Dorceta Taylor points out:

> The fact that so many environmental groups of colour have emerged and operate within the ideological framework of environmental justice demonstrates to the "mainstream" movement that people of colour have always been interested in environmental issues. They simply remained outside the existing movement because of the ways in which environ-

"Many immigrants bring to Canada environmental traditions from their own countries and identify themselves as environmentalists."

– Bernadette Arreola, Multiracial Network for Environmental Justice

mental issues were framed, the kinds of issues which were focused on, and the ways those issues were strategically addressed.[5]

The Congressional Black Caucus and Hispanic Congressional Caucus have consistently demonstrated the best environmental voting records of any electoral blocs in the US. In California, Latino voters have proved crucial in passing at least five open-space and clean-water measures statewide and in Los Angeles County since 1996. In the state legislature, Latino leaders have emerged as major advocates for clean air, clean water and open space measures since the mid-1990s.[6] Marcy Darnovsky and Robert Gottlieb point out that people of colour in North America have long engaged in forms of environmentalism focused on municipal waste and sewage, public health, and industrial-caused illness.[7]

M. Ann Phillips, an environmental health promoter and researcher, suggests that:

> [E]ven in the narrowest sense of the term, people of colour have always been environmentalists. But many of them don't see it as just taking care of "the environment"; they see it as taking care of their communities and themselves. For many, it's about living practices, not joining a club.

As a community member of the environmental health committee at Women's Health in Women's Hands, a feminist community health centre primarily serving immigrant, refugee and low-income black women and women of colour in Toronto, Phillips has been spearheading efforts to integrate a race and gender analysis with environmental health promotion.

Phillips' work at Toronto's South Riverdale Community Health Centre involves educating prenatal educators and nurses, community residents and new mothers – many of whom are not white and who work with or are from low-income, often immigrant communities – about reducing women's and children's exposures to particular toxins. "Some of these women are or become frontline environmentalists," she says, "but no one recognizes them as that."

Myth 3 Racism happens somewhere else.

Perhaps the most damaging characteristic of the "diversity" discourse is that it avoids attention to power (especially institutionalized forms of power) and so avoids a term that many Canadians believe only applies elsewhere, particularly to the US: racism.

When I interviewed many of Toronto's environmentalists about their groups' interest in "race" matters, for example, many skipped past the Canadian context to highlight their activities and interests in the developing world. While a considerable body of work has deftly illustrated the racist motives and implications of much environmental planning and policy making in the US, little scholarship explores similar questions in Canada.

But that does not mean environmental racism does not happen in Canada. Adopting Robert Bullard's definition of environmental racism as "any policy, practice or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages (whether intended or unintended) individuals, groups or communities based on race or colour,"[8] many Canadian researchers have argued, for example, that environmental racism lies behind the location of toxic waste sites in aboriginal and black communities, and that higher toxic exposure levels are more often tolerated by responsible authorities, in non-white communities.[9]

Environmental racism may be understood as another manifestation of institutional racism faced by non-whites in Canada, part of a list that includes job and housing discrimination, police violence, and other kinds of social and economic marginalization.

Myth 4 Environmentalists just need to recruit more "diverse" peoples (to do the same work).

When mainstream green organizations in the US began their consideration of "race" and racism, many sought easily adaptable "solutions", such as "how-to-diversify" lists that did not require any substantial change to the way that they worked.[10] Affirmative action programs introduced by green groups often resulted in the hiring of people of colour to perform the very same work that the groups had usually pursued. Only after consistent demands from activists that the environmental movement pay more careful attention to the meaning, operation and impact of "race" and racism did some of these groups begin to see their task not as merely bringing people of colour to their fold, but as engaging people of colour – and an anti-racist agenda – in order to create whole new priorities and initiatives.

Many diversity initiatives provide narrow and limited understandings of "environmentalism" and so not only under-represent the contributions of people of colour, but also confine the spaces available for imagining more democratic, accessible and innovative expressions of environmentalism.

When Chinese-Canadian Clement Lam worked as a Greenpeace forest campaigner, the group was able to achieve unprecedented levels of media exposure.

What must be pursued instead are tasks similar to some achieved by the environmental justice groups, as Bullard notes:

> The environmental justice movement has basically redefined what environmentalism is all about. It basically says that the environment is everything: where we live, work, play, go to school, as well as the physical and natural world.... We can't separate the physical environment from the cultural environment. We have to talk about making sure that justice is integrated throughout all of the stuff that we do.

That's precisely what the Multiracial Network for Environmental Justice (MNEJ) set out to do in 1998 with a walking neighbourhood tour designed to introduce new immigrants to Toronto's community and social organizations, and to identify resources available for their use. Arreola explains, "all the other environmental organizations limited their vision to natural resource issues. At MNEJ, we wanted to empower people to more actively participate in the life of the city."

The Toronto-based Anti-Racist Environmental Collective shares this emphasis on power and justice. Their 2002 inaugural fall conference "Refining Green" invited environmentalists to focus on environmental issues that they identified as important in the lives of Toronto's marginalized peoples, including housing, food, public transportation and political participation.

Myth 5 Anti-racism is expensive (and environmentalists have no money).

"Limited resources!" is a popular refrain among environmentalist organizers when discussing the homogeneous make-up of their staffs and memberships, and especially when asked about their strategies to invite the participation of Canada's different communities. "Diversification," unfortunately, is usually seen as a cost.

Many of those I interviewed repeated similar fears about the costs of printing more booklets in different languages and of providing more services. The primary excuse given for their groups' homogeneity was a lack of resources to finance more jobs for more different kinds of people. Greenpeace Canada's former communications director Jamey Heath contrasted the situation of green groups with that of the Liberal Party, which he says has been the only organization able to reflect Canada's multicultural diversity. "We don't have the resources they do," he says.

But "diversification" isn't necessarily a cost. It is in an organization's financial interest to reach out beyond their traditional constituencies. The strongest push for mainstream environmentalists' new interest in "diversity" matters has likely been the demographic shift they are witnessing in Canadian society. Canada has always been a multicultural society – even before it was colonized as "Canada," there were many different nations and communities living here – but never before has this country's diversity been so widely recognized, some would say even trumpeted. Part of the reason for this change is that there are many more "others," and *some* of them are considerably economically and politically empowered. Member-funded organizations, especially, must know that their very survival depends on their ability to reach out to new supporters.

The pay-offs are not just financial. Heath recalls that when Chinese-Canadian Clement Lam worked as a Greenpeace forest campaigner in British Columbia, the group was able to achieve unprecedented levels of media exposure, and to recruit new members. "It was hugely advantageous to have Clement," he says.

As immigrant advocate Ratna Omvidar pointed out in her contribution to the Sustainability Network panel, many new immigrants would very much like to contribute more to their new country and communities, but aren't offered opportunities to do so. Some are interested in providing financial resources, and many others bring skills and expertise that are largely under-valued and overlooked in Canada.

Immigrants in fact boast significantly higher levels of education than the Canadian average, but many find that hard work and disciplined study aren't always rewarded in *this* promised land. About one in five non-white immigrants with a university degree is unemployed, and those doing paid work are over-represented in manual labour jobs.[11] Omvidar wonders: Why don't environmental organizations offer to do presentations at centres where new immigrants are learning English as a second language? (Some do. See "Growing a Second Language, page 23.)

Money also isn't a requirement for political action. Often, simple changes to processes and procedures can provide openings to more revolutionary changes. One of Singh's priorities, in taking on his new role as EnerACT's project manager, is to reach out beyond the narrow group that he says tends to comprise the environmental sector. It's a sentiment shared by both Heath and Perks, who point out that postings for environmental jobs tend to reach and be filled by a relatively small group. "We end up recruiting in our own image," says Perks.

Consultant Paul Kwasi-Kefele has also advised some environmental organizations about ways to democratize their processes, so that power is better shared, and new voices aren't drowned out by the old guard. Most importantly, perhaps, anti-racist initiatives require not just an invitation to the excluded, but a reopening of environmentalism itself, and an appreciation of many different kinds of knowledge and experience.

As Phillips says, "You can move the agenda forward in many different ways. It's very narrow-minded and arrogant of activists to think that there is only one way of moving the agenda forward."

Between 2000 and 2002, Andil Gosine designed and instructed a course called "Race"-Racism and Environmentalism, which is now a permanent offering at York University's Faculty of Environmental Studies.

Notes

[1] *B.F. Chavis, Jr. "Foreword," in R.D. Bullard, ed., **Confronting Environmental Racism** (Boston: South End Press, 1993), p. 3.*

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *D. Orton, "The Left and Environmental-First Nations Relationships," **Green Web Bulletin <greenweb@fox.nstn.ca>**, number 46 (1995).*

[4] *For example, see **Returning the Gaze**, H. Bannerji, ed. (Toronto: Sister Vision Press, 1993); and S. Razack, **Looking White People in the Eye** (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).*

[5] *D. Taylor, "Environmentalism and the Politics of Inclusion," in **Confronting Environmental Racism**, R.D. Bullard, ed. (Boston: South End Press, 1993), p. 58.*

[6] *P. Rogers, "Latinos Take Lead on Environmental Justice," **Mercury News** (San Jose: March 10, 2002), np.*

[7] *M. Darnovsky, "Stories Less Told: Histories of US Environmentalism," **Sojourners**, 21:1 (January 1992), pp. 30-31; and R. Gottlieb, "Reconstructing Environmentalism: Complex Movements, Diverse Roots," in **Out of Woods: Essays in Environmental History**, C. Miller and H. Rothman, eds. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), pp. 144-160.*

[8] *R.D. Bullard, **Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality** (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1990), p. 98.*

[9] *For example, see H. McCurdy, "Africville: Environmental Racism," in **Faces of Environmental Racism: Confronting Issues of Global Justice**, L. Westra and P. Wenz, eds. (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1995), pp. 75-92.*

[10] *For examples, see L.P. Thiele, **Environmentalism for a New Millennium** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).*

[11] *Statistics from a July 2002 report by Michael Ornstein, Institute of Social Research, York University, cited in E. Carey, "Race, Income Splits Toronto, Study Warns," **Toronto Star** (July 7, 2002).*

Follow up

Find key terms, discussion and links at the site of the Anti-Racist Environmental Coalition: **www.yorku.ca/arec**

Les Verts Reinvent Égalité

WHAT does a green future look like? For France's Green Party, Les Verts, it's a place where natural environments are valued and sustainable lifestyles are promoted – but also where gays and lesbians have the same rights as heterosexuals, national borders are open to immigrants and refugees, and class distinctions are no more.

In each of the four major elections in which Les Verts have presented candidates for office since 1997, the party has campaigned on the themes of solidarity, citizenship and ecological responsibility, and actively promoted social equality as the central component of environmental politics.

Employing "Reinvent Europe" as their motto for the 1999 elections for the European Parliament, Les Verts invited voters to dream about a "green" Europe. "What if women and men had equal say in politics?" proposed the cover of one policy book, while another wondered, "what if *fraternité* had no boundaries?" Following a decade of debate over party policy, Les Verts have positioned themselves as advocates of France's marginalized peoples. Les Verts argue that the successful negotiation of local citizenship struggles – especially by women, people of colour, immigrants, and gays and lesbians – are key to the achievement of environmentalism.

Their political agenda weaves together more familiar ecological themes with others that are less often associated with environmentalism. Priorities identified in policy books include the standard green issues like energy consumption and agriculture, but also give attention to problems such as sexism, unfair immigration and labour laws, and the closing of national borders. It has also been often identified as France's "gay party" following its championship of an accord that recognized same-sex partnerships.

The party has also consistently worked with anti-racist organizations in Paris to promote the rights of refugees and immigrants in France. A pre-condition of the party's agreement to join the 1997 leftist coalition government was that 40,000 *sans papiers* ("illegal" immigrants) would be granted amnesty. In 1999, the *de-facto* leader of the party Dominique Voynet also almost lost her cabinet position as Minister of Environment because she supported and joined a hunger strike by refugees.

Les Verts welcomes non-white activists into its fold, and the party is often represented in the media by national spokesperson Stéphane Pocrain, a 29 year-old African-Francophone and leading figure in the anti-racist movement. "We are the most diverse political party, maybe national organization in France," Porcrain points out, "but it's still not enough. We don't represent all of France's peoples, not yet."

After enjoying consistently stronger levels of support for most of the last decade, Les Verts' vote collapsed along with those of other left parties in the 2002 National Legislative elections. But in a year when themes like crime and insecurity propelled fascist and right-wing groups like the National Front to some important victories, Les Verts did not abandon its pro-immigration stance. The party's presidential candidate, Noel Mamere, led many of the anti-racist demonstrations that filled the streets of Paris over the spring and summer in opposition to the popular support for National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen. So far, Les Verts' leading members insist on maintaining its social equality agenda.

– A.G.

Follow up

Read Les Verts' policies (in French) on their Web site: **www.les-verts.org**

Tar Sands: Environmental justice, treaty rights and Indigenous Peoples

Clayton Thomas-Müller

Canadian Dimension magazine, March/April 2008

The application of treaty rights as a legal strategy implemented by the First Nations themselves must be the key focus in efforts to challenge Big Oil in Alberta. Resources and effort must be placed into building the knowledge and capacity amongst First Nations and Métis leadership, including grassroots, elders and youth, to engage in both an indigenous-led corporate-finance campaign and in decision-making processes on environment, energy, climate and economic policies related to halting the tar-sands expansion. Canadian policy makers need to understand that there is an inextricable link between indigenous rights and energy and climate impacts.

The Tar Sands: What, How, For Whom?

