

dominion, *n.* 1. Control or the exercise of control. 2. A territory or sphere of influence; a realm. 3. One of the self-governing nations within the British Commonwealth.

# The Dominion

CANADA'S GRASSROOTS NEWSPAPER

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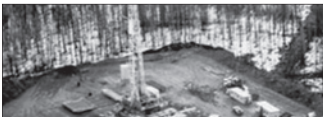
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## From the Tap to the Bottle and Back Again

### A look at bottled water and privatization

by Leah Orr

Many of us have purchased a bottle of water thinking that we were paying for a pure product taken from an abundant source and packaged in a clean container. Maybe not, according to Tony Clarke, director of the Polaris Institute and author of *Inside the Bottle: An Exposé of the Bottled Water Industry*. Clarke says we may not only be supporting dubious social and environmental practices, but also contributing to the privatization of our public water systems.

In February 2005, the Polaris Institute brought together more than twenty "water warriors" on the banks of Lake Michigan to discuss regional issues and cross-border strategies concerning the bottled water industry. In a talk he delivered at that meeting, Clarke outlined what he sees as some of the key problems with privatized water management and distribution in Canada.

#### The Birth of the Bottled Water Industry

According to the Canadian Food Bureau, consumption of bottled water in Canada currently outpaces that of coffee, tea, apple juice, and milk. How-

ever, this wasn't always the case. As little as two decades ago, the industry was made up of a few local bottlers serving niche markets. Some estimate the bottled water industry's revenue growth at nearly 800 percent in the past 20 years.

In the 1980s, Clarke says, European food giants Nestlé and Danone had expanded as far as they could in Europe and set their sights on North America, "so they came in and bought up a whole series of the more productive and expanding bottled water operations."

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, as bottled water sales skyrocketed and soft drinks were linked to health problems such as obesity, Pepsi and Coca-Cola realized that there was a foreseeable end to the soft drink boom. They looked to juices and bottled water as the way of the future. Their entry into the bottled water market, however, was easier than their European counterparts'.

"They didn't have to buy up bottled water companies. They already had their own bottling operations and their big bottling plants. It was a question of taking advantage of that infrastructure, moving on that and getting some kind of a foothold into the market," says Clarke.

That "foothold" was based

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## Alcan Workers Refuse to Smelt Alumina from Kashipur

Employees at two Canadian smelting operations run by Montréal-based Alcan Inc. have passed resolutions refusing to process aluminum from planned Alcan-financed mining operations in the Kashipur region of Orissa, a state in eastern India.

The resolutions were passed in locals in Kitimat, British Columbia and Arvida, Québec, both affiliated with the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW). The resolutions were passed in solidarity with the popular resistance to mining in Kashipur. Thousands of people have demonstrated against mining in the region; three demonstrators were shot and killed by police in 2000. In 2001, ten thousand people gathered in Kashipur to proclaim "we are not afraid to die, we will not leave our land," in resistance to the mining projects. There have been recent reports of intimidation and "false arrests."

According to activists, the proposed mining project would displace tens of thousands of people and destroy self-sustaining Adivasi communities. The Adivasis are an indigenous people who live outside of the traditional Hindu social system.

Attention has also been called to the massive environmental impact of the mine and refinery, which would require burning an estimated 3000 tonnes of coal per day and would cause the contamination of two streams on which local communities rely for water.

An estimated 33 million people have been displaced by "development projects" in India since 1947—1.4 million in the state of Orissa. According to Alcan't in India, the primarily rural Adivasi communities account for eight per cent of India's population, and 40 per

cent of its displaced.

According to the CAW, the locals "unconditionally endorse" the "sustainable agro-centric democratic development objectives" of the Adivasis and the activities of Alcan't in India, a Montréal-based solidarity group that is pushing Alcan to divest from its stake in the Kashipur project.

Alcan't in India is continuing to call on Alcan to "recognise the Kashipur peoples' title to the land and constitutional guarantee for self-determination," and to divest from the joint venture.

*(expanded version online)*

**Dru Oja Jay**

## Bill Undermines Democratic Control over Food: Scientists

Canada is giving away its ability to set health and safety standards on food that crosses the border, say several US and Canadian scientists. They refer to Bill C-27, which Parliament will vote on in the coming months if an election is not called.

"Bill C-27 is about harmonizing with US regulations. It is not about protecting the health of Canadians," said Dr. Gerard Lambert. The press conference was organized by the Council of Canadians and Beyond Factory Farming. According to the Council, Bill C-27 would allow the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to accept testing and certification results from other countries. Critics of the bill say that it will undermine the ability of the Canadian government to set its own standards to ensure the safety of imported food.

According to proponents, Bill C-27 is intended to increase trade with the United States by harmonizing standards.

According to former US meat inspector Dr. Lester Friedlander, "rules and regulations are broken every day in the United States because the

government is not enforcing them."

But Friedlander said that the problem goes deeper than specific regulations. "The public must insist that the food safety regulatory function be separated from the governmental agency promoting corporate agribusiness. We need a genuine, separate department of consumer protection."

"We will request the postponement of the entire legislative renewal process until after a full public inquiry into what we, as scientists, have been suffering on account of the pressure exerted on us to pass drugs and other products and methods of questionable safety," said Dr. Shiv Chopra, who, along with colleagues Lambert and Dr. Margaret Haydon, went public with concerns about conflicts of interest in Canada's drug approval process.

The bill has received minimal media coverage. One exception was an op/ed published in the Toronto Star by Thomas Walkom. According to Walkom, Bill-27 would allow the government to bypass health inspectors, allowing milk from cows treated with the currently-banned Bovine Growth Hormone to cross the border.

"In 1999, the last time Ottawa tried to mess with food safety in order to promote trade, there was a public outcry. A chastened Liberal government eventually allowed that bill to die," wrote Walkom. "But the impetus never went away," he added, warning that the same bill does "the same thing, but in a more roundabout way."

**Dru Oja Jay**

## Corporate Taxes Already Cut, With Few benefits: Economist, Report

When it comes to helping the Canadian economy, returns from further corporate tax cuts have been diminishing for some time. This was the message of

a recent report from TD Bank, and a public statement from Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) economist Jim Stanford.

According to the TD Bank report, which was released on April 28, Canadian corporations are showing record profits, which they aren't reinvesting. The report attributed the lack of reinvestment to uncertainty due to a volatile global political situation, but warned that "corporations cannot simply build up savings in perpetuity," but need to invest to "maintain competitiveness".

Canadian Labour Congress economist Andrew Jackson said that the report shows that past corporate tax cuts are responsible for the profits that aren't being reinvested. "One is struck by the discrepancy between extremely solid corporate profitability... and the fact that real investment by corporate Canada... has not increased by anywhere near as much," Jackson was quoted as saying.

In a briefing published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Jim Stanford says that Canadian corporations have already received massive tax cuts. "The average effective corporate income tax rate paid to Ottawa by Canadian corporations fell by almost 5 percentage points between 2000 and 2004, more than five times as much as the effective personal income tax rate," wrote Stanford. "Corporations have already received much more tax relief from the Liberal government than any other significant tax-paying constituency."