The tar sands lie beneath more than 141,000 square kilometres (54,000 square miles) of northern Alberta forest. In 2003, thirty square kilometres (160 square miles) of land had been disturbed by tar-sands development. By the summer of 2006, that number had grown to 2,000 square kilometres (772 square miles) — almost five-fold within three years. These tar sands are the second-largest oil deposit in the world, bigger then Iraq, Iran, or Russia, and exceeded only by Saudi Arabia. If current, approved projects go forward, 3,400 square kilometres (1,312 square miles) will be strip-mined, destroying a total area as large as the state of Florida. The current process limit of 2.7 million barrels of oil per day is estimated to increase to six million barrels per day by 2030. Current and future high oil prices make the extraction and processing of bitumen very profitable.

Tar sands are a mixture of sand, clay and a heavy crude oil or tarry substance called bitumen. To get the oil out of the ground, the tar has to be superheated with steam in “cookers” to make the oil flow. For each barrel of tar-sands oil produced, between two and 4.5 barrels of water is required. In 2007, Alberta approved the withdrawal of 119.5 billion gallons of water for tar-sands extraction, with an estimated 82 per cent of this water coming from the Athabasca River, a major tributary in northern Alberta.

The extracted bitumen is later processed in industrial facilities called “upgraders” into synthetic crude oil to be piped to the U.S. for refining. These upgrader facilities look like “refinery cities,” with smokestacks bellowing polluting emissions and wastewater emptied into toxic tailings ponds. Recently, in sutu technology is being used to pump steam under the earth in order to make the bitumen flow through wells. By 2010, the industry is projected to generate eight billion tons of waste sand and one billion cubic metres of wastewater — enough to fill 400,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools. Some of these toxic tailings ponds are located next to the Athabasca. The tar sands are also a

major source of greenhouse-gas emissions and a major contributor to climate change and global warming.

The oil from the tar sands is going south in order to satisfy U.S. energy needs. The U.S. has reorganized its long-term plans for petroleum energy: It has set a new goal that requires satisfying up to 25 per cent of its daily oil needs from tar-sands operations. This involves massive pipeline construction and expansions running from northern Alberta down through Minnesota to refineries in Wisconsin and Chicago, through North Dakota, South Dakota, down to Oklahoma and Texas. Pipelines will also go through British Columbia to ship the oil overseas.

Blue River, Brown River

The exploitation of the tar sands is a human-rights issue, an environmental-justice issue and an indigenous treaty-rights issue. For the most part, however, the public in Canada and the U.S. has not been made sufficiently aware of what is going on in northern Alberta. The public still does not understand that the indigenous First Nations communities are the populations most negatively affected. Dene and Cree First Nations and Métis live close to or actually in the midst of these tar-sand deposits, mostly along the Athabasca River basin area. These are the indigenous communities of Fort McMurray, Fort McKay and Fort Chipewyan.

The tar-sands development around Fort McMurray and Fort McKay is located upstream along the Athabasca River basin. Current tar-sands development has completely altered the Athabasca delta and watershed landscape. This has caused de-forestation of the boreal forests, open-pit mining, de-watering of water systems and watersheds, toxic contamination, disruption of habitat and biodiversity, and disruption of the indigenous Dene, Cree and Métis trap-line cultures.

“The river used to be blue. Now it’s brown. Nobody can fish or drink from it. The air is bad. This has all happened so fast,” says Elsie Fabian, 63, an elder in a Native Indian community along the Athabasca River.

From the perspective of many concerned First Nations and citizens of northern Alberta, the government has given over the responsibility of environmental monitoring and enforcement to the corporations. But the tar-sands development has completely outstripped the ability of the corporations and the provincial and federal governments to provide either management or protection.

A recent health study commissioned by the Nunee Health Authority of Fort Chipewyan provides evidence that the governments of Alberta and Canada have been ignoring the evidence of toxic contamination on downstream indigenous communities. The people most at risk of health effects are those who eat food from the land and water. The Dene, Cree and Métis communities continue to subsist on a diet of fish and wild game. The remote Fort Chipewyan community, for example, has an eighty-per-cent subsistence diet. According to many Fort Chipewyan residents, the tar-sands mining is the principle cause

of both the toxins in the water and the recent dramatic increases in the number of cancers and other diseases.

The Mikisew Cree First Nation is located within Fort McKay and Fort Chipewyan. Chief Rozanne Marcel of the Mikisew Cree has declared, “Our message to both levels of government, to Albertans, to Canadians and to the world who may depend on oil sands for their energy solutions, is that we can no longer be sacrificed.” But the governments of Alberta and Canada have so far refused to listen.

The areas of concern fall under Aboriginal Treaties 8 and 11. These are treaties that ensure that lands of First Nations should not be taken away from them by massive, uncontrolled development, threatening their culture and traditional way of life. But the de-watering of rivers and streams to support the tar-sands operations now poses a major threat to the cultural survival of these indigenous peoples. The battle over the tar-sands mining comes down to the fundamental right to exist as indigenous peoples.

“If we don’t have land and we don’t have anywhere to carry out our traditional lifestyles, we lose who we are as a people. So, if there’s no land, then it’s equivalent in our estimation to genocide of a people,” says George Poitras of the Mikisew Cree First Nation.

Big Oil vs. Indigenous Rights

The first tier of tar-sands development came into a region mostly inhabited by Indigenous peoples. As with many historical instances of the colonization of indigenous peoples and their lands, the Alberta and Canadian governments enticed First Nations governmental leadership to lease their treaty reserve lands to the tar-sands industry as a means for economic development.

Now, however, the oil industry and the Alberta government want to expand even further. With an anticipated $25-billion expansion of the Athabasca tar-sands underway, First Nations leadership and community members are being pressured by Canada, Alberta and the oil industry to partner with the world’s largest tar-sands corporations. These giant developers include Mobil Oil, Shell, Syncrude Canada, Petro-Canada and Suncor Energy.

Many grassroots First Nation members have not been part of these negotiations, however, and most silently oppose tar-sands expansion. The problem is that most of these members feel disenfranchised. They lack knowledge and skills in organizing on energy- and climate-related issues. Many of the elected First Nations leaders are also feeling torn between the need to bring economic prosperity to their people and the need to protect the health and environment of their communities. The stakes have been set high by petro-politics and the money that flows from it.

The ability of First Nations to retain their inherent sovereignty rights to protect their lands and culture, and to maintain economically sustainable and healthy communities has been hampered by the Canadian and Alberta governments. According to many elders and land-

based community members in the tar-sands area, concerns for jobs, housing, income and economic development are being prioritized over the traditional indigenous values of respect for the sacredness of Mother Earth and the protection of the environment.

A moratorium on further tar-sands expansion must be implemented in northern Alberta. Since the tar-sands expansion is within First Nations' territories, any effective strategy must acknowledge Aboriginal title and treaty rights. This will require an urgent, coordinated, collective response, led by First Nations and Métis.

A moratorium on development is required until the concerns of First Nations and Métis regarding the many serious issues that have been raised by this breakneck industrial development are addressed. These include the human-rights abuses; the human and ecological health crisis; the climate-change implications; the water- and air-quality implications; the treaty-rights implications; the tribal sovereignty and self-determination implications; as well as the cumulative socioeconomic impacts on the health and way of life of indigenous peoples. Each of these serious issues must be responded to, respected and protected in a permanent, traditional, Indigenous framework, in compliance with the spiritual and natural laws, treaties and inherent rights of indigenous peoples.

We Speak for Ourselves

Indigenous peoples challenge the fossil fuel regime in Alberta

by Clayton Thomas-Muller

The Dominion - http://www.dominionpaper.ca

Stacks of wood cleared from the land in preparation for a tar sands strip mining operation. Photo: Dru Oja Jay

Over the span of 38 years, Northern Alberta has changed from a pristine environment rich in cultural and biological diversity to a landscape resembling a war zone marked with 200-foot-deep pits and thousands of acres of destroyed boreal forests. Lakes and rivers have been contaminated and groundwater systems drained. The impact of the tar sands industry is what I am talking about. This industry has also resulted in the disruption to the Dene First Nations and their treaty rights, including the cultural disruption to the Cree and Metis communities.

The areas of concern are under Aboriginal Treaties 8 and 11. These are treaties that ensure lands of First Nations not be taken away from First Nations by massive uncontrolled development that threatens their culture and traditional way of life.

The de-watering of rivers and streams to support the tar sands operations, and the destruction of the boreal forest, have threatened the cultural survival of the First Nations peoples.

An anticipated $25-billion expansion of the Athabasca oil sands in Northern Alberta is underway. First Nations leadership of the Athabasca Tribal Council (ATC) have been partnering with the world's largest corporations involved in tar sands development. Some of these giant developers are Mobil Oil, Shell, Gulf, Syncrude Canada, Petro-Canada and Suncor Energy. However, many First Nations and Metis grassroots people have not been part of these negotiations and are silently opposed to tar sands expansion. These people

feel disenfranchised by a lack of knowledge and skills necessary for organizing policy for energy- and climate-related issues.

Most Canadian and American campaigns against tar sands development have been initiated by non-Indigenous groups or environmental non-governmental organizations (eNGOs). Although these tar sands lie within the traditional territories of First Nations and Metis peoples, these campaigns lack Indigenous involvement.

In the words of many elders and land-based community members living in the tar sands area, concerns for jobs, housing, income and economic development have taken priority over the traditional Indigenous values of respecting the sacredness of Mother Earth and protection of the environment.

"The river used to be blue. Now it's brown. Nobody can fish or drink from it. The air is bad. This has all happened so fast," said Elsie Fabian, 63, an elder in a First Nation community along the Athabasca River.

Some First Nations leadership, such as the Deh Cho Dene First Nations in the Northwest Territories and the Mikisew Cree and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nations in Fort Chipewyan have called on Canada and Alberta to support a moratorium on further tar sands development.

Organizations opposing the expansion of tar sands development must recognize the First Nations who share that opposition. As a member of the Indigenous Environmental Network and the Chair of the IEN Native Energy and Climate Campaign, we are identifying, and will be working with, Dene, Cree and Metis community members who are concerned about the Alberta tar sands expansion, as well as the broader fossil-fuel regime in Canada.

The rationale behind this approach is that the government of Canada and the courts recognize treaties between the Crown and Aboriginal peoples. As Aboriginal peoples with long-standing use and occupation of the land as descendants of the original inhabitants of Canada, we are not merely "concerned citizens." Our Aboriginal title and treaty rights in Canada legally supercede the rights of the province of Alberta and corporations and their operation in the region.

Dene, Cree and Metis communities and their leadership must look beyond a dependence on a fossil-fuel regime and be visionaries and doers, supporting the development of clean production and clean renewable energy within their lands. There needs to be a clear strategy to motivate First Nations leadership and their grassroots communities to get active in energy and climate change policy, at the provincial, federal and international levels. Capacity development must be strengthened. There is a need for informed Aboriginal and Indigenous organizations to take the lead in organizing strategy, advocacy and training for First Nations. Our Dene, other First Nations communities and Indigenous support organizations must be more visible locally and in national campaigns.

Information is power. This is the reason that there must be a major focus on "building the base" with members of the First Nations and the Metis settlements, on starting with the grassroots. The Indigenous Environmental Network (www.ienearth.org) an Indigenous-run environmental justice non-profit organization based in the States, along with our Canadian allies, is working on this level. IEN will be launching the Canadian Indigenous Tar Sands Campaign (CITSC). This campaign aims to develop mechanisms for Dene, Cree and Metis grassroots peoples to have meaningful participation in decision-making, to make informed decisions, to speak for themselves on energy and climate issues and to link front-line climate and energy impacts to policy development.

The CITSC campaign will work towards the establishment of a sustainable energy and economic platform for First Nations and Metis. The platform will include both a moratorium on "new" fossil fuel development, large-scale hydropower and nuclear energy and, as an alternative to the tar sands, a call to prioritize the development of clean, renewable energy on First Nations and Metis land in Alberta. The campaign will build a broad-based regional coalition of First Nations and Metis grassroots--made of provincial-, regional- and community-level First Nations and Metis organizations and Band Council leadership--which will advocate for, and realize, sustainable energy and climate policies. The IEN recognizes, supports and promotes environmentally sound lifestyles, economic livelihoods and healthy, sustainable communities. As Indigenous peoples, we have a sacred responsibility to protect our human rights and to practice our cultural and spiritual beliefs.

Clayton Thomas-Muller, of the Mathais Colomb Cree Nation (Pukatawagan) in Northern Manitoba, Canada, is an activist for Indigenous Rights and Environmental Justice. He has worked across Canada, Alaska and the lower 48 states with grassroots Indigenous communities to defend their Inherit, Treaty and environmental rights against unsustainable energy development and transnational energy corporations.

Native Perspective on WHAT is ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE?

From the Indigenous Environmental Network Website

- To Native peoples, the term "environmental justice" goes beyond the issue of disproportionate toxic and nuclear contamination and health exposure of our elders, men, women, youth, children and our traditional food web.
- It includes issues of exploitation, ecological damage, restoration of natural resources, compensation for victims of exposures and protection and healing of biological diversity that sustains us and allows us to practice our culture, language, and spirituality.
- It includes the protection of all areas that are sacred and that are culturally and historically significant to our peoples.
- It addresses economic development and social justice issues towards building sustainable communities with safe and sustainable jobs and livelihoods.
- Environmental justice means the de-colonization of our minds and recognition of traditional knowledge as the foundation of who we are.
- It addresses ethical and policy issues concerning biotechnology, ownership of life, introduction of genetically modified organisms into the environment and policy issues on intellectual property rights of Indigenous knowledge.
- It means developing and maintaining education and language programs that teaches adults and the younger generation what their relationship is to the sacredness of our Earth Mother.
- It means understanding and defending our treaties and to exercise our right to self-determination as Indigenous peoples.
- It means to claim our inherent right to protect our traditional land, water, air and our future generations.
- In the United States, it means the right to develop our own tribal environmental protection programs with our own water and air quality standards, and seek delegated authority to implement our own environmental programs - which strengthens our sovereignty.
- In the United States and Canada, it means to have the right to fully protect our environment and all natural resources in our traditional territories, reserves and reservations by applying, monitoring and enforcing our own tribal-based environmental, historical, sacred areas, endangered species and conservation laws.
- Environmental justice means to be active - from the grassroots to tribal government - in all policy decisions from the local, tribal, state, national and international levels where policy development is being made that would affect our future generations and all life that sustains us and our Earth Mother

Crosses made of flowers mark the spot where William Bell and Desmond McNeil were killed by a speeding car near the small town of Delhi, Ontario.

WHO is RESPONSIBLE?

Life and death for two migrant farm-workers

By Janet McLaughlin

For a group of Jamaican migrant farm-workers employed at a vegetable farm near Delhi, Ontario, September 27, 2005 started out the same as any other day. Like many of the more than 7,500 migrant farm-workers in the region that stretches between Simcoe and Tillsonburg, they awoke early in their bunkhouses to a crisp Ontario autumn morning. It was a day when the fields were alive with mature crops, and workers could spend in excess of 14 hours bending, pulling, lifting and packing to ensure that the precious harvest was retrieved in time. Around dusk, when their work ended for the day, they rode into town on their bicycles to call their faraway families. Two of them never made it back.

Continues...

Who is RESPONSIBLE?/continued

© Horace Hines
Courtesy of the Jamaica Observer

© Karl McLarty,
Courtesy of the Jamaica Observer

William Bell, left and Desmond McNeil, right. In order to call their families they had to ride poorly equipped bikes along the dark highway into town, which led to their untimely deaths.

On the long, straight stretch of highway between their farm and the small town of Delhi, three of the workers were hit from behind by a young local resident in a speeding car. Two of the cyclists, William Bell and Desmond McNeil, were pronounced dead at hospital. The third, Frederick Smith, was seriously injured. Some media and officials portrayed the incident as an unfortunate accident for which workers' own actions and their "dark skin and clothes" against the night sky were partly to blame. But an examination of the broader context within which the incident took place points to a systemic and discriminatory pattern of exclusion and exploitation for migrant workers in Canada, which renders them particularly vulnerable, and is directly connected to their untimely deaths.

Poor treatment

The farm that employed Bell and McNeil is notorious for its poor treatment of workers. The families of the deceased, past employees at the farm and some other local residents, point out the exploitative and even abusive conditions. The migrants live in over-crowded, run-down bunkhouses and are not provided with any access to a phone or safe method of transportation. They work exceptionally long days, and by the time they finish working, it is often dark. In order to call their families, to make purchases or even to socialize, they have little choice but to ride poorly equipped second-hand bikes along the dark highway into town.

Junior Bell, son of the late William Bell, explains, "After working a long day, my Dad had to bike into town just to call my family back home. My father had been coming here for 12 years. There were 10 of us in the house in Jamaica and my father was the only one with a good job. He spent his whole life dedicated to us. Now there's no one to support my family in Jamaica, and I lost the best Dad a man could ever

Continues...

Who is RESPONSIBLE?/continued

ask for." Bell, who is currently residing in Toronto with his wife, says that this accident could have been avoided if there had been an accessible phone at the farm where his father worked, or if the workers there had had safe means of transportation to access the necessities of life.

The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program

All three workers were in Canada as part of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP), a federal government initiative that employs approximately 20,000 workers from Mexico and the Caribbean every year for labour-intensive agriculture. The work is notoriously arduous, dangerous and low paid, which is why Canadians cannot be recruited to fill the positions. Since 1966, the SAWP has provided temporary foreign workers to sustain Canada's multi-billion dollar agricultural industry and to perform the difficult labour required to provide cheaper food for Canadians. Their dependable, just-in-time labour has brought prosperity to many large agri-business operations, and sustains smaller operations that would otherwise go under.

While the program now extends through much of Canada, the vast majority of migrant workers are concentrated in the agricultural region of Southwestern Ontario, where they work in greenhouses, fields and processing plants. Workers come to Canada as part of a set contract that allows them to work for a maximum of eight months. When they complete their contracts, they must return home and reapply to work again the next season. The program allows workers to earn a substantial income – relative to their opportunities at home – and so places in the program are competitive and coveted. In return, contractors spend most of the year separated from their families and work in a country where they regularly face racial discrimination, poor working conditions and social and political exclusion.

Wanted as labourers but not as citizens

Despite the large number of migrant workers who rely on bikes, "rural roads can be deplorably dangerous for cyclists, with high-speed traffic and a lack of basic safety measures such as streetlights, paved shoulders or bike lanes, rumble strips, or even signs warning motorists to share the roads with cyclists," notes bicycle rights advocate Levi Waldron of Advocacy for Respect for Cyclists (ARC). The communities in which the migrants work do not do enough to integrate the workers as fully included participants, adds Nicole Wall of Justice for Migrant Workers (J4MW), a political collective which fights for the just treatment of migrant workers. "Racism and discrimination are frequently reported by workers, from both employers and community members." Thus, she says, although a number of community groups

Continues...

Who is RESPONSIBLE?/continued

have sprung up in recent years to provide support or occasional social activities to migrant workers, most migrants remain largely excluded from the broader community. Their needs are rarely considered and their voices are unheard. "Perhaps if local resident communities relied as heavily on bikes as the SAWP workers do, safer conditions would be put into place. These workers are seen as transient labourers rather than as community members whose needs must also be met."

Unlike other managed migration programs, such as the live-in caregiver program, regardless of how many years workers have been coming to Canada, participants are not given any advantage in applying for immigration status. They are seen as temporary guests with no citizenship rights, even though these workers may spend more time in Canada than in their home countries, and they pay full taxes and contributions to benefits that they never receive.

Justice for Migrant Workers advocates for the right of workers to immigrate. Despite their many letters and telephone calls to the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, no explanation has been given for the exclusion of these workers. Research by McMaster sociologist Vic Satzewich indicates that the initial reasons for barring workers from a system of regularization were directly linked to the racist concerns of government officials, who feared for the consequences of

From left to right: Widow Bernice, daughters Onica and Yaniqua, and mother Cynthia McGrowther sitting on a veranda looking at a picture Desmond, the son, husband and father they have lost.

allowing so many immigrants of colour in Canada's rural communities. Though such a public rationale would be morally unpalatable these days, through its silence on the matter the Ministry implicitly endorses the policy's continuation.

Official and undocumented migrant labourers have long been used to sustain the affluence of wealthy countries through their low-paid, dangerous labour. Programs like the SAWP allow the rich to benefit from cheap goods and services, while the state avoids providing migrant labourers the protections and benefits of citizenship. To allow

Continues...

Who is RESPONSIBLE?/continued

regularization of such workers would undermine this vital labour source, since citizens have the right to change employers and even professions, something SAWP workers cannot freely do.

Calls for change

On December 18, 2005, on International Migrants Day, a number of community activist groups led by Justice for Migrant Workers and Advocacy for Respect for Cyclists, issued a joint call for a coroner's inquest into the deaths of migrant farm workers in bike accidents in rural Ontario this past season. The groups note that since August, at least five migrant farm workers have been the victims of serious bicycle accidents when traveling between the fields and local communities. These include two separate incidents affecting workers near Leamington, Ontario, one of which resulted in the death of Mexican worker Alberto Tableros. Wall stresses, "These deaths and severe injuries are not random. Our government must ensure that workers who come here to harvest our food and agricultural products have safe ways to get to and from local towns."

Lynette Bell, wife of deceased William Bell, with her granddaughter. William Bell was in Canada as part of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP), a federal government initiative that employs approximately 20,000 workers from Mexico and the Caribbean every year for labour-intensive agriculture.

The two groups calling for the inquest also held vigils in the wake of the deaths, one in Simcoe and a second in Toronto. At the Simcoe vigil co-workers were given a chance to share their respect for their fallen colleagues as well as their anger about the conditions in which they died. Stories, prayers and spontaneous songs were offered, and following the ceremony the attendees initiated an impromptu petition demanding better living and working conditions. Many, however, fear the consequences of signing such petitions or calling for changes, since they can be expelled from the program at any time, or given a poor evaluation and so excluded in the future. Workers have no recourse to appeal their dismissal or exclusion from the program.

Who is responsible?

Because they come from home countries ravaged by years of unbalanced trade and financial policies, these jobs offer many migrants their best hope for obtaining life's necessities. This, and the fear of losing their jobs, is the main reason why workers are so hesitant to speak out. Yet their invisibility in Canada is precisely what keeps them excluded and vulnerable. And that is what contributed to the tragic deaths of two

Continues...

Who is RESPONSIBLE?/continued

people who spent most of their time living and working in this country, but who were never recognized as its citizens.

The irony is not lost on the families of Bell and McNeil, who have lost their main breadwinners and dearly loved fathers, husbands and friends. William Bell's sister-in-law, also resident in Toronto, stresses, "People need to be more concerned. These men leave their families and work the hardest way under stressful conditions. Some are so sick and they still have them working. They're human, they have family at home. They come here to work with all the disadvantage and people take advantage of them. They deserve respect."

As for who or what was ultimately responsible for the deaths of William Bell and Desmond McNeil — apparently just one man driving a car down a dark road on a particular evening. The only charges laid have been against the driver who struck the three migrant farm-workers. It is unlikely that the larger structural issues, which regularly place migrant workers in vulnerable positions, will ever come to trial. ■

Action

William Bell and Desmond McNeil are just two of many workers in the SAWP who have been killed, or left Canada sick or injured, often without any compensation or justice. Justice for Migrant Workers has organized a fund to support the families of such workers. Donations can be made via their web site: www.justicia4migrant-workers.org

Activist Links

Justice for Migrant Workers Web Site: www.justicia4migrantworkers.org and extensive resource page: http://www.justicia4migrantworkers.org/resources.htm
Advocacy for Respect for Cyclists Web Site: http://www.respect.to/

Resources

Tortillas and Tomatoes by Tanya Basok
Rumbo a Canadá: La Migración canadiense de trabajadores Agrícolas Tlaxcaltecas by Leigh Binford, Guillermo Carrasco Rivas, Socorro Arana Hernandez and Soledad Santillana de Rojas
El Contrato by the National Film Board of Canada, Min Sook Lee director. Karen King-Chigbo producer.
Migrant agricultural workers and processes of social inclusion in rural Canada: Encuentros and desencuentros by Preibisch, Kerry. 2004. Canadian Journal of Latin American & Caribbean Studies 29(57/8):203.
Racism and the Incorporation Foreign Labour: Farm Labour Migration to Canada since 1945 by Vic Satzewich

Janet McLaughlin is a doctoral candidate in Medical Anthropology at the University of Toronto. This article is based on her doctoral research, which focuses on health issues among migrant workers in Canada.

Did you know that over 17,000 workers from other countries come to work on Ontario farms for up to 8 months each year?

Who are these migrant farm workers and why are they here?

What are some of the difficulties that they face while working here?

How can we help to ensure that all of their rights are respected and that they are welcomed into our communities?

WPIRG
Student Life Centre Rm2139
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 3G1
Email: info@wpirg.org
Tel: 519.888.4882

migrant workers in ontario

growing the food we eat

What is this book?

This book is about the migrant farm workers who live and work in our communities throughout Ontario and Canada for up to eight months each year. It looks specifically at why Canada brings people from other countries to work in agriculture and attempts to explain some of the inequities, problems, and challenges these workers face.

Why this book?

This book was created to help inform the public about a portion of our population that is largely invisible to many Canadians. They face some common difficulties related to access to services, quality of living and working conditions. By bringing these issues to light, we hope that people (like you!) will become interested in learning more and taking action to help support full rights and fair treatment for all migrant workers.

Acknowledgements

This book is a result of research that took place in the Summer 2004. It could not have been accomplished without input from the migrant workers who were willing to share their stories and from a number of people working for migrant worker rights and support services: Jenna Hennebry, Kerry Preibisch, Andre Lyn, Stan Raper, Aylwin Lo, Evelyn Encalada Grez, Fanny Belcoski, Henry Neufeld, Sue Martin, and Tanya Basok.

Research and writing by melanie kramer. Design and layout by melanie kramer and Daryl Novak. Photos by Aylwin Lo, Adam Perry, Jonathan Hera, melanie kramer, and Daryl Novak. Input and editing by WPIRG staff Raj Gill and Daryl Novak. Additional input from Andrés Fuentes and additional editing by Aylwin Lo.

WPIRG

The Waterloo Public Interest Research Group provides students at the University of Waterloo a place to pursue research, education, and action on environmental and social justice issues. Funded and directed by students, WPIRG acts as a bridge between campus and community. There are over 20 PIRGs in Canada and over 200 in the United States.

* ***Please note that pseudonyms have been used for the names of all migrant workers and images have been altered.***

◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇

NOTES

Contents

SECTION 1: MIGRANT FARM WORKERS IN ONTARIO

Who are the Migrant Farm Workers in Canada?

Migrant farm workers work in Canada during the prime agricultural season to help plant, maintain, harvest or process produce. Also known as seasonal agricultural workers, migrant farm labourers, temporary workers, or guest workers, migrant farm workers may be here for up to eight months a year working up to seven days a week. Many return year after year, in some cases for over 20 years.

In 2003, Canada welcomed over 18,000 migrant farm workers, with 94% hosted by Ontario. Currently workers come from Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Grenada, Antigua, Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Montserrat and Mexico.[1]

These workers generally work and live on one farm throughout their stay. The majority of the workers are male, and all of them have wives or dependent families in their home countries who do not travel here with them but who depend on the money they send home from Canada.