The TD Bank report and Stanford's brief come amid loud protests from representatives of Canadian corporations over a Liberal-NDP agreement to cancel corporate tax cuts that were slated to take place in 2008. Instead, the money is being spent on the environmental, education and social programs.

**Dru Oja Jay**

## India Passes New Patent Law: Price of AIDS Drugs Expected to Soar

India's government passed a controversial patent law last week making it illegal for domestic firms to produce cheap generic copies of AIDS drugs developed by multinational pharmaceutical firms.

As a New York Times report suggests, the law has the potential to cut the supply of cheap generic AIDS drugs to millions in the developing world who rely on India as a supplier.

The patent law changes result from the nation's membership in the World Trade

the cost of the patented versions from multinational pharmaceutical firms cost around \$395 US.

Sandy Hager

## Lobbyists Spent \$13 Billion in US Since 1998; Few Resources for Monitoring

According to a recent report, special interest groups in the US have spent close to \$13 billion in lobbying to influence Congress, the White House, and over 200 other federal agencies since 1998.

The report, entitled "Industry of Influence Nets Almost

Integrity examined the US federal government's mandatory disclosure forms and found that many of them were sent in well past deadline dates, while some of the sections in many of the forms were improperly filled in or left blank. The report also suggests that there is an "unknown number" of lobbyists that fail to file disclosure reports at all.

Sandy Hager

## Corporations Profiting Big From "Reconstruction Projects" in Poor Countries: Klein

From Iraq to Haiti, and Afghanistan to Aceh, Canadian journalist Naomi Klein has castigated disaster and post-conflict reconstruction projects as a way for "a familiar cast of consulting firms, engineering companies, mega-NGOs, government and UN aid agencies and financial institutions" to enrich themselves.

What's worse, according to Klein, is that the reconstruction industry not only profits dearly from this form of "disaster capitalism," but it is "stunningly inept" at rebuilding as well.

A contributing factor to the rise of inept disaster capitalism is the increasingly dominant role played by the World Bank in disaster and post-conflict reconstruction, an area which Klein notes "has traditionally been the domain of UN agencies."

Twenty to twenty-five per cent of World Bank funding now goes to post-conflict nations, and the loans are often used by the Bank to 'lock in' government commitments to neo-liberal policies.

In one example, Haiti was required to let private companies run schools and hospitals in order to secure a \$61 million (US) post-conflict loan.

Klein claims that similar approaches are being taken

by the World Bank to nations recovering from last December's tsunami. Loans given to these countries are to be spent on the "expansion of tourism and industrial fish farms, rather than rebuilding small-boat fisheries," while privatization is encouraged in the realm of public services.

Sandy Hager

## 30 Murdered by Rio 'Death Squad', Public Outcry Limited

According to the UK's Guardian newspaper, the March 31st massacre of 30 people by a "band of rogue policemen" in Rio's working class Baixada district has not created "much of a stir" in the Brazilian metropolis.

The same report suggests that while the pope's death has "eclipsed" all other news stories in this predominately Catholic country, the complacency also stems from the fact that people are accustomed to hearing bad news coming out of poorer areas such as Baixada.

Claudia Guerro of Rio's Public Safety Department suspects that the massacre was a retaliation by police against the arrest of eight other police officers connected to the murder of two people at a Rio police station.

Guerro claimed that the police officers involved in the massacre were "unhappy with our investigations into crimes committed by police officers and with our efforts to weed out corrupt and bad policemen."

While the public outcry against this incident has been limited, Bloomberg News Service reports that Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is sending 600 "police reinforcements" to Rio in order to battle corruption and organized crime in the city.

Sandy Hager



Haiti's only AIDS referral centre. While intellectual property treaties push the price of AIDS drugs higher, funding for health facilities in countries like Haiti is being tied to privatization.

Organization (WTO) and India's commitments to the WTO's TRIPs agreement (Trade Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights). The TRIPs agreement obliges members to change their national patent rules in order to comply with the WTO standards.

An editorial in Nairobi's Nation blasts the TRIPs agreement, claiming that it hinders Africa's socioeconomic development and serves as a tool for multinational firms from industrialized countries to "continue to reap huge profits."

It has been suggested by Nation that the cost of AIDS drugs in Kenya is likely to soar due to the new Indian patent laws. Currently, Kenyans pay approximately \$20 US for generic drugs from India, while

\$13 Billion," which was published by the Centre for Public Integrity, also suggests that the resources devoted to the monitoring of lobbying groups are minimal because federal agencies in charge of these areas lack the staff to track the billions of dollars given to lobbying efforts each year.

This, according to the authors, has led to a lack of media and public scrutiny towards the practice of lobbying in the US despite the fact that lobbyists have a significant impact on the federal government's decision-making process.

Lobbying efforts are further hampered by ineffective federal legislation demanding the disclosure of lobbying activities, the report's authors explained.

The Centre for Public

# What's in a Graphic Novel?

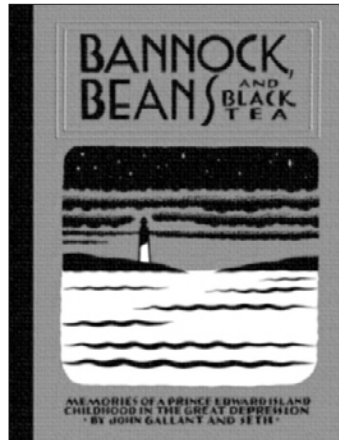
by Jane Henderson

It's fun to ask people to define the phrase "graphic novel." A few people still hate it for giving literary pretensions to an immature preoccupation with the gory and fantastic. Another militant minority hates it for selling out the comix underdog and toadying to the aforementioned literary pretensions.

Most people just find it weird that, under this heading, you find Spiderman and a Holocaust memoir sharing the same shelf.

Fair enough. But I enjoy this loose and baggy category. Simple but true, these books do share something special which sets them apart from the rest of the fiction/non-fiction world. Books with pictures, and books that *are* pictures, make us read differently and understand *story* differently, whether they're organized by frame or collage, in sequence or at random. They challenge our vocabulary—should we talk about "viewing" or "reading," "figures" or "characters"? And though comic-strip conventions are often used, there's little formulaic to be found.

Recent works like Chester Brown's *Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography*, Craig Thompson's gigantic novel *Blankets*, and Marjane Satrapi's Iranian memoirs, *Persepolis I and II*, have been picking up international attention and awards. Here are introductions to three recent, dissimilar Canadian works which I was happy to discover in that curious collection behind the Tolkien display.