What are their needs?

Migrant farm workers need support from their own governments as well as the Canadian government, and from communities and citizens alike. Sometimes this support is lacking, particularly from the governments who often face conflicts over ensuring that there is cheap labour available while ensuring that people's rights are always respected. Many community organizations, religious groups, individuals and unions attempt to provide support and advocacy in a variety of ways. Some groups advocate for worker rights, some provide religious services in workers' own languages, some organize social or recreational activities. Others provide information on rights and obligations, benefits workers are eligible to receive, English classes, translation services, legal consultation, community services, and more.

http://www.nsi-ins.ca/ensi/research/progress12.html
North-South Institute, links to articles on migrant workers

http://www.nsi-ins.ca/ensi/pdf/exec_sum_preibisch.pdf
Excellent article outlining issues and difficulties

http://www.jennahennebry.com/qac.html
Jenna Hennebry's website, Professor at Wilfred Laurier University with focus on migration and Mexican migrant workers

http://www.whsc.on.ca/Publications/atthesource/summer2002/cultivatinghs.pdf
Good Health and Safety overview article

http://www.farmsafety.ca
Farm Safety Association

http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/rc4004/rc4004-e.html
Detailed SAW tax info

http://www.regional.niagara.on.ca/living/health_wellness/health_bus/default.aspx
Niagara Health Bus Services

http://www.stelizabethseton.ca/ses_orgs.html
Project El Sembrador, connecting the Spanish Catholic community and providing support for migrant workers

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/asp/gateway.asp?hr=/en/epb/lmd/fw/lowskill.shtml&hs=on0
Pilot Project description

http://www.ufcw.ca/cgi-bin/download.cgi/westNileInfoSheet.pdf?id=597&a=v&name=westNileInfoSheet.pdf
West Nile pamphlet in Spanish

http://www.cdc.gov/nasd/docs/d000101-d000200/d000144/d000144.pdf
Tobacco sickness pamphlet in Spanish

http://www.cdc.gov/nasd/docs/d000101-d000200/d000143/d000143.pdf
Pesticide information in Spanish

http://www.nfu.ca/
National Farmers Union (supports collective bargaining for agricultural workers)

For a copy of this book online, please visit http://wpirg.org

Websites

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/on/epb/agri/overview.shtml
Explanation of SAW Program

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/on/epb/agri/pdf/2004_caribbean_agreement_e.pdf
Caribbean Agreement

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/on/epb/agri/pdf/2004_mexican_agreement_e.pdf
Mexican Agreement

http://justicia4migrantworkers.org/
Best resource for other links, and articles.

http://www.ufcw.ca/cgi-bin/download.cgi/National+ReportENG.pdf?id=231&a=v&name=National+ReportENG.pdf
National Report on the Status of Migrant Farmworkers in Canada, 2002

http://www.migrantsrights.org/
The Global Campaign for Ratification of the Convention on Rights of Migrants.
Includes listserve and update on ratification and link to the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

http://www.unesco.org/most/migration/convention/
Information kit on migrant workers

http://www.december18.net/web/general/page.php?pageID=50&menuID=36&lang=EN
Migrant News

http://www.sre.gob.mx/
Mexican External Relations

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/epb/lmd/fw/seaagrass.shtml
HRDC guide for employers

http://www.ufcw.ca
United Food and Commercial Workers' Union of Canada

http://www.ufcw.ca/report_unfairness.cgi
UFCW: Workplace Unfairness Report

http://www.ufcw.ca/report_hazards.cgi
UFCW: Report a Health and Safety Hazard

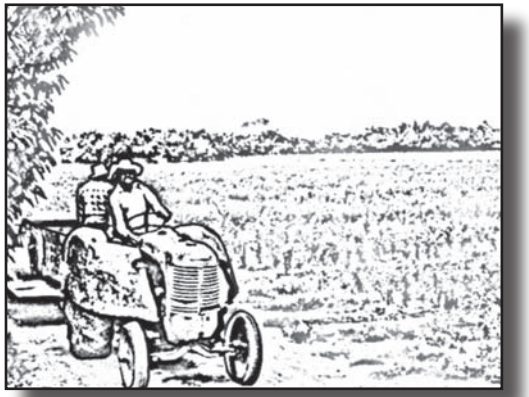
http://www.ufcw.ca/cgi-bin/full_story.cgi?story_id=132&from_page=20
UFCW Rights for Agricultural Workers. Link to video and pamphlets.

SAWP – The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program

The SAW Program is a government run program responsible for bringing the majority of migrant farm workers to Canada. In 1966 the first 264 Jamaican workers came to Canada to work on farms in the fruit and vegetable industry. It did not take long before the program expanded to include workers from other countries in the Caribbean and later from Mexico. These workers are employed in the areas of fruit and vegetable growing and harvest, greenhouses, processing plants, flowers, sod and tobacco.

Farm workers in general, whether migrant or domestic, face many disadvantages compared to other employment sectors. Farm work, sometimes described as a "legal vacuum" for its exemption from labour legislation covering overtime and holiday pay, it is not covered by the Ontario Health and Safety Act, and farm workers are not allowed to collectively bargain. While migrant farm workers usually earn more money than they could in their home countries, they still face the disadvantages of Canadian farm labour laws, plus they have additional restrictions placed on them by the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program Agreement.

Due to the vast numbers of migrant farm workers here through the SAW Program, this book will focus on the issues and difficulties that these workers face. However, this is not to say that their struggles are more important or more difficult than those facing other migrant workers (see next section). They too are in need of our outreach and support.



Julio, from Mexico City, works in Canada through the SAW Program.

Other Migrant Farm Workers

A recent federal pilot project managed in Ontario by the Foreign Worker Recruitment Unit of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada has also brought offshore workers to work in Canada. The "Pilot Project for Hiring Foreign Workers in Occupations that Usually Require a High School Diploma or Job-Specific Training" brings workers to work in trades requiring little technical skill or training, such as hospitality, meat processing, ski resorts, and food processing. Only a few workers in this program work on farms.

However, these jobs are less regulated by the government than those under the SAW Program. This new program needs to ensure workers are fully informed of their rights when they first come to Canada. As a pilot project, the program is still subject to change. Monitoring and advocacy by human rights and social justice groups could help to encourage the government to ensure decent living and working conditions.

There are also large numbers of undocumented farm workers in Canada. In the Leamington area alone, significant numbers of Chinese and Vietnamese visitors and immigrants are bused in from Toronto, Windsor, and other cities to work for cash. Their immigration status varies; some may be here on visitor visas, some may be permanent residents. Some local residents also work on farms to supplement their family's income, and are paid in cash. The undocumented migrant labourers have no one to appeal to if they are not paid or are otherwise treated unfairly. They risk deportation, and many face additional language and cultural barriers to fair treatment.

A number of Mexican Mennonites also make their way to Canada each year to work on farms in Canada throughout the growing season. These are Mennonites who moved from Canada to Mexico around the 1920s. Many retained Canadian citizenship. Some have migrated back to Canada and remain here permanently working on farms or in machine shops and renting old farmhouses, while others follow the harvest through parts of Canada and return to Mexico in the winter. Some have been known to start working at the age of five.

Bibliography

"A History of Discriminating Against Farm Workers." United Food and Commercial Workers. 15 June 2004. <http://www.ufcw.net/articles/docs/history_of_discriminating_against_farm_workers.html>.

Andre, Irving. "The Genesis and Persistence of the Commonwealth Caribbean Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program in Canada." Osgoode Hall Law Journal. Volume 28, No. 2 (1990): 243-301.

Basok, Tanya. Tortillas and Tomatoes: Transmigrant Mexican Harvesters in Canada. Montreal & Kingston: Mc-Gill-Queen's University Press, 2002.

Commission for Labor Cooperation. "Protection of Migrant Agricultural Workers in Canada, Mexico and the United States." Washington, D.C.: Secretariat of the Commission for Labor Cooperation, (2002). 8 June, 2004. <http://www.naalc.org/english/pdf/study4.pdf>.

Miracle, Marvin P., and Sara S. Berry. Migrant Labour and Economic Development. Madison WI: Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin,1970.

Preibisch, Dr. K. "Social Relations Practices between Seasonal Agricultural Workers, their Employers, and the Residents of Rural Ontario." CD-ROM. Prepared for the North-South Institute, Ottawa, ON, November 2003.

Satzewich, Vic. "The Canadian State and the Racialization of Caribbean Migrant Farm Labour1947-1966" Ethnic and Racial Studies Volume 11, Number 3 (July 1988): 282-303.

Steinbeck, John. Their Blood is Strong. San Francisco, CA: Simon J. Lubin Society of California, 1938.

Wall, Ellen. "Personal Labour Relations and Ethnicity in Ontario Agriculture." Deconstructing a Nation: Immigration, Multiculturalism & Racism in 90's Canada. Ed. Vic Satzewich. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing, 1992.

APPENDIX

Endnotes

[1] Commission for Labor Cooperation. Protection of Migrant Agricultural Workers in Canada, Mexico and the United States, (Washington, DC: Secretariat of the Commission for Labor Cooperation, 2002).

[2] Basok, Tanya. Tortillas and Tomatoes: Transmigrant Mexican Harvesters in Canada. (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002) 93.

[3] Vic Satzewich, "The Canadian State and the Racialization of Caribbean Migrant Farm Labour, 1947-1966" Ethnic and Racial Studies Volume 11, Number 3, July 1988: 286-287.

[4] "World War II." Sir Alexander Galt Museum. 18 June 2004. <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/prairie/warchpt5.htm>.

[5] "Japanese Internment Camps." 18 June 2004. <http://www.yesnet.yk.ca/schools/projects/canadianhistory/camps/internment1.html>. & Satzewich 286-287.

[6] Satzewich 295.

[7] Dr. Kerry Preibisch. "Social Relations Practices between Seasonal Agricultural Workers, their Employers, and the Residents of Rural Ontario." CD-ROM. (Ottawa, ON) Prepared for the North-South Institute: November 2003, 1.

[8] Satzewich 295.

[9] John Steinbeck. Their Blood is Strong. (San Francisco, California) Simon J. Lubin Society of California: 1938, 1.

[10] "Cultivating Health & Safety." Workers Health & Safety Centre, 7 June 2004 <http://www.whsc.on.ca/Publications/atthesource/summer2002/cultivatinghs.pdf>.

[11] "History of the Occupational Health and Safety Act." Windsor Occupational Health Information Service, 8 June 2004 <http://www.mnsi.net/~wohis/history.htm>.

[12] "A History of Discriminating Against Farm Workers." United Food and Commercial Workers, 7 June 2004 <http://www.ufcw.net/articles/docs/history_of_discriminating_against_farm_workers.html>.

[13] "International Migrants Day." Amnesty International. 18 December 2003. 15 June 2004. <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ENGPOL300372003>.

[14] "International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families." United Nations General Assembly. 15 June 2004. <http://www.migrantsrights.org/Int_Conv_Prot_Rights_migWorkers_Fam_1999_En.htm>.

[15] "Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families: the Migrant Workers Convention." Amnesty International. 15 June 2004. <http://web.amnesty.org/pages/treaty-cmw-eng>.

Where are the Migrant Farm Workers in my Community?

Most migrant farm workers working in Canada through the SAW Program live throughout Southern Ontario communities during the growing season, particularly in areas of intensive agricultural production such as Leamington, Simcoe, and Niagara. They work on farms of all sizes, in the fields, greenhouses and processing plants, and sometimes at Farmers Markets or roadside produce stands.

If you stop at a small roadside produce stand you may notice a trailer parked near the farm buildings, or a garage that has been converted to a "bunkhouse", or farm workers coming and going from a farmhouse where they live. When employees are hired through the SAWP, the employers must agree to house the workers, so migrant farm workers usually live on their employer's land or someplace close by, such as a bunkhouse in the nearest city.

Migrant Worker Accommodations near Delhi, Ontario

Why are they here?

Migrant farm workers are hired to work on farms during peak seasons when farmers can't find enough local people to do all of the work. They are only hired once a farmer has advertised for Canadian workers and is unable to fill all of the positions. This is known as the "Canadians First" principle.

Harvest (July through October, depending on the crop) is one of the most important times because a lot of produce needs to be picked by hand rather than machine. Migrant labourers usually work on fruit or vegetable farms, in greenhouses, or on tobacco and ginseng farms. When fruits and vegetables are harvested they need to be processed, so many processing plants also hire migrant workers during this time.

Farm Labour Shortages

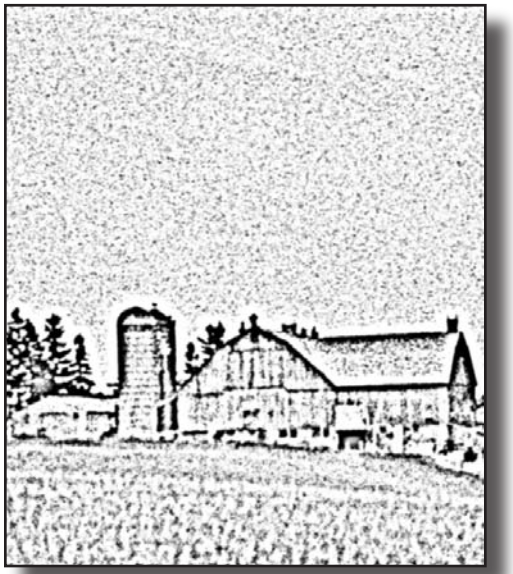
The need for farm labourers in Canada has grown in the past 100 years as farms have moved toward larger commercial operations rather than small, family run businesses. It is often difficult for farmers to find enough reliable local labour, and with the size of many farms, relying on family members is no longer an option. But it is unclear whether there is a shortage of labour *available* for farm work, or if the shortage is due to the demanding and sometimes difficult working conditions of most farm work. Nevertheless, a shortage exists, and the Canadian government has attempted to meet this labour shortage in a variety of ways.