## Bannock, Beans, and Black Tea

by John Gallant and Seth  
Drawn & Quarterly, Montreal, 2004

*Bannock, Beans, and Black Tea* is a charming book to hold. Small, dark, clothbound, its endearing presentation is at odds with its stark contents. It's a father-son collaboration; renowned cartoonist Seth spent a decade collecting, sifting, and assembling his dad's reminiscences of childhood in Depression-era Prince Edward Island. Somehow the stories morphed from the adventurous tales Seth remembered his father telling to reveal a reality of "awful desperation... the memories of a neglected starving child." Seth's introduction is told in comic-strip frames, his father's words appear as text, and illustrations and diagrams by both appear throughout. Mixed in between stories like "I Walked All the Way to the Lobster Factory Just to Get Fired" are wry lists like "Night-Time Snacks." (This includes:

2. Raw turnip. Scoop with spoon and eat.
3. Apple (in summer). Slice and eat.
4. Raw carrot. Eat.)

This prickly treasure evokes both grief and nostalgia. Its content and presentation capture the conundrum beautifully.



## Witness My Shame

by Shary Boyle  
Conundrum Press, Montreal, 2004

Insistent, often unpolished, and flecked with humour, Shary Boyle's drawings expose private vice and public embarrassment. *Witness My Shame* assembles nine "bookworks," one collaborative piece, and assorted drawings. Words are few or absent altogether, and her subjects, like a girl caught masturbating with a birthday cake, surprise and disturb. The minibooks, such as "I Feel Funny Mommy," "Horny" and "Homestead, Scarborough" become chapters in this larger story about longing and vulnerability flayed open. Told almost entirely in pictures, Boyle's characters live in an imaginative world, confused and funny, lusty and driven.



Left, above: images from Boyles' *Witness My Shame*.



## Fatal Distraction

by Sonja Ahlers  
Insomniac Press, (Toronto), 2004

Hundreds of clipped images, scribbles, and snippets of text stuff this anarchic compendium. Ahlers' second book is a tribute to obsession which she suggests reading "in a random sort of way or front to back."

Each page of the miscellany can stand alone: "I don't wanna be in the opening band singing about the artist working the art supply store," reads one page; "I've been repeating myself for years," says a cherub perched on a record. When viewed sequentially, different stories appear. Page-numberless, *Fatal Distraction* offers limitless potential for conversations between its component parts.

Its black-and-white contents appear scattered yet meticulously assembled. Its disorder both mocks and rewards a reader's longing for sequence and story. Ahlers riffs on work, anxiety, shopping, rock and roll, BC pot, sensitivity, and *Fatal Attraction*, of course... trying to contain this book in a list is absurd. Just go play with it.



*The Burden of Snow*  
by Heather Simeney  
MacLeod, Turnstone, 2004

Falling snow is light and bright and can accumulate with tremendous weight. With this as its central metaphor, Heather Simeney MacLeod's newest poetry collection queries the elements that constitute a person: past, place, what is longed for. Using a strong first-person voice throughout, MacLeod maps a lifetime of leaving and returning to the Arctic. This three-part collection's strongest moments are in pithy statements that disrupt the often

gentle meditations: "God is the first spoonful of heroin," one piece begins. "Even in love / I perch," concludes another. MacLeod's delight in sound is also evident; indeed, I'd welcome more of this wordplay, as in the rolling gait of "Out to Pasture's" refrain: "This then here now one more time." The basic longing for accompaniment appears in the deceptively straightforward "End With Snow", in which MacLeod mixes Hades with Genesis and adds

precipitation. God's declaration, "Let there be light" is amended: "of course, light came," but "nothing arrives singular / all creation cleaves to something else / needing something else to say, I am whole / and light came with snow." Ultimately, MacLeod's introspection takes on a certain hospitality, as she, through the medium of her poems, constantly invites, "Ask me anything".

—Jane Henderson



*She Speaks*  
edited by Judith Thompson  
Playrights Canada Press, 2005

From Burnet Smith's knife-thrower's partner ("Before each performance I tear a page out of the Bible, burn it, rub the ashes into my hair") to the exploration of First Nation women's rights in Nolan's "Annie Mae's Movement", a play based on the actual murder of Anna Mae Pictou Aquash, this collection of monologues from Canadian plays that are drastically under-produced in their own country contains, among others, works

from Dionne Brand, Djanet Sears, Kristen Thomson, Daniel MacIvor, Joan MacLeod, Jackie Torrens, Wendy Lill, George Elliot Clark and Jason Sherman. For both those reading for pleasure and for the actor preparing an audition piece, the interesting editorial choice to exclude any notation of age and ethnicity forces the reader/preparing actor to forget about physical attributes of character and focus on the speaker's perspective

and the story she is telling. In the words of Judith Thompson, who edited the collection, it is through the monologue that an audience can hear "the true voice of the character, and more significantly, the dragon that lives underneath the surface life of that character". *She Speaks* is a fiery roar of Canadian theatre that you never knew existed. Now there's no excuse.

—Jessica Grant



*Ticknor*  
by Sheila Heti  
Anansi, 2005

This is a strange little book, with impossibly obfuscated intentions. The story behind it is that Heti read *The Life of William Hickling Prescott* by George Ticknor in a coffee shop, and was moved to write a novel about this Ticknor. The question Ticknor raises might well be, what does it say about Canadian literature when our young writers find their inspiration in second-rate biographers of second-rate American

historical figures from nearly a century ago? The relationship between Ticknor and Prescott is the kind of historical platonic friendship between men that died with the Wilde trials: the word love is bandied about, Ticknor obsesses for pages about whether Prescott will pay him any attention, and he begins a textbook relationship of hostility and jealousy with Clare, Prescott's wife. Yet the historical setting and style of the

book are so well-executed, so proper and plain, that the book doesn't give the impression that it's trying to be revisionist or radical. All this may simply be due to the fact that the average Canadian reader knows next to nothing about Prescott—and our understanding of Ticknor, the man and the book—suffers for it.

—Matthew J. Trafford



*The Far Away Home*  
by Marci Denesiuk  
NeWest, 2005

Denesiuk's characters gaze out at landscapes as clean-lined as an undetermined future. The solitary women who Denesiuk spins her stories around would be at home in an Edward Hopper painting: alone with their bodies, alone in rooms, alone among people. These characters' present solitude, in which the everyday has calcified

into routine, is usually undercut by references to a more complicated past. And yet we most often find these characters in their moments of liberation, when they have just cut the few bonds that tie them, and Denesiuk lets us watch as they take their first steps towards freedom. Not every story in this volume is a narrative of flight;

sometimes home is ultimately found not on the distant horizon but right where a character realizes, finally, she does belong. Indeed, as *The Far Away Home's* central metaphor seems to indicate, flight can signal the heady long-awaited beginning of a satisfying end.

—Dan Corry

## “A look at bottled water and privatization,” continued from page 1 »

on access to publicly built, maintained, and funded water systems, and the result is two of the best-selling brands of single-serve bottled water in North America: Aquafina and Dasani.

### Public Water For Private Gain

In the cases of Aquafina and Dasani, bottled water is no more than tap water taken from municipal supplies that is reprocessed and marked up for resale. To get an idea of how much this water is marked up, compare 1.5 litres of New York City tap water (often flaunted as some of the cleanest water in North America) and the same quantity of Dasani. New York tap rings in at about 1/100th of a penny. A bottle of Dasani, however, costs around \$1.20. A 1999 Natural Resource Defence Council (NRDC) study titled *Bottled Water: Pure Drink or Pure Hype?* estimates that it costs “from 240 to over 10,000 times more per gallon to purchase bottled water than it does to purchase a gallon of average tap water.”

Companies that use groundwater (or “spring water”) have it a little harder than those who use municipal water, as they have to pay for drilling and infrastructure. However, they are not required to pay a fee or tax for extraction as they would for oil and gas.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, one Ontario water activist says, “They do pay for drilling and their own infrastructure, but notice that they are still accessing the water for free. A company takes a standard amount of one million litres per day. Each litre sells for \$1.25, so gross revenues are half a billion dollars per year.”

“I don’t think water should be priced,” she continues. “Rather, private companies should pay hefty taxes for the privilege of temporary use, if they’re to get it at all.”

One of the reasons for a 2003 moratorium on new water

permits in Ontario is that the province does not have a system to determine how much water is being extracted and whether permitted extractions are damaging the system.

The situation in Alberta is similar, says Diana Gibson, Research Coordinator at the Parkland Institute. “Alberta does not have an accurate inventory of ground water aquifers, nor do we know the rate at which those are being tapped or replaced.” A current Natural Resources Canada initiative to map 20% of key regional aquifers by 2006 indicates a shortage of information in all regions.

Would bottlers be concerned if they did have that information? The Ontario activist is doubtful. “Our experience locally is that [water bottlers] use up aquifers and move on to new ones when those have run dry.”

But isn’t it worth paying for a better product? Though the CBWA claims that “bottled water is held to stringent standards for quality, identity and labelling,” Clarke and other water activists are quick to point to the NRDC report. This four-year study tested more than 1,000 bottles of 103 brands of bottled water and concluded that “about one-third of the waters tested contained levels of contamination—including synthetic organic chemicals, bacteria, and arsenic,” and that bottled water “is not necessarily cleaner or safer than most tap water.”

Add to this the environmental costs of manufacturing the components of plastic bottles, the bottles themselves, and what Clarke views as “the toxic chemicals and fossil fuel runoff of the biggest throwaway item there is,” (plastic water bottles) and it seems water bottlers are getting away with more than price gouging.

All of this to transform water into... water.

### The new consumer culture



Most distributors of bottled water in Canada do not pay for the water they extract from aquifers and publicly-funded water systems.

*Dru Oja Jay*

The more we hear it, the more we come to believe that bottled water is a superior product. The more we accept that clean water is a luxury, rather than a right, the more we are willing to pay for it.

“By creating a consumer culture through bottled water you set the stage for people to accept and promote the privatization of water services,” says Clarke. “It helps to have those water privateers directly engaged in the bottled water portion of things to start to facilitate that kind of development.”

What Clarke is referring to is that some companies have their fingers in both pies, including one of the largest proponents of public-private partnerships in North America: Veolia (formerly Vivendi).

According to the Veolia Company Profile released in February 2005 by Public Citizen, Veolia is “concentrating on...contracts where the company can lease assets and collect revenue without being required to make any major capital

investments in maintaining, expanding or rehabilitating the water system infrastructure. In other words, the public must pay for pipes, treatment plants and other infrastructure, and the company gets to make the money.”

In May 1998, the city of Moncton, New Brunswick partnered with US Filter Canada and The Hardman Group Ltd. to build and maintain a new water treatment facility for the city. One year later, Veolia bought US Filter and its subsidiaries (including Culligan). Apparently Veolia’s 85% share of the 20 year, \$85 million contract was not enough.

Between 1999 and 2004 (when Veolia sold US Filter) the company not only treated municipal water, but also sold filtration systems and bottled water to residents of Moncton as Culligan. Like Dasani and Aquafina, Culligan fills its bottles and jugs with reprocessed tap water—in this case, tap water its parent company had already

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# Pour une redéfinition des rapports entre Israéliens et Palestiniens

Vivien Jaboeuf

Des anciens soldats ou réservistes de Tsahal sont sortis de leur mutisme pour proposer une réflexion profonde sur le quotidien de l'occupation des territoires palestiniens et la « corruption morale » de toute une génération d'Israéliens. Interrogé récemment par Daniel Mermet, pour l'émission *Là-bas si j'y suis*, Yehuda Shaul, porte-parole de Breaking de silence, s'attaque à la banalité de l'humiliation faite aux Palestiniens. Alors que la Ligue de défense juive scande : « *Arabs to the gas chamber* », le mouvement pacifiste dénonce le climat de haine et de mépris.

Depuis juin 2004, ces jeunes Israéliens et Israéliennes ont fait connaître, de façon anonyme, leurs troublantes expériences de service militaire par une exposition intitulée *Breaking the silence*. Celle-ci exhibe une soixantaine de photos accompagnées d'enregistrements audio et vidéo évoquant les crimes et les abus commis principalement envers les habitants d'Hébron. Aujourd'hui relayé par la presse nationale et internationale, les témoignages de ces « refuzniks » de l'occupation ont fait le tour d'Israël et réveillé les consciences.

« Cette exposition n'a rien de politique », car elle présente « une part de ce qu'il y a de plus fondamental, de plus humain, elle est une réflexion après coup », prévient Yehuda Shaul. Le catalyseur de l'initiative est en effet une révolte individuelle et sincère qui s'affirme comme un retour pédagogique voire thérapeutique sur un état de conditionnement mental collectif. « *Quand on est dans l'action, on est incapable, on ne veut pas et on fait tout pour ne pas comprendre. On crée une vraie muraille de silence pour ignorer la réalité, car si on en prenait conscience, on ne se*

*lèverait plus le matin. Et ce n'est qu'après avoir pris du recul par rapport à nos actions qu'on en comprend la gravité* », atteste l'ancien soldat.

## Conséquences de l'occupation

Y. Shaul ne cherche pas à discourir sur la légitimité ou non de cette guerre, là n'est pas son but. Ses observations partent d'une réalité et de ses implications intrinsèques : « *Dans une guerre, il y a des morts et des blessés, et ce n'est pas facile à assumer. Mais le vrai problème est l'influence d'une occupation et le contrôle sur une population (palestinienne) et sur la morale et les sentiments de toute une génération (israélienne). D'un côté, il y a la lutte contre le terrorisme, de l'autre, la volonté d'imposer un pouvoir à une population et ses effets sur notre société* ».

Les intellectuels israéliens parlent de « corruption morale », une expression critique qui définit ici le déclin de la raison au profit d'intérêts ubuesques. Et d'après Y. Shaul, cette corruption est le contrecoup de la guerre, « *un prix à payer en terme de génération* ». « *Et sommes-nous prêt à le payer ? Si on me dit que mon fils frappe des vieilles dames ou casse les murs d'une épicerie pour se fumer en cigarettes, moi, je n'ai plus rien à lui dire. S'il est prêt à le faire, le dialogue est terminé entre nous* ».