Around 1900, the Canadian Government began accepting British children, mostly boys, to live on farms and provide farm labour, sometimes against the will or without the knowledge of their parents in Britain. This "labour supply" lasted until 1939. Canada also recruited European immigrants to work on farms for two years when they first arrived in Canada, but this often lasted only until they found other employment in better paying, less demanding jobs.[3]

Other forms of farm labour were also explored. From 1942-1946 many Prisoners of War were required to work on farms, particularly in southern Alberta.[4] Some Japanese Canadians in internment camps were also forced to work on farms, and Polish War Veterans were required to provide farm labour if they wanted to emigrate to Canada after WWII.[5]

In hindsight, many of these policies and practices are questionable as to their respect for human rights. The next section will examine some of the benefits and challenges of the SAW Program and will highlight some of today's practices – some that can be applauded, others that also need to be questioned.

A city under glass: Leamington hosts huge greenhouses where produce is grown year-round.



A farm in Southwestern Ontario.

- **Workplace Safety and Insurance Board**
  Agricultural Director, 1-888-259-4228

- **Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples**
  2141 Jane Street, 2nd Floor, Toronto, Ontario, 416-533-8545

Consulates & Liasons

- **Mexican Consulate**: 416-368-2875 Carlos Obrador, Program Coordinator, Email: cobrador@consulmex.com

- **Jamaican Liaison Office:** 416-733-4359, 1-888-898-3951 (toll free number for the exclusive use of Jamaican workers)

- **Barbados Consulate:** 416-214-9825

- **Trinidad & Tobago Consulate**:
  Keith James, Consul (Labour) 905-897-3001 ext. 13

- **Eastern Caribbean Consulate**:
  Egbert Lionel, Consul/Liaison Officer 416-222-1988

Administration

- **F.A.R.M.S.** (Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services -SAWP administrative body) 905-568-4500, Sue Williams Manager, Mina Vivar-Dy, Program Coordinator

Religious Organisations

- **St. Michael's**
  29 Elliot Street, Leamington Spanish Services Sundays, 2:30 PM

- **St. Vincent de Paul**, Niagara on the Lake – 6 pm Sunday Mass, and other events

- **Free Reformed Church of Vineland** – sports, a meal and evangelistic message Saturday evenings in the summer

- **Caribbean Workers Outreach Program in Niagara (CWOP-N)**
  Jamaican Pastors hold services at Bethany Mennonite Church, Virgil in May, June, & September at 7:30 pm Sundays, with food afterwards.

A Global Problem

Tanya Basok, author of *Tortilla and Tomatoes*, has found that rural Mexican farmers' livelihoods are being replaced by large-scale, foreign-owned agribusiness – sometimes the same Canadian businesses that request migrant workers. This has helped to fuel the migration of workers to places like Canada and the United States.[6]

In Mexico and the Caribbean, many small farmers have lost their land to large corporations who will produce crops for export, rather than for local use. When people do not have their own land and cannot grow their own crops, they have to pay for basic foods. If food is being imported rather than produced locally, it is more expensive. This leads to chronic underemployment and poverty in rural areas. This causes people to leave their homes to seek employment either in larger cities, or through programs like the SAW Program.

Rural farmland in Ontario hosts many migrant farm workers, but the issues they face are not separate from the global economy.

SECTION 2: BENEFITS

Benefits to the Workers

One Mexican migrant farm worker in Ontario told the story of his son who was working under the table on farms in the United States. He had to pay $2000 to have someone take him illegally across the border and then had to find a place to live for which he would have to pay rent. He would worry about being sent back to Mexico or wonder when he would be able to get back. His father prefers to work in Canada because he knows how he will get here, how long he will be here, he is guaranteed work and pay, and he does not have to worry about making living arrangements.

Workers who come to Canada:

- Have an opportunity to earn more money than in their home country,
- Have an opportunity to fulfill basic needs of their family and improve the lives of their family members,
- Have the chance to use their agricultural skills,
- Have the potential to learn new agricultural skills and methods,
- Have the chance to visit another country,
- In some cases are able to provide higher education for their children and help them to gain greater skills so they can find better employment.
- A mandatory savings program is in place for Caribbean workers (not for Mexican workers) through the SAW Program, which requires them to remit 25% of their wages from each payroll. Part of this money goes toward each worker's home countries' administrative fees, and the rest is paid to the worker once he has returned to his home country. Whether or not this benefits the worker is subject to opinion.

Support Organisations and Contacts

Support & Advocacy

- **Migrant Agricultural Worker Support Centres:**
  Bradford 905-775-3837
  Leamington 519-326-8833
  Saint-Remi, Quebec 450-454-9888
  Simcoe, Ontario 519-426-4056
  Virgil (Niagara) 905-468-8329
  • National Coordinator, Stan Raper 416-674-8218
- **Justicia 4 Migrant Workers**
  http://www.justicia4migrantworkers.org
  email: info@justicia4migrantworkers.org
  voice mail / pager: 416.329.6844
- **Migrant Worker Community Centre**
  South Essex Arts Association 519-326-2711
- **Health Bus of Niagara** – Thursdays from 5:30-8pm at M.B. Foods, 1551 Niagara Stone Road, Virgil – provides consultation on dental and medical problems, questions, no health card needed 1-800-263-5757, for more information. A translator is required for Spanish speaking people.
- **Latin Immigrant Niagara Community Association** (LINCA)
  Activities and cultural events – contact Folk Arts Council, 85 Church St., St. Catharines, 905-685-6589, email: pedro@vaxxine.com
- **K-W Multicultural Centre** -- Translation Services
  46 Mount Hope St., Kitchener, 519-745-2531
- **Windsor/Essex Bilingual Legal Clinic**
  595 Tecumseh Blvd East, Suite B, Windsor, 519-253-3526
- **Frontier College**
  35 Jackes Avenue, Toronto, 416-923-3591
- **Support for Mexican Mennonite families in Lynwood**
  To volunteer, contact Sue Martin at 519-656-2187
- **International Tax Services** at 1-800-267-5177

Already Know Some Migrant Workers?

- Inform workers of their right to collect Workers Compensation, to seek medical attention, and to collect CPP and Parental Benefits
- Provide proper clothing and protection (masks, etc) to protect from pesticides
- Inform workers about workplace dangers and safety
- Distribute contact numbers for support organizations
- Offer to drive workers someplace if needed (i.e., doctor, bank, grocery store, phone, support centre)

Letter Writing

- Write to the Provincial Minister of Labour, the Premier, and your local MPP in support of agricultural worker rights, specifically inclusion in the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and the right to bargain collectively and form a union
- Write to your MP and the Prime Minister asking them to exclude migrant workers from paying into Employment Insurance since they are not eligible to receive benefits
- Write to your MP and the Prime Minister asking that Canada sign the UN Migrant Workers' Convention honouring the rights and fair treatment of all migrant workers

Community Connections

- Encourage your city council to produce relevant publications in Spanish – especially event publications, transportation, or recreation information
- Ensure that businesses and public institutions have signs that are easy to understand – e.g. a picture of a phone rather than the word "phone"
- Create a drop-in space for migrant workers in your area

Caribbean workers picking strawberries near Simcoe, Ontario. This is backbreaking work when done for long hours.

Benefits to Canadian Farmers and the Canadian Economy

- Low cost, hard-working labour,
- Solves a difficult to fill labour gap,
- Reliable, readily available workforce,
- Constant supply of workers,
- Workers purchase goods here (such as bicycles, stereos, TVs, etc.) for themselves and to send home,
- Workers can be sent home immediately if employer is dissatisfied.

Benefits to Mexico and Caribbean Countries

- Provides employment for underemployed or low skilled labourers,
- Lack of employment can cause unrest, so helps to maintain stability in their home countries,
- Better paying employment than most workers would receive in their home countries,
- Money sent home is spent in home country, benefiting its economy.

SECTION 3: CHALLENGES

The following challenges that migrant workers may face are addressed in detail on subsequent pages.

- Language/Literacy
- Isolation
- Worker-Worker Relationships
- Effects on Workers' Families and Home Communities
- Worker Exclusion and Vulnerability
- Labour Laws and Regulations, and the Unique Nature of Farm Work
- Deductions and Benefits
- Health and Safety
- Accessing Services
- Unions
- Exclusion from Joining a Union

Language/Literacy

"If we are not allowing them to apply for citizenship, why do we expect them to communicate in English or French?"
- Canadian literacy worker

Language and literacy barriers can magnify a worker's challenges. If a worker cannot *read* English, he will not be able to read warnings on pesticide containers, or he may experience difficulty understanding his paycheques and deductions, or rules, which his employer must post. If a worker cannot *speak* or understand spoken English, misunderstandings may occur when the employer gives instructions or when he goes to purchase items at a store or does his banking. He may have trouble discovering local transportation routes, or learning about local recreational activities.

Although it is not always their first language, all Caribbean workers commonly communicate in English (though many have low literacy skills). Mexican workers, on the other hand, often only speak Spanish. There are no requirements in the SAW Program for translating instructions into Spanish or ensuring that workers understand. While some farmers try to learn Spanish themselves or hire people to act

Volunteer

- Contact one of the support centres or another organization to volunteer
- Offer English as a Second Language tutoring. Use a learner-centred approach that recognizes workers own experiences and needs – i.e., one priority may be to learn words relevant for the work they do, dangers they may encounter, etc.
- Volunteer with a school readiness program

Projects

- Start a newsletter or newspaper with/for migrant workers
- Start a Spanish radio show on a local station – perhaps one hour of Latin/ Hispanic music, discussion of current events – ask workers what would appeal to them and if they'd like to get involved!
- Organize a drive for clothing, kitchen utensils, work gloves or other protective equipment, or old bicycles and donate them to a support centre, church or directly to farms with migrant workers.
- -Donate dishes and household items, work clothes or work boots, bedding, baby seats, material, old furniture, or diapers to Mexican Mennonite families by contacting Sue Martin at 656-2187
- Provide safety information or workshops in English and Spanish so workers understand the precautions that need to be taken around farm machinery, pesticides, and other dangers
- Make a personal donation or take up a collection at your religious institution and donate it to the Global Justice CareVan Project or Justicia 4 Migrant Workers
- Organize an event with some workers – ask what kind of event they would like, a barbecue, a soccer game, a music jam night, movie night, TV sports night, etc.
- Organize an information session or blitz on December 18th, International Migrants Day
- Encourage existing local literacy groups to reach out to migrant workers, The Literacy Group of Waterloo Region, for example

Special Skills?

- Offer legal services to workers in need
- Offer bicycle repair and maintenance workshops
- If you own a store that migrant workers frequent, carry products from the Caribbean or Mexico, translate your signage, train your workers in basic Spanish

SECTION 5: WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

Want to Know More?

- Visit the websites listed in the Appendix
- Watch the video *El Contrato*, by Min Sook Lee, available at many public and university libraries
- Read Tanya Basok's book Tomatoes and Tortillas ISBN: 0773523383
- Join the Justicia 4 Migrant Workers listserve and receive emails about migrant farm worker issues: http://justicia4migrantworkers.org/action.htm
- Visit one of the Migrant Agricultural Worker Support Centres in Bradford, Simcoe, Leamington, or Virgil – learn what they do; ask how you can help!

What You Can Do

- Get to know migrant workers in your community and their needs
- Don't make assumptions – ask people about themselves
- If you hear of any mistreatment of workers, document it and call one of the Support Centres or Justicia 4 Migrant Workers – as soon as possible!
- Buy some Latin American or Caribbean newspapers or magazines and hand them out – any info from home is valuable
- Document any difficulties that migrant workers share with you. Keep this information confidential unless a worker wishes to pursue a complaint. If a worker desires to pursue a complaint, contact a local migrant worker support centre, or Justicia 4 Migrant Workers

If You Speak Spanish...

- Offer translation services, particularly at hospitals, doctors' offices, clinics, banks and other service providers
- Offer to teach Spanish to a farmer who hires Mexican workers
- Talk with migrant workers you meet in your community
- Share any Spanish media that you may have

as translators or English as a Second Language teachers, many make little effort to reduce these barriers and there is little to no government support that they can access. Language barriers can be prohibitive in the workplace and in performing everyday tasks. Understanding a common language helps to minimize misunderstandings and misinterpretations between employer and employee. Minimizing language barriers also makes people feel more welcome in a community and helps to ensure their needs can be communicated and met.

Isolation

Most migrant farm workers work in rural areas away from easy access to services and activities. Bicycles provide a key form of transportation, but if nothing is nearby, they may be of little use, other than to provide a change of location from the farm.

The SAW Program does not require that workers have access to phones (or even electricity) on the farms or nearby, so many workers must walk or ride bicycles to pay phones, if there are any nearby, or wait until they are taken into town to do their weekly shopping and errands. This can present problems as some workers arrange certain times to call home, which they may not be able to adhere to if there is no phone nearby. This limits access to phone books and other useful sources of information and restricts movement further as workers are not able to order taxi services, contact friends, or call support or advocacy groups at their own convenience.