## « La société entière est donc responsable »

Qui doit endosser alors le rôle du coupable : l'armée, la société israélienne, le gouvernement, les soldats ? Y. Shaul dévoile alors la cible visée par l'exposition : « *Nous n'accusons pas l'armée car elle est mise dans une situation où elle peut améliorer les choses, éviter certaines bavures, mais,*

*en général, les agissements de l'armée sont le résultat d'une politique. La société entière est donc responsable, c'est elle qui nous envoie et qui nous dit : faites le sale boulot là-bas, et lorsque vous revenez le jeudi soir pour votre permission surtout souriez, ne nous parlez pas de ce qui s'y passe, on ne veut pas le savoir* ».

Selon lui, ce refus de savoir, de comprendre et d'accepter la réalité persiste même devant l'évidence des faits et la puissance des témoignages des soldats. « *La réaction de la société à l'égard de notre exposition est le déni. Ils refusent d'endosser la responsabilité des bavures en imaginant que leurs enfants ne feraient jamais ce genre de choses. Pour eux, ce ne sont que quelques salopards qui commettent ces crimes* ». Sachant que la prise de conscience est l'étape la plus dure à passer, Y. Shaul souhaite que la société puisse « *se regarder dans un miroir et voir son vrai visage* ». « *Et lorsque la mère embrasse son fils le jeudi soir, elle devrait savoir que ce même fils a donné, dimanche, une claque à une vieille dame et s'est fait photographier, lundi, avec des cadavres* », poursuit-il.

## « la banalité est l'enjeu central »

« *C'est le retour à la banalité du mal* » souligne D. Mermet, l'installation d'un univers où l'homme perd tous ses acquis, ses repères sociaux et humains qui lui permettaient d'avoir sa propre justesse de raisonnement, une rectitude du comportement et de la morale. « *C'est l'impossibilité de voir et de comprendre la réalité dans laquelle on se trouve et de discerner le bien du mal. En entrant dans l'armée, toutes nos valeurs et idéologies disparaissent complètement comme si on les avait mises dans un mixeur et mélangées. Dès lors, le bien*

*et le mal n'ont plus aucune signification* », déplore l'ancien réserviste qui a servi à Hébron.

Pour lui, « *la banalité est l'enjeu central. Après trois années dans l'armée, ce qui n'était pas banal, c'est-à-dire se faire photographier avec des cadavres, tirer n'importe comment sur la population, devient la routine. Tous ces vices suivent un processus d'évolution : on commence à entrer dans les magasins pour prendre des cigarettes, au barrage on va piquer à quelqu'un son chapelet, puis ce sont des choses beaucoup plus graves comme le vol de matériel électronique, d'ordinateurs. Ce qui était au départ de simples bavures devient la norme. Et nous ne voulons pas voir cette norme se développer dans les territoires occupés* ».

L'exposition désire alors « *Briser le silence* », comme briser l'apparente banalité des photos qui cachent la présence des actes imbus de mépris, de violence, d'humiliation et de vengeance déguisée. L'une des photographies de l'exposition présente une vue panoramique d'un quartier de la ville d'Hébron, un cliché dont l'étonnante normalité visuelle reflète parfaitement le divorce mental entre le perçu et le réel. « *Cette photo est typique de notre exposition : si on ne connaît pas son histoire, elle n'a aucune signification* », avertit Y. Shaul. « *Celle-ci a été prise d'une position de mitrailleur. Chaque fois que les Palestiniens tirent des coups de feu, on riposte. (...) Le lance-grenades n'est certainement pas une arme précise. En fonction de l'attaque adverse tu corriges le tire un peu à droite, plus en haut, pour arriver enfin à l'objectif. Dès lors, tu commences à arroser et tu pries au fond de ton cœur que personne n'a été touché, mais tu n'en sais absolument rien. Tu rentres dans un véritable jeu. Tu t'es entraîné et tu*

# No Lifeblood for Oil

## Lubicon nation fights oil companies, governments for survival

by Kim Petersen

Near the town of Peace River in northern Alberta is the 10,000 square kilometer Lubicon Lake First Nation traditional territory—home to about 500 Crees. When the abundance of resources—in particular, heavy oil—became apparent on Lubicon traditional territory, the Alberta provincial government began to sell the resource rights to multinational corporations. The exploitation of the unceded territory of the Lubicon Lake First Nation continues unabated. By 2002, over 1,700 well sites and several kilometers of pipelines had been constructed on Lubicon land. In August 2004, Alberta granted oil sands exploration leases to Calgary-based Deep Well Oil and Gas on land reported to encompass over 101 square kilometers in Lubicon traditional territory. The development has not been without impact on the Lubicon.

A short time ago the Lubicon subsisted from the land. The Ottawa-based group Outaouais Lubicon Solidarity describes the change: “Between 1979 and 1983, annual trapping income dropped 90%. The number of moose killed for food dropped 90% and the number of people on welfare jumped from 10% to over 90%.”

They say the federal and Alberta governments are complicit in undermining the Lubicon Lake First Nation.

The Alberta government, says the group, rejected the Lubicon land registry claim, denied the Lubicon nation’s existence, belittled the Lubicon as “merely squatters on provincial Crown land” without aboriginal rights, declared the Lubicon community at Little Buffalo to be “an official provincial hamlet,” threatened to bulldoze Lubicon homes (but later backed down), sent in RCMP



An oil well on Lubicon land in northern Alberta.

*Public Archives*

to forcibly dismantle Lubicon barricades on their territory, negotiated the size of a Lubicon reserve in the Grimshaw Accord, and then backed out of the accord.

The federal government has taken similar actions. They are accused of manipulating the Lubicon Band membership list, negotiating by “take-it-or-leave-it” offer, suppressing a federal inquiry report favourable to the Lubicon, resorting to chicanery in Lubicon elections, and financing clear-cut logging operations by neighboring bands within Lubicon traditional territory.

Criticism of the governments’ respective roles abounds. The World Council of Churches decried the potential “genocidal consequences” of actions by the Alberta provincial government and oil corporations. The Canadian government was urged to take “immediate action.”

In 1987, the United Nations Human Rights Committee asked Canada “to take interim measures of protection to avoid irreparable damage” to the Lubicon Lake First Nation while it investigated. In March 1990, the commission declared that “recent developments threaten the way of life and culture of the Lubicon Lake Cree and constitute a violation of Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights...”

The federal government’s own Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP)

concluded the solution to First Nations’ territorial woes was simple: they required a greater share of the lands and resources to survive.

In 1998, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights iterated the RCAP solution and urged “concrete and urgent steps to restore” land and resources to Original Peoples.

Amnesty International was alarmed and demanded respect for Canada’s Original Peoples. Scandal-plagued Prime Minister Paul Martin gave his assurance of being “committed to a just settlement of this [Lubicon] land claim ...”

Kevin Thomas, a negotiator with the Lubicon Lake First Nation responded, “It’s not the first time that we’ve heard that. Every PM for the last twenty years has said it. ... Obviously we’re a little cynical when someone makes that statement and doesn’t back it up with action.”