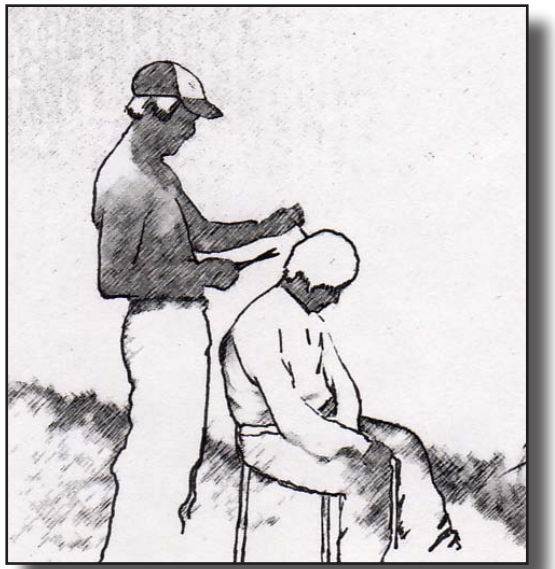
Working and living in one location may also enable employers to intrude on workers during off-hours.

Rural accommodations near a vineyard.

Worker-Worker Relationships

"You have to get along with everybody because there isn't much room."
- Migrant farm worker, 2004

Relationships naturally develop between workers who are working and living together in close quarters for up to eight months a year. However, it can be difficult when living arrangements place them in rooms with two to twelve (or more) other people, sometimes in 3-level bunk beds. Personal space and a sense of privacy are often hard to come by. Workers may also be reluctant to form close ties with their co-workers, as they do not know in advance whether or not they will all be returning to the same farm. Unless they are from the same town in their home country, they may never see one another again once they stop returning to Canada.



Two Mexican workers take a break after a long day of planting tobacco and cut each others' hair. Workers usually help one another out when they can.

All of these people have different needs and experiences and are governed by different agreements. Indeed, the variety of types of migrant workers across the world is even wider and goes far beyond farm work. They are all marginalized or on the fringes of society by the nature of the temporary work that they do and the fact that this work is not in their home country.

In an effort to mitigate the dangers of maltreatment of migrant workers working in a variety of professions across the world, the UN introduced the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families*[14] (Migrant Workers' Convention) in 1990. It entered into force on July 1, 2003. Canada has not yet signed the agreement. Indeed, the majority of countries who have signed the agreement are sender countries, rather than countries who primarily host migrant workers.

The Convention outlines fair treatment of migrant workers working in any profession, working legally or illegally, and specifies basic human rights that should be upheld by employers and governments. However, the majority of the UN member states have yet to sign the agreement.[15] In an effort to raise awareness around these issues, December 18 has been declared International Migrants Day by the UN – a day to honour and respect the hard work and difficult conditions that migrant workers often face.

Many organizations, small and large, provide support for migrant workers and for migrant worker rights. Amnesty International, for example, urges governments to sign the UN's Migrant Workers Convention and to abide by its guidelines in order to respect the rights and dignity of all migrant workers.

Juan, a migrant worker from Tlaxcala, Mexico, has been returning to Canada for several years and considers himself fortunate to have been placed with a grower who treats him and his coworkers with dignity and respect.

By signing the Migrant Worker Convention, Canada has the opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to the fair treatment of migrant workers. This could be a huge step toward fully recognizing migrant worker rights in Canada.

SECTION 4:
BALANCING BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

While there are benefits to both migrant workers and their home countries, as well as Canada, there are obviously some struggles which workers face when they come to Canada. Workers are placed in positions where they have less power than the farmers, the Canadian government, their own countries' government, and the administering bodies, yet it is their lives and livelihoods that are affected most directly by the SAW Program.

The benefits of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program need to be balanced against respect for the full human rights of migrant workers. Government support for workers and their families needs to come from both Canada and workers' home country governments, and workers' needs and rights should be placed at the forefront of any laws and policies, and in the SAW Agreement itself.

Universal Migrant Worker Rights

Vilified by politicians and the popular media, often subject to discrimination and human rights violations, many migrants continue to live their lives at the margins of societies unwilling to accept or integrate them fully.
- Amnesty International website[13]

In Canada, most migrant farm workers come through the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program that governs much of their rights and expectations while here. However, as noted above, this agreement places the workers in vulnerable positions with little power to act in their own interest if they do not want to risk being sent back to their home country.

Other migrant workers may come to Canada through the Low Skills pilot project and there are also many undocumented workers, such as the Mexican Mennonites.

Effects on Workers' Families and Home Communities

"It's hard to be away because sometimes one of your kids needs a hug."
- Migrant farm worker, 2004

Workers are absent from their families and home communities from six weeks to eight months each year. This has many implications for the families at home. They must perform tasks that the absent member would normally perform. Sometimes this means that the husband or wife must perform in non-traditional roles and they may take on more work than when their partner is there. It means that many fathers (and some mothers) cannot help with child rearing for a large part of the year.

At the same time, the SAW Program usually helps people to better the lives of their family members, and it can inject money into their home country communities. It may also help the workers' families to escape the cycle of poverty by enabling their children to pursue higher education and better paying jobs. Although workers' sense of connection, community and belonging are interrupted when they come to Canada for long periods of time, most, and perhaps all of them, still identify where they are from as "home".

Worker Exclusion and Vulnerability

Home may remain home, but migrant workers' lives beyond work do not stop when they are in Canada. In Dr. Kerry Preibisch's report "Social Relations Practices between Seasonal Agricultural Workers, their Employers, and the Residents of Rural Ontario" she quotes one migrant farm worker, "*you said that we have our lives back home, but that's not true. When we come here we don't stop living. What we have here [in Canada] is our life also.*"[7]

• Limited rights

Compared to most Canadians, migrant farm workers are some of the most disadvantaged people living in our society. Migrant farm workers are vulnerable to injustices on a number of different levels. As mentioned earlier, farm work is often dangerous and there are very few laws protecting farm workers.

The SAW Agreement limits workers' ability to switch employers and prevents them from staying in Canada once their contract has finished or from applying for

Canadian citizenship. At the same time, it places most aspects of workers' lives under their employers control. The worker becomes subject to his or her employer's personal goodwill which can result in a supportive environment and even friendship, but it can also lead to tense or difficult working and living arrangements.

At the community level, workers may be welcomed through outreach, social or religious activities and social supports, or they may be excluded from these events and services. This may sometimes be due to racial or class-based prejudices and discriminations, or ideas that foreign workers are only here to work and would not be interested in socializing.

• Designed to prevent immigration

Regardless of how many years workers have been coming to Canada, they are unlikely to be allowed to settle in Canada at any point in their lives as they are considered low skilled workers. To encourage workers to return home at the end of their contract, workers must be married or have dependent families in their home countries. Their children do not receive any education benefits or opportunities to study in Canada. Workers themselves cannot take formal classes while working in Canada, nor can they stay beyond the end of their contract. This is not accidental.

When the government first considered starting the program, pre-1966, officials weighed what they considered to be key issues. "By admitting West Indian workers on a seasonal basis, it might be possible to reduce greatly the pressure on Canada to accept unskilled workers from the West Indies as immigrants. Moreover, seasonal farm workers would not have the privilege of sponsoring innumerable close relatives."[8] Thus, the SAW program has always intended to prevent migrant farm workers from immigrating permanently to Canada.

Other government statements and policies from near the same time demonstrate blatant racism and classism, intended to keep people out of Canada. When migrant workers from the US were allowed to work on Canadian farms, "the Canadian state specified that 'no coloured workers [be] included in those selected for work in the tobacco fields of Ontario."[7]

Today, farm workers from other countries are welcome to plant, nourish and harvest our food, but still cannot enjoy the rights of Canadian citizenship.

on their first collective agreement when the Conservative Ontario government repealed the *Agriculture Labour Relations Act* (ALRA), again excluding agricultural workers from the Labour Relations Act. At this time they terminated any certification rights of trade unions, and any collective agreements certified under the ALRA, meaning the mushroom workers were no longer allowed to be represented.

The UFCW challenged the Act, but it wasn't until December 2001, when the case reached the Supreme Court of Canada, that they won a ruling that concluded that not allowing farm workers the freedom to associate was unconstitutional. As of 2004, the right to bargain collectively is still before the courts.[12]

Unions

Farm workers are among the most exploited workers anywhere in the world. Allowing foreign workers to come into Canada and be treated poorly doesn't speak well of the labour movement in Canada, or the federal or provincial governments. When we allow these exploitations, it basically says that our standards and most things we stand for as Canadians are lip service. By working with the most exploited and impoverished people in Canada we can set basic national standards and we can only move forward from there. We want to ensure this is not a race to the bottom.
- Stan Raper, UFCW

It is the hope of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union that the government will see the need for the support that the centres provide and take responsibility for funding the centres to ensure workers are made aware of all of their rights and good worker-farmer relations can be maintained.

The UFCW has been the most prominent union involved in supporting migrant farm workers in Canada. With support from the Canadian Labour Congress, the United Steelworkers' Union, and the Canadian Auto Workers' Union, as well as other social justice organizations, the Global Justice CareVan Project was begun in 2000. The van travels to various farming communities throughout Canada providing information on farm worker rights and where farm workers can seek support. The UFCW has created four Migrant Agricultural Worker Support Centres in Ontario (see page 29). The Centres provide services ranging from translation to advocacy to health education. The UFCW is also spearheading several court challenges that will improve the working conditions for all farm workers, including the right to freely associate, to unionize, and to bargain collectively, and the right to be included under Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety legislation.

Exclusion from Joining a Union

When the Ontario Government provided a framework for the establishment of trade unions and collective bargaining in 1943, agricultural workers were excluded. They remained excluded from the Labour Relations Act until 1994 when the provincial NDP government passed *An Act Respecting Labour Relations in the Agriculture Industry*. For the first time agricultural workers were given the rights to form associations and to bargain collectively.

Shortly after this Bill was passed, a group of mushroom workers won representation by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Canada. They were working

• Farmers are in the driver's seat

Once workers are hired, their employers determine when workers come to Canada, when they leave, where they live, their living conditions (how many people per room, for example), how many hours they work, the type of work they perform, access to services (most significantly the telephone which may or may not be provided for workers), and more.

This instability and lack of access is reinforced by the farmer's ability to send a worker home, known as "repatriation". If a worker is considered "non-compliant" by a farmer, he can be sent back to his home country with little opportunity to challenge the decision and no appeal process – sometimes at the worker's own cost. This means that when workers are faced with an unreasonable work request or poor living conditions, s/he can be put in a position to choose between putting up with it, or speaking out and potentially being sent home and permanently banned from working in Canada.

Conversely, if a worker is favoured by an employer, he may be requested by name to come back, which guarantees his renewal of employment. Thus, workers often try to please their employer, sometimes compromising their own rights, needs, desires, free time, or even health. This is not to say that all, or even most, farmers take advantage of this arrangement. However, the power structure in place through the agreement reinforces an employer's power over his employee in ways that go beyond employment, to affect every aspect of the worker's life. It creates the potential for an abuse of power with few alternatives for the worker.

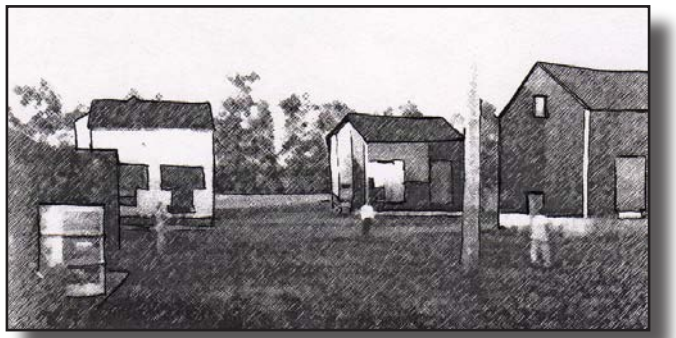
Large farms often use vans or schoolbuses to take workers into town for weekly shopping trips. When this takes place is decided by the employer, although in many places it is Friday evenings. It may be the only opportunity workers have to use phones, do their banking and buy groceries.

• Community integration difficult

Traditionally, many rural Canadian communities have been primarily populated by white people of European descent. It has made it easy for an "us-them" attitude to develop where members of other ethnic or cultural groups are seen as different from, and often less than, the dominant white community. Ideas like "they are only here to work", "they just want to make money", "they don't like our food or events anyway", "they can't speak in English", "they are too tired after working", "they are uneducated", or "they don't have any skills other than farming" can also be used to exclude migrant farm workers from social or recreational events and activities and planning.

Many communities do try to include migrant farm workers in events. In the past several years, there has been an increase in community outreach and support for migrant farm workers. Due to false information or perceptions, some of these older ideas and prejudices remain, . These outlooks should not be used to generalize about workers' situations, nor should they form the basis for any kind of exclusion. Exclusion based on race or class is just as it sounds: racism and classism.

Again, it is important to recognize that we are discussing migrant farm workers who come to Canada through the SAW Program and that there are other migrant farm workers who may have other experiences of oppression and exploitation. Undocumented farm workers are at the greatest risk for being underpaid or not paid at all as they have very little leverage other than their labour to hold their employers to any work agreements.

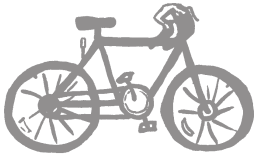


Isolation on rural farms can increase worker vulnerability and make it difficult for people without transportation to travel to community events or services.

Accessing Services

Transportation

On most farms, the employer will drive the workers into town once a week to buy supplies, do their banking and any other errands. Many migrant workers living and working in rural areas rely on bicycles as their key means of transportation. Bicycles can be purchased relatively cheaply at yard and rummage sales and workers may share bikes between each other. Sometimes farmers keep a few old bikes on hand for workers to use. However, not all farms have bikes available and in some cases, there are no services or entertainment nearby so bikes are of little use. Having access to rides or knowledge of local transportation systems may help with mobility and the freedom to come and go if the workers live relatively close to a town.



Recreation and Social Activities

"Those who perform get to express other sides of themselves, other than just using their bodies as machinery."
- Migrant worker activist

Pedro, from Amecameca, Mexico, plays accordian when he finds the time.

During peak season, long hours usually prevent workers from participating in social activities. Some community centres, churches and other support groups schedule events after 8 PM or on Sundays when more workers may have a day off.

Transportation to recreational events is crucial, but there are also possibilities for facilitating or encouraging on-farm activities. Providing a soccer ball or other recreational opportunities can greatly increase morale and enhance people's quality of life by giving them an outlet outside of work.

specially drafted for farm labour is the area of the Act that enables the government to immediately and completely shut down an operation for violations. Due to the unique nature of farming, this could endanger the lives of farm animals, or potentially ruin an entire year's crop. Thus, new legislation needs to balance these concerns, as well as be complete and effective for all workers.

The main health and safety concerns for farm workers are pesticides, heat stress, injuries relating to improper lifting, bending or reaching or improper use of machinery, and tobacco sickness. It is because of their fear of being sent home that some workers accept less than desirable working or living conditions.

There are stories of workers working in fields a few meters from where pesticides are being sprayed, of workers labouring in the hot sun far from any access to drinking water, of workers having no water in the fields to wash their hands after they have applied pesticides and then eating their lunch in the field, or of working 14 hour days 6-7 days a week, in all weather conditions. This is reinforced by poor access to information on taking precautions and recognizing signs of fatigue, heat stress, West Nile, and other ailments. When this information is available, it is usually in English, and not in Spanish.

Generally, farmers are not required to provide training on how to "safely" apply pesticides unless they are extremely toxic (Schedule 2 and Schedule 5 pesticides). There is little monitoring of safe pesticide use by the government and workers are reluctant to complain as there may be the possibility of them losing their jobs. These difficulties demonstrate the need to include farm labour in the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act gives employees the right to refuse unsafe work and to know about hazards in the workplace. However, it specifically excludes farming operations from its application. Ontario is the only province that excludes the agriculture sector entirely from health and safety laws. Agricultural work is dangerous, labour-intensive work -- 13% of all occupational deaths in Canada are farm-related.

Workers who refuse work they feel is unsafe risk being sent home (repatriated) at their own cost, as well as being banned from working in Canada in the future.

Labour Laws and Regulations, and the Unique Nature of Farm Work

A large peach orchard which requires the work of twenty men the year round will need as many as 2000 for the brief time of picking and packing. And if the migration of the 2000 should not occur, if it should be delayed even a week, the crop will rot and be lost.
- John Steinbeck[9]

Farming has unique labour requirements. Planting and harvest depend on weather and may require long hours at peak times when planting conditions are ideal or crops are ripe, while there may be lulls at other times. For these reasons farm work can be demanding or slow, and so farm work has often received exemptions from standard labour laws. In some cases, this can result in more dangerous and inequitable situations for farm workers compared to workers in other sectors.

For example, while some migrant workers were earning $7.75 per hour as of 2004, farm labour is not subject to minimum wage in some provinces. When other industries such as factories and construction first began paying higher wages, unionizing and providing benefits such as overtime pay and mandatory vacation; farm workers did not receive these benefits. Indeed, farm workers are not even covered under Ontario's Health and Safety Act.

Benefits

Workers are not always aware of their rights or how to go about collecting benefits. The Canadian government and the body that administers the SAW Program, the Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services (F.A.R.M.S.), do not require that adequate information packages on rights and benefits are presented to all migrant farm workers in their own languages when they enter the country.

• Taxes

If workers make above a certain amount each year, they must have income tax removed from their paycheques and they are eligible to receive income tax reimbursement. However, this means that they must file their taxes in English,

usually when they have already returned to their home countries. Alternatively, the employer or another person can be designated to do it using a consent form from the Canada Revenue Agency.

• Employment Insurance (EI)

> *In 2000, $11 million was deducted from migrant farm workers and their employers [for EI] yet they do not qualify to collect the benefit.*[10]

Seasonal Agricultural Workers pay into Employment Insurance, but because they return to their home country immediately after their contract ends, they are never considered *unemployed and available for work,* which is necessary to qualify for Employment Insurance.

Thus, to enable workers fair access under the law, they should either not pay into EI, or EI would have to be revised to include their potential to find jobs once they are back in their home country. Under EI, migrant farm workers are eligible to receive parental benefits, but they must apply in English and supply supporting documentation (also in English). The Migrant Agricultural Worker Support Centres help workers to receive these benefits.

• Overtime Pay

Under the SAW Program workers are not eligible to receive overtime pay and thus can work for 10 or 11 hours a day, seven days a week making only $7.50 per hour. 70-hour work weeks are not uncommon in the agricultural industry.

• Canadian Pension Plan

Workers are eligible for the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). Deductions are taken from their paycheques and they can work with their home country through their Consulate to collect. However, many workers do not claim CPP due to language difficulties or simply because they are unaware of it.

• Health Coverage

All workers through the SAW Program are covered by OHIP while they are working in Ontario. Caribbean workers do not have any coverage beyond this, while Mexican workers are required to buy medical coverage for non-occupational illnesses.

• Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (Workers' Compensation)

> *One worker was told by his Consulate that if he wanted to keep coming to work in Canada he should stop pursuing his Workers Compensation Case.*

> *A worker on a different farm had his tailbone injured and the farmer helped him to claim Workers Safety and Insurance Board benefits. The farmer also arranged weekly visits to a physiotherapist who was an hour away to aid the worker's recovery.*

As with Canadian workers, if migrant workers are injured on the job, or become sick from something at their job, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board benefits cover them. This means they can receive full pay for the time they are off due to the illness or injury. It does not matter whose fault the injury or illness is, the benefits are no fault. Ensuring workers are informed about this is crucial as it is a worker's responsibility to seek medical attention and to inform his supervisor or employer as quickly as possible if he has been injured or fallen ill. Employers may sometimes discourage workers from making claims as the cost of the employer's WSIB insurance premium may then increase.

Health & Safety

Established in 1978 and amended in 1990, the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act excludes all farm labour from provincial Health and Safety regulations. This means that farm workers, including migrant farm workers, are not subject to the same protections as most workers in Ontario.[11]

According to Stan Raper, the National Coordinator for the United Food and Commercial Workers of Canada Migrant Agricultural Worker Support Centres, the current provincial government has agreed to begin drafting Occupational Health and Safety Regulations for farm workers beginning in the Fall 2004. This should give farm workers the right to be informed about the hazards facing them, and provide more training for potentially dangerous situations. The area that needs to be

Why Green Isn't Enough:
An Anti-Racist Anti-Colonial Environmentalism Conference

March 14 & 15, 2008
Peterborough Public Library Auditorium (345 Aylmer Street North)

The conference is free and open to all members of the public. No registration is required. Resource booklets on anti-oppressive environmental activism will be available to conference participants (suggested donation: $5). Everyone is welcome to attend!

Schedule

FRIDAY, MARCH 14

7:00-9:00 pm: Peterborough Public Library Auditorium
Keynote Address: "Stories Less Told: Environmental Justice and Racism in Canada"
A panel discussion with:
*Andil Gosine (York University), author of *Environmental Justice and Racism in Canada: An Introduction*
*Karen Okamoto, *Environmental Justice and Racism in Canada* contributor

9:00 pm-1:00 am: The Red Dog (189 Hunter Street West)
Beats 4 Justice! Fundraiser for the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation
A night of spoken word, Afro-soul, down-tempo electronica, and beats
~ Featuring:
*Dave Hudson
*Hesper Philip-Chamberlain
*LAL
and others!
$10 waged/$5 unwaged, or pay-as-much-as-you-can

SATURDAY, MARCH 15: Peterborough Public Library Auditorium

12:00-12:15
Welcoming remarks

12:15-2:15
"Environmental Racism and the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program"
A panel discussion with:
*Chris Ramsaroop (Justicia for Migrant Workers)
*Janet McLaughlin (PhD Candidate, Anthropology, University of Toronto)
*Allan, participant in the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program

2:15-2:30

Refreshment break

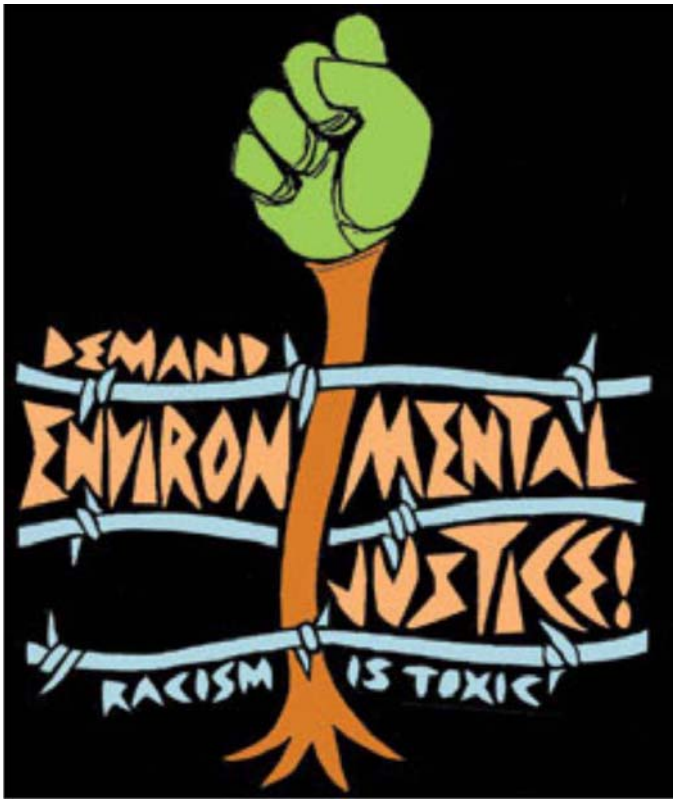
2:30-4:30
“Impacts of Energy Extraction and Climate Change on Indigenous Peoples”
A panel discussion with:
*Paula Sherman (Co-Chief, Ardoch Algonquin First Nation)
*Leanne Simpson (Past director of Trent University’s Indigenous Environmental Studies Program)
*Clayton Thomas-Muller (Indigenous Environmental Network)

4:30-4:45
Refreshment break

4:45-6:00
“Where Do We Go From Here? Organizing for Structural Change”
A workshop with:
*Clayton Thomas-Muller (Indigenous Environmental Network)

Sponsored and supported by: Community and Race Relations Committee of Peterborough; Fair Trade Trent; Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Native Studies; Kawartha World Issues Centre; New Canadians Centre Peterborough; OPIRG-Peterborough; Peterborough-Kawarthas Chapter of the Council of Canadians; Peterborough Coalition Against Poverty; Sustainable Trent; Roy Brady; Theatre Trent; Trent Central Student Association; Trent Centre for Community-Based Education; Trent Environmental Students Society; Trent University's Canadian Studies, Environmental and Resource Studies, Politics, Sociology, and Women's Studies Departments; Trent University's Champlain, Gzowski, Lady Eaton, Otonabee, and Traill College Cabinets; Trent University Graduate Student Association; and Trent University's Environmental Issues and Women's Issues Commissioners.

For more information, email whygreenisntenough@gmail.com, visit the conference website at http://whygreenisntenough.blogspot.com, or contact the Kawartha World Issues Centre: 748-1680.



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE 101

By Muna Ali, Juby Lee, and Rachel Gurofsky

Preserving the wilderness, wetlands, and watersheds, as well as protecting wild wolves and other endangered animals are not the only objectives of environmentalism. Chaining yourself to equipment and trees, living in or occupying trees about to be cut down, creating road blocks, and spiking trees, are not the only criteria to being an environmentalist. The environment is where we live, work, and play and what we eat. It is not just wilderness; it is our urban spaces, reserves, and our bodies. However, images of the wilderness and wildlife preservation are commonly associated with environmentalism. These images of environmentalism reflect the way that environmentalism has been constructed—as York professor Andil Gosine puts it: "popular environmentalism is a white environmental discourse." As well, author Peter Mathiessen points out that although issues of wilderness and wildlife preservation are significant and should be addressed, there are other issues of environmentalism that mainstream environmentalism neglects.

From *Silent Spring* comes Popular/Mainstream Environmentalism

Environmentalism has existed for generations in many different forms. However, it was not until 1962 when Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring*, was released that the popular mainstream environmental movement began to be embraced by people in both Canada

and the United States. Author, Robert Gotlieb describes Carson's controversial book an epochal event in the history of environmentalism and that helped launch decades of protest in which the idea of nature and wildlife preservation became defining characteristics of environmentalism. Mathiessen argues that the introduction of the popular environmental movement inspired many people to change their individual behaviour and work to preserve the natural environment as well as lobby for governmental policies to preserve natural spaces. Today, popular environmentalism still works with these general concerns. The mainstream environmental movement has created groups and organizations that focus primarily on the natural environment—that is to say, places where many people do not live. This contributes to a construction of the notion of 'environment' as an untouched, uninhabited, wild space. It does not allow for the idea of urban areas as 'environments', and, it could be argued, is rooted in a colonial myth of an untouched, empty, pristine landscape, in need of the protection and management of white settlers.