Deep Well Oil and Gas, Surge Global Energy, Welwyn Resources, and Paradigm Oil and Gas have announced a plan to extract almost 820 million barrels of oil through as many as 512 wells in Lubicon territory. The Lubicon Lake First Nation with environmental NGOs Sierra Club of Canada and Greenpeace asked Canadian Environment Minister Stéphane Dion to initiate a federal environmental review of the oil sands project.

Lubicon Chief Bernard Ominayak said “We believe that it is irresponsible to allow this development to proceed without first dealing with the unresolved jurisdictional issues regarding these lands and without an independent assessment of the environmental, social and economic impacts of this project.”

Ominayak expressed concern about harm to the lake fisheries, the depletion and contamination of water resources, and the unknown impacts of massive steam injections into the sensitive boreal muskeg ecosystem.

The effects of potential air pollution, litter, contaminated wastes, and climate change on the flora and fauna, culture, and Lubicon “way of life” were also pressing concerns cited by Ominayak.

Deep Well and its associates have so far been unresponsive to Lubicon requests for discussion except briefly in response to a Lubicon blockade that reportedly cost the companies \$100,000 a day.

In a late response to The Dominion, Deep Well said that “Legal ownership and beneficial title to the land involved is with the Province of Alberta.”

Thomas paraphrased the Lubicon resistance to co-optation: “Oil companies typically think they can wave some money around and people will jump. The Lubicon community needs money; they don’t even have running water at this point. But their first question isn’t how much money they can make—it’s what’s this going to do to their land and their way of life.”

Ominayak’s message is urgent: “I hope people will understand we’re trying to survive from day to day and need all the help we can get from the general public. It’s a battle against time.”



## Social Determinants of Health

New WHO commission examines more than biology



An Indian family on a motorcycle. A new WHO commission is investigating the relationship between economic inequality and health.

WHO

by Andrea Smith

Although it has received little fanfare, public health advocates are hopeful that a new World Health Organization (WHO) Commission on Social Determinants of Health will act to improve people's health around the world. Inequalities in health have been deepening—both within countries and between them—and a growing body of research suggests that these inequalities are not the result of individuals' biology or health choices, but the result of the social conditions in which people live and work.

The WHO convened the Commission to recommend interventions and policies to reduce disparities in health status resulting from social determinants. Social determinants such as poverty, literacy, and employment affect the health of populations, leading some people to be healthier than others. Key amongst these factors are conditions of material deprivation, such as lack of income, but some propose that the gap between rich and poor itself accounts for people's health. For example, in countries with less social inequality (such as Cuba), infant mortal-

ity rates are lower than those within the wealthiest classes in societies where large gaps between the rich and poor exist (such as the United States).

A vast body of research on these determinants has accumulated and according to the Commission, it is now time to put that knowledge into action. Canadian Minister of State for Public Health, Dr. Carolyn Bennett, who attended the formal launching of the WHO Commission, agrees: "Finding strategies to improve these social determinants is equally, and in some cases, more important than medical care and improving personal health behaviours."

Two Canadians, Monique Bégin and Stephen Lewis, will sit on the panel. Lewis is currently UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa and Bégin served as Minister of National Health and Welfare during the implementation of the Canada Health Act. Canada's representation on the Commission is fitting given that Canada has been at the forefront of research on the social determinants of health. Canadian researchers have come up with a listing of eleven different social determinants, which included medical services, early education,

education and employment, but also social exclusion and income distribution.

"It is about opportunities in life and control over one's life, in addition to social conditions that shape the physical environment one lives in," says Michael Marmot, Commission chair and Director of the International Centre for Health and Society. Writing in the British medical journal *The Lancet*, Marmot says that "the Commission will seek to have public policy based on a vision of the world where people matter and social justice is paramount."

While the aims of the Commission resonate with the values of social justice, some are skeptical. The Commission points to interventions such as nutrition programs in Latin American schools as examples of successful strategies. By providing families with subsidies to enable their children to attend nutrition clinics and enroll in school, the children are able to stay in school and pay attention. However, programs like these are unlikely to address the facts of poverty, especially income inequality between countries.

Addressing the roots of social injustice will require substantial reform, and will likely

be resisted by economic forces, and the Commission's proposals will likely face formidable obstacles in some areas. Anticipating this opposition, Marmot's team intends to focus its efforts in "a group of countries where there is commitment to rapid action to overcome the social barriers to health among political leaders, health officials, civil society groups and other stakeholders." The Commission is to operate until March 2008. Only time will tell if it will have the support to turn its talk on health inequality into action.

### Update: EPA Cancels Childhood Environmental Exposure Research Study

On April 8th, 2005, the US EPA announced it was canceling the Children's Health Environmental Exposure Research Study (CHEERS). According to Stephen Johnson, Acting Administrator of the EPA, the study was axed due to misrepresentation and controversy. Critics were concerned about CHEER's ethical implications, particularly the risk of families increasing their use of household chemical hazards in order to qualify for the study so they could receive compensation which included \$970 and a video camera. Questions of ethics were compounded when it became known that the American Chemical Council, the chemical industry's trade group, provided \$2.1 million to the study. Initially the EPA had halted the study and sent it for an independent review, but Johnson said, "the study cannot go forward, regardless of the outcome of the independent review. EPA must conduct quality, credible research in an atmosphere absent of gross misrepresentation and controversy."

# Engineering for a Small Planet

## A Conversation with Kim Paradis

by Amanda Jernigan

Many people talk about leaving a well-heeled corporate job to do something less “soul-killing.” Few people actually take that leap. Kim Paradis, a professional engineer from Ottawa, Ontario, managed to do it. I spoke with her recently, hoping to find out how.

Paradis graduated from the University of Waterloo in 1994, with a Master’s degree in Systems Design Engineering. She was a stellar student, with a creative mind and wide-ranging interests, and was poised to land a good job in the booming high-tech industry. It wasn’t long before she was hired by Nortel, doing work in wireless communications and later in long-haul optical networks. She travelled widely, and at one point took on an extended expatriate appointment in Paris, France.

Last summer, she returned to Waterloo — not from a high-profile expatriate appointment, but from six months spent living in Rio Negro, Honduras, volunteering for Enersol [www.enersol.org], a Boston-based NGO.

The village of Rio Negro is a coffee-growing community, located in the Parque Nacional Montanas de Comayagua, which was created to protect a tropical cloud forest. “It is an incredible setting,” she says, “quite lush and beautiful.” The rain that is responsible for the park’s natural beauty has its disadvantages, however. Paper turns to a pulpy mess; one’s clothes don’t dry; the villagers are forced to sell their coffee wet, and are penalized financially for the extra weight per pound. The rain also means that the village is relatively inaccessible. Paradis describes a typical drive up the mountain: “[Rio Negro] is only accessible by dirt road, in a high-clearance four-wheel drive vehicle. During the rainy season, which is a good part of the year, it can take more than

three hours to get there from Comayagua [the closest city, 20 km away], most of the trip spent slowly slogging up the hill, with 15 to 20 other people in the back of a pickup truck, at times pushing, at times walking when the ‘road’ becomes unpassable.”

The community’s size and its isolation mean that it has never been brought onto the electrical grid — and it’s unlikely that it will be any time soon. “Enersol aims to serve such rural, off-the-grid communities by providing solar energy solutions to education and clean water problems,” Paradis says. “In [Rio Negro], Enersol installed a small solar-panel system on the schoolhouse to provide lighting and to power two laptop computers.... I was there to provide training to the teachers and students in the use of computers and in their integration into the classroom.”

Paradis had the technical skills required to operate and maintain the solar technology, and she had some experience teaching. (She’d spent three of her Waterloo summers working as a teaching assistant with Shad Valley — a university-based high school enrichment program — a position to which she would return in the summer of 2004.) But Rio Negro provided her with new challenges.

By the time most Canadian children encounter their first classroom-computer, they are familiar with a range of electronic technologies — telephones, video games, remote controls — if not with actual computers. Children in Rio Negro, by contrast, may never have seen a button or a switch, much less a keyboard. For Paradis, this meant a readjustment of her assumptions about what is a “given” in computer education.

Rio Negro forced Paradis to readjust her approach to the technology, as well. Solar energy is not to be had for the asking in a cloud forest. It can



Children using laptops in a Rio Negro school.

*courtesy of Kim Paradis*

work, she says, but more solar panels are required. There is, however, “significant potential for pico-hydro” in Rio Negro. Paradis learned this in part from a townspeople who had set up a personal hydro plant in his home: “He offered me the use of his little hydro plant to charge my laptop when the school solar panels were unable to provide enough energy for my needs.”

A computer won’t dissolve the way paper will, but there are challenges to keeping a PC running in a high-humidity environment. “I learned that an optical mouse was perhaps a better choice than a mechanical one as it won’t get gummed up,” she says, and that “a laptop’s mouse and keyboard will eventually break down, [so] it is better to use an external mouse and keyboard that can easily be replaced.” Given cost and transportation issues, however, “it doesn’t make sense to give people substandard equipment hand-me-downs.” These require constant replacements and repairs, and so can be more trouble than they’re worth.

These challenges notwithstanding, Paradis’s Rio Negro sojourn had its rewards. “The children were captivated by the computers, not unlike kids here at home,” she says. It is her hope that the novelty of the computers may furnish the children with some motivation to continue their education beyond the six grades taught at

Rio Negro’s small school, when and if that’s financially possible. “I was told firsthand that children managing to attend secondary school and coming from communities served by Enersol’s EduSol projects had an advantage,” she says. “They were already familiar with computers and had overcome any fears they might have had about the technology, allowing them to get ahead more quickly and develop useful skills that could lead to better than minimum-wage jobs.”

Teachers in Rio Negro have very few books at their disposal. “Given the proper training and basic materials,” Paradis says, they can use the computers to “produce workbooks for the students, computer-based tutorials, and evaluation tools that [are] culturally relevant and tailored to the national curriculum.” For Paradis, this is an example of the concrete ways in which relatively low-tech information and communications systems can help solve educational problems in the developing world. Her thinking about this is the “real learning” she took from her time in Honduras, and she hopes to apply it to further projects. Since her return to Canada, she has volunteered with and supported another NGO, Acceso International [www.accesointernational.ca], which works to improve equality of access to education in Latin America and the Caribbean.

\* \* \*

Paradis's trajectory, from Nortel to Rio Negro, may seem unlikely — but her interest in development work goes back to her undergraduate days. After gaining her B.Eng., she looked into a variety of volunteer placements, but most wanted at least a two-year commitment — difficult for a young person, with graduate school in the offing, to provide. Later on, in graduate school, she hosted “a series of talks on development activities undertaken by various people on and off campus, where they could discuss their successes and failures and perhaps motivate others to get involved.” When her own studies came to an end, however, a “real job” seemed to be in order. She decided to shelve her interest in development work, for the time being, “and get back to it, perhaps in retirement or on short volunteer vacations.”

There was a lot to like about the Nortel job, particularly in the early days. It gave Paradis a chance to make real use of her technical skills — and her interpersonal skills. “To fill the demand during the telecom heyday, Nortel had to recruit from all over the world,” she says. “This created a unique working environment that I really enjoyed, and afforded the opportunity to work with people from a wide variety of backgrounds.” As the years went on, however, the company declined, and the aspects of the job that she liked were overshadowed by the stress of constant layoffs. She left the company in 2002.

Ironically, her tenure at Nortel had made a volunteer placement seem more possible. For one thing, she now had the financial wherewithal to devote herself to an unpaid project. Secondly, all that experience working abroad, and working with people from a wide variety of backgrounds, would stand her in good stead. “Working with individuals of different cultures may initially pose challenges to communication,” she says, “but it helps develop the ability to listen more carefully

and to better understand and appreciate each person's unique contribution. In a setting where language and culture were both foreign to me, this skill made integration a little easier.”

Paradis learned to speak Spanish, gave herself a crash-course in solar technologies, and then offered her services to Enersol. For Enersol, as for many NGOs, the problem lies not in finding volunteers so much as in finding skilled volunteers; they took Paradis on in a minute.

Paradis is an engineer at heart, as well as by profession. She delights in elegant design, and will discuss with equal fascination her new digital camera, and an oil-lamp in Rio Negro that was fashioned from a recycled maple-syrup can. She has an engineer's pragmatism. She speaks frankly about the difficulties of integrating one's principles with the practical circumstances of one's life; about trying to make oneself useful in a community to which one is an outsider; about the conflicts that can arise within non-profit organizations, or between those organizations and the communities they serve. Her response to these difficulties seems to be informed, on some level, by what an engineer might call the Systems Design approach (after the department at Waterloo where Paradis studied): define the problem, generate alternative solutions, evaluate and select the best solution, implement the solution — and continually refine the problem-definition and/or solution, as new information arrives or the system changes. This last step is particularly important to Paradis. In the context of development work, it involves “feeding the lessons learned from every project implemented back into every new project, further refining the model for project delivery.”

\* \* \*

In modern history, technology has been both hero and villain. Engineers Without Borders (EWB), another technology-oriented NGO, uses the

industrial revolution as a case study. Engineers designed new technologies to address certain problems. These technologies created problems in turn, however: “populations were concentrated in cities, income disparities grew, people continued to be exploited and the natural landscape was decimated.” EWB goes on, however: “Soon engineers were hard at work creating mass public transit systems, applying environmental standards and cleaning up factories.” EWB is optimistic about the role of the engineer in society.

But there are some who would see in their example a terrible cycle, in which the problems we create may eventually outstrip our ability to deal with them. (Industrialization is one scenario to which this argument is readily applied; weaponization is another.) Is it possible to have positive technological development without unleashing the destructive potential of that same technology? Can engineering truly be a helping profession? “It can be and should be more so,” Paradis says:

At times I have felt that too often we simply pursue technology for technology's sake and, as engineers, don't often look beyond the “cool” factor. True there is some merit to pushing the envelope, trying to see how far we can develop a technology, making it cheaper, faster, “better,” but this is primarily driven by the competitive demands of the marketplace. Other important aspects of the design equation are often overlooked, such as basic accessibility of the technology (and not only for the wealthy, connected, first-world countries), recoverability and reusability of materials at the end of a product's life, the true cost of resources needed to manufacture, operate and dispose of a product over its lifetime. As well, many difficult and technically challenging problems

are ignored or overlooked, because they don't fit a market-driven model. This is true of many of the challenges facing the developing economies around the world. It's a shame that so few of our brightest and well-educated engineering minds are devoted to tackling these challenges, as there is certainly demand for their services. It would be good to refocus, to recognize and value the rewards for our work beyond just the monetary.