From Mainstream Environmentalism to Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is a holistic effort to examine power structures and mainstream environmentalism. Environmental justice draws together insights of both civil rights and the mainstream environmental movement. In other words, environmental justice is an intersectional approach to environmentalism. Mainstream environmentalism does not provide adequate organizational base, analysis, vision, or strategy to address the problems facing communities of colour, women, and the working class. According to Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) campaigner Gord Perks, Canada's "professional" environmentalists are a "white middle class scene." Although environmental degradation is experienced by all people, mainstream environmental groups are slow to broaden their concerns to include environmental issues that directly affect low or working class people, people of colour, and new immigrants. In Chris Clarke's article, "Is the Green Movement Too White?" he asks the question, "Why do some activists' demands for the preservation of biodiversity apparently exclude human racial and cultural diversity?" In the last two decades multiracial and community oriented environmental justice groups have formed. Gosine argues that the rate at which these organizations are forming and growing is unprecedented. The creation of environmental justice groups is in response to the exclusion by mainstream environmental groups of the concerns of racialized and working class people.

Environmental Racism in the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program

The face of farming is changing; the increase of large agribusiness from small family farms has meant a demand for just-in-time field hands. Increasingly, as academic Phil Goodfellow points out, the Ontario tomato or BC apple in the local grocery chain was picked by a migrant farm worker. The demand for farm workers during planting, growing and harvesting time led to the creation of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) in 1966. Through this federally authorized program through the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development, Canadian labour supply takes precedent; the farmer must prove their attempts at enticing local labourers. But the labour demands are not being met by Canadians. Under this program, approximately, 20000 migrant workers migrate to Canada, and a majority of these workers come to Ontario.

Context

Justicia for Migrant Workers (J4MW), a migrant workers rights activist group, argues that economic agreements like NAFTA and programs implemented by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank have devastated economies in the Global South. Increasingly, land is being taken away from the people who rely on it, and struggling labourers must go abroad to find work. The depressed economies of the Global South are

a result of an influx of cheap, tariff-free, USA or Canadian foodstuffs that flood their markets.

Issues with SAWP

J4MW co-founder Evelyn E. Grez argues that the SAWP is a racialized and gendered program. A large percentage of the workers are men, many from Mexico and the Caribbean who are pushed to migrate for economic reasons. Once they are here, they face appalling conditions. The workers face the real threat of being sent home anytime, sometimes at their own expense. Farmers decide when the workers migrate to Canada, when they leave, they control work and housing conditions, and access to services like telephones with little regulation. Working conditions are such that few Canadians take these jobs. The hours are long and there is no overtime pay. Workers are exposed to pesticides, with little or no protection, with little running water nearby; workers eat their lunches without being able to wash their hands. Many workers receive no formal training in regards to handling pesticides, chemicals and heavy farm equipment. Substandard housing conditions; social isolation and the very real potential of abuse from their employers are some of the issues that migrant workers face daily. Grez points out that the actual economic need to work means that employees must decide between next season's employment over their health, integrity, or freedoms because by speaking out; they risk not being "named" for future employment. Approximately 80% of the migrant workers are "named" ones. Workers feel that they are treated like slaves and expected to act like machines, given little rest opportunities, forced to work in extreme heat, and made to perform the most dangerous work. While there are exceptions to these kinds of narratives, the vast potential for this kind of exploitation is the issue. The program is not regulated federally, because labour, health and housing are provincial responsibilities.

The North-South Institute found in a 2006 report that because of the harsh conditions of the program, many workers do not return, but the ones who do come back, will unlikely settle in Canada. They are considered "low-skilled workers" and have families back home. While here, they face isolation and racism from the local communities, the same communities that the workers contribute, on average, $1500 when buying food, clothes, and gifts. Their hard work means economic contributions in this country as well as their own. But at what price?

J4MW reminds us that historically, Canada is based on the back-breaking labour of migrant workers. From the Chinese labourers who built the railways to the Southeast Asians who helped settle Western Canada, this nation has benefited from the exploitation of migrant workers. The workers in SAWP are good enough to plant, maintain and harvest our food but not worthy of basic human rights, protection under employment laws or Canadian citizenship. The answer is not an elimination of SAWP; rather, a drastic improvement of its regulation. Migrant farm workers need more decision-making power over the program that dictates their lives.

Growing Movement

There is a growing movement of social justice groups that stand in solidarity with the migrant workers, by providing services like rides into nearby towns, providing information on employment and labour rights, creating connections between the local communities and the migrant workers. J4MW calls on Canadians to re-assess the SAWP and realize that the low wages of these workers have allowed the multi-million dollar agribusiness to flourish. The conditions that workers in the SAWP face needs to be addressed, issues of these workers losing their land because of economic reform caused by IMF-like institutions, forced to migrant and work in unsafe conditions, treated as invisible by the communities that some workers return to every season. As environmentalism becomes a hot new topic, there needs to be a simultaneous and coordinated movement looking at how environmental justice means justice for all, including the men of colour who picked those apples and tomatoes you see on the grocery shelf.

Impacts of Energy Extraction and Climate Change on Indigenous Peoples

Peterborough has recently seen a series of actions supporting and standing in solidarity with the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation, who is facing a total of $50,000 in crippling fines from the Ontario government, as well as the ongoing threat of imminent uranium mining on their land. It is crucial to locate this local struggle in the broader context of environmental racism and colonialism toward Indigenous peoples across this country, dispossession and genocide that has been taking place since the Canadian colonial project began. While stories about the impact of melting icecaps on Inuit communities in the north have made it into Canadian headlines (though with no response from the current government in power), less common have been the stories of what is happening in the heart of the biggest industrial project ever undertaken in the history of the world: the Alberta tar sands.

OUT WEST

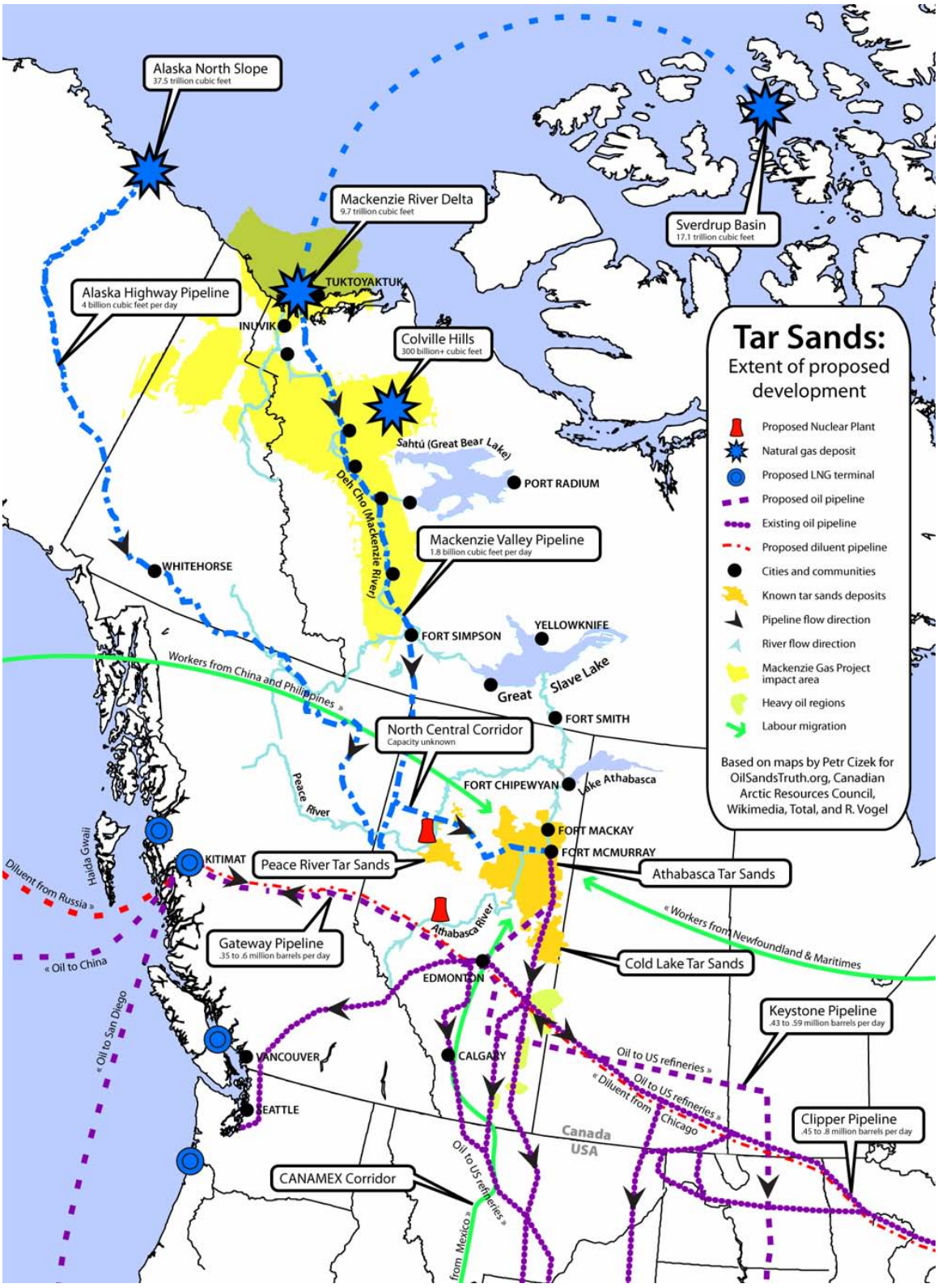
According to Ricardo Acuna of the Parkland Institute, under NAFTA, the majority of the oil extracted in Alberta goes to our neighbours in the South in order to fuel the war in Iraq (the U.S. military is the number one consumer of oil in the States). Not only are Canadians fuelling an illegal war, but we are also taking the lives of Indigenous peoples at home. An open letter to recently re-elected Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach posted on the

Tar Sands Watch website states that "increasing numbers of the small aboriginal community of Fort Chipewyan (downstream from the Alberta Tar Sands) are being diagnosed and dying from rare cancers and other auto-immune diseases. A recent water study confirmed that the water in Fort Chipewyan had increased levels of arsenic, mercury and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and was not safe for consumption, particularly in the fish eaten by local residents." Local doctor John O'Connor confirmed that Fort Chipewyan, which is a community of between 750 and 1200 people, has already seen at least two cases of Cholangiocarcinoma, a rare cancer which normally occurs in one out of 100,000 people. And, just as the Ontario government has failed to consult with the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation about uranium mining on their land, the Alberta government has violated its duty to consult with the Mikisew Cree and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nations about using their land for oil extraction and poisoning and depleting the Athabasca River, in direct violation of their treaty rights.

As the energy-intensive tar extraction continues unabated, the province must look for other energy sources to fuel the project, including gas and nuclear. Predictably, all the proposed projects impact upon the health and sovereignty of Indigenous peoples. As just one example, the McKenzie Gas Project, which would transport natural gas from the Artic Ocean to fuel tar sands development, is projected to pass through 40% of the Dehcho First Nation's ongoing land claim.

CLIMATE CHANGE AS A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE

The Indigenous Environmental Network stresses that climate change is a human rights issue. In their words, "Indigenous Peoples, Pacific Islanders, and local land-based communities are the first to experience the devastating impacts of climate change like affects to hunting, fishing and gathering rights, land lost, food security, respiratory illness, infectious disease, and economic and cultural displacement." At the Everyone's Downstream conference which took place in Edmonton last November, IEN organizer Clayton Thomas-Muller echoed this sentiment, also stressing the need to link environmentalism, social justice, and Indigenous self-determination into one broad-based movement. "The tar sands is the epicentre of the North American energy infrastructure that has been built on the backs of Indigenous peoples," said Thomas-Muller. "And so, in that context, we need to have a very real discussion about how collectively we can bring our movements together, because we have been divided. Environmentalists are doing good work, but they're getting their asses kicked, and we're definitely getting our asses kicked, and local communities are suffering unjustly as a result of that, and people are dying daily."


Alaska North Slope
37.5 trillion cubic feet
Mackenzie River Delta
9.7 trillion cubic feet
Sverdrup Basin
17.1 trillion cubic feet
TUKTOYAKTUK
Alaska Highway Pipeline
4 billion cubic feet per day
INUVIK
Colville Hills
300 billion+ cubic feet
Sahtú (Great Bear Lake)
Dehcho (Mackenzie River)
PORT RADIUM
Mackenzie Valley Pipeline
1.8 billion cubic feet per day
WHITEHORSE
FORT SIMPSON
YELLOWKNIFE
Great Slave Lake
Workers from China and Philippines »
FORT SMITH
North Central Corridor
Capacity unknown
Peace River
FORT CHIPEWYAN
Lake Athabasca
FORT MACKAY
FORT MCMURRAY
Athabasca Tar Sands
Haida Gwaii
KITIMAT
Peace River Tar Sands
Diluent from Russia »
« Oil to China
Gateway Pipeline
.35 to .6 million barrels per day
Athabasca River
« Workers from Newfoundland & Maritimes
Cold Lake Tar Sands
EDMONTON
Keystone Pipeline
.43 to .59 million barrels per day
« Oil to San Diego
VANCOUVER
CALGARY
Oil to US refineries »
« Diluent from Chicago
SEATTLE
Canada
USA
Clipper Pipeline
.45 to .8 million barrels per day
CANAMEX Corridor
Oil to US refineries »
from Mexico »
Tar Sands:
Extent of proposed development
Proposed Nuclear Plant
Natural gas deposit
Proposed LNG terminal
Proposed oil pipeline
Existing oil pipeline
Proposed diluent pipeline
Cities and communities
Known tar sands deposits
Pipeline flow direction
River flow direction
Mackenzie Gas Project impact area
Heavy oil regions
Labour migration
Based on maps by Petr Cizek for OilSandsTruth.org, Canadian Arctic Resources Council, Wikimedia, Total, and R. Vogel

---

*Interested in joining the struggle for environmental justice? Check out "**Why Green Isn't Enough: An Anti-Racist Anti-Colonial Environmentalism Conference**" this Friday and Saturday at the Peterborough Public Library. Visit whygreenisntenough.blogspot.com for info.*