For Paradis, that refocusing and reevaluation is an ongoing process. Six months immersed in development work can make one see the world with new eyes — but it can be difficult to maintain that perspective once one is re-immersed in one's home environment. Still, our home environment, here in Canada, is more deeply connected to the world's privations and injustices than we like to think. Paradis addresses this in relation to technological development: “I think [that] whether a technology will have a positive or negative impact on society and our environment depends a lot on what is driving the development of a given technology,” she says — “and this mirrors the values that we as a society are promoting through our choices as consumers.” She continues:

When efficiency for profit or technological novelty for competitive advantage are the rule, other unaccounted-for or invisible costs to the environment and to society are ignored. When the true cost of manufacture, operation and disposal of a product is valued in terms of its environmental footprint and its social cost, such as its dependence on workers in foreign countries where labour and environmental laws are lax, perhaps only then will we see technological advances that are on the whole positive, driven oddly enough by the same market

*continued on page 12 »*

**Bottled water, continued from page 6 »**

treated.

**The Dangers of Privatization**

When Chrysler moved out, so did the tax base of Highland Park, Michigan, dropping the population from 60,000 to 16,000, and leaving behind astronomical debts incurred by Chrysler and former residents. The state took the city into receivership, and through a series of business dealings, the city's water department was contracted out to CPI Engineering.

Highland Park is one of the poorest cities in the United States. Residents are also subject to one of the highest water rates in the nation. In 2003, over half of Highland Park's residents—many of them families with children and seniors—had been placed on shutoff status due to unpaid bills. Unpaid bills are added to property tax, and in

many cases result in foreclosure on residents' homes. According to a June 2003 Earth First! media release, CPI employees were seen carrying firearms while shutting off people's water.

Public Citizen reports that in June 2004, while families were still being denied access to water, Highland Park City Council considered a proposed 10-year water management contract with Rothchild-Wright Group Inc. When it was revealed that the contract included an allowance for the company to bottle and sell water from the public reservoir, the proposal was hotly debated and ultimately rejected.

In Canada, privatization has not been an overwhelming success, either.

Hamilton, Ontario privatized its system in the mid-1990s. Since then, the city has had numerous raw sewage backups and floods. According to a

CBC report, in 2003 even city councillors were confused as to who, exactly, was running their water service due to numerous shifts in ownership, including a stint with Enron-owned Azurix in 1999.

In Halifax, Suez subsidiary United Water insisted that taxpayers pay for future failures (such as chemical spills). As a result, the city cancelled a \$465 million contract in June 2003.

**The Way of the Water Warrior**

Water activists agree that there is a time and a place for bottled water. In times of crisis, such as drought or contamination, bottled water is crucial to sustain life. If, however, we come to rely upon bottled water as our sole source of hydration—as many people have—we risk losing a basic human right to life: clean water for all.

“While publicly operated

water systems are managed to deliver clean, safe and affordable water to you and your family, privately operated systems are managed to get as much money as possible from you and your family,” says Public Citizen. Clarke and the rest of the “water warriors” would likely extend that to the bottled water industry.

The Michigan meeting brought together many perspectives and presented many strategies for continued action on water issues. Many commonalities came to light, but the one resounding belief shared by all participants is perhaps best stated by the Sweetwater Alliance, a grassroots movement based in Michigan. “Fundamentally, we believe that life and the things that support it are sacred, and that it is vicious and wrong to exploit the needs of living things for private gain.”

**Paradis, continued from previous page »**

forces. As long as these costs are out of sight, out of mind, people will readily accept cheaper, faster, better technology for lack of information and lack of choice. In the absence of information on true costs, what other criteria are at hand to judge

the merits of one product over another?

Paradis's term as a volunteer with Enersol ended last summer. In January, she took on a new paid job with a not-for-profit organization in Ottawa, working to find technological solutions to clean energy access

problems, both in Canada and abroad. “Perhaps in a year we should do a follow-up,” she suggests, “to see how well I've managed to apply the experience I gained in Rio Negro to the international work I am undertaking now.” I recall the final step of Paradis's Systems

Design approach: *continually refine the problem-definition and/or solution, as new information arrives or the system changes.* This is not the guise in which we're used to seeing it, but it seems to me that what we have here is a species of hope.

**Continué de page 7 »**

*attends le moment où on va te donner l'ordre de tirer ; tu prends ton pied, car c'est pour ça que tu es là. Finalement, tu comprends et tu ne comprends pas à la fois qu'il y a quelque chose de vraiment tordu dans cette histoire ».*

Sur une autre photo, on aperçoit à quelques mètres d'un soldat israélien deux jeunes Palestiniens accroupis, les yeux bandés. Une image qui, selon le porte-parole du mouvement, raconte pour le mieux le message qu'ils essayent de faire passer à travers l'exposition. « *Que se passe-t-il dans la routine du soldat ?* », lance-t-il. « *Tu commences tous les*

*soirs à revenir avec ton butin : ton Palestinien, capturé après avoir jeté des pierres. Il devient alors une entité, il n'est plus personne, tu n'as pour lui aucun sentiment. Pendant que tu fumes et te reposes, lui, il va rester dans son coin durant 10 ou 12 heures. Tu joues aux cartes tranquillement et tu oublies complètement qu'il est là. Ça devient quelque chose de vraiment banal ».*

**Un vent d'espoir**

Touché dans son être, Y. Shaul témoigne de l'état de mutation de la personnalité dont sont l'objet les soldats

israéliens. Une pathologie inhérente à la politique de domination qu'il serait vain, selon lui, de taire : « *Une fois arrivé là-bas, le fusil à la main, tu commences à changer, et, lorsque tu reviens au sein de la société, tu te retrouves transformé. Quelles que soient tes opinions politiques et les formations ou initiatives initiées par le département de l'éducation de l'armée rien ne peut arrêter ce processus, car il est lié à la réalité de cette domination. Et aucune enquête qui tenterait de nous mettre en garde contre la divulgation de ce qui se passe là-bas ne changera cette réalité ».*

La prise de conscience mise en avant par Y. Shaul est inexorable et s'affirme de jour en jour avec l'aide de la presse et de la justice israélienne. Parallèlement, la popularité croissante des mouvements pacifistes des deux bords accompagne le processus de décolonisation entamé par les autorités officielles. Bien plus qu'un plaidoyer pour un changement de la politique du gouvernement israélien, cette exposition est une réflexion universelle sur la condition humaine et laisse entrevoir l'émergence d'un réel désir de cohabitation entre les communautés.