

The Dominion

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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.

Bush Suffers Setback Over Nuclear Bill

U.S. Congress has rejected a bill to provide funds in the 2005 fiscal budget for the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons. Led by Rep. David Hobson (R-Ohio), the repeal of the bill is a small but significant coup by Republicans, who went against their own administration and voted with Democrats to refuse funding for research on low-yield atomic bombs, or "mini-nukes", and a high-yield "bunker-buster" weapon. Designed to destroy targets deep underground, the proposed high-yield warhead could be as much as ten times as powerful as the bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

In his rejection of the rationale for the new weapon, Hobson argued that the Energy Department's obsession with a new generation of nuclear weapons would be better devoted to maintaining the safety and security of the existing stockpile. At a symposium debating the proposed funding, Hobson stated that his concern over the *Penetrator* weapon stemmed from a fear that "some idiot might try to use it."

Critics have repeatedly criticized the proposed bill as indicative of the Bush administration's hypocritical nuclear policy in light of international nonproliferation efforts and particularly Washington's demands that North Korea and Iran abandon the development of their own nuclear weapons arsenals. Arms-control advocates are adamant that



Members of Congress applaud following the defeat of a government bill to fund advanced nuclear weapons research.

the further development of "usable" nuclear weapons will only ignite a new arms race and increase the likelihood of war. The Bush administration must now decide whether or not to attempt to revive the bill in the fiscal 2006 budget, which goes before Congress in January.

European Constitution Faces Votes

Following the October 29th signing of the European Constitution on the Capitoline Hill in Rome by leaders of the EU's 25 member nations, the final decision to ratify the agreement will be made by voters in nine countries.

France, Denmark, Portugal, and the Czech Republic will hold referendums, whereas in countries such as Belgium and the UK, where there is no constitutional precedent for plebiscites, they will be held with the results subject to parliamentary approval. In the remaining

member nations, ratification will be approved by parliaments directly. Failure on the part of any one country to ratify the agreement will stall the entire constitutional process.

Support is said to be particularly strong in Denmark, with almost 75 per cent support among decided voters. In the UK, where public support for the EU is viewed as political suicide, it is said that Tony Blair hopes France rejects the proposed constitution before he is forced to face what seems to be certain defeat on the issue in March 2006.

America Faces Economic "Armageddon"

Stephen Roach, chief economist at investment banking giant Morgan Stanley, has made a prediction: America has no better than a 10 per cent chance of avoiding economic "armageddon."

According to comments

reported in the Boston Herald on November 23, Roach says that to finance the US current account deficit with the rest of the world, the country has to import \$2.6 billion in cash each working day, or 80 per cent of the entire world's net savings every 24 hours.

And the debt keeps getting bigger. The US Congress has just approved an increase of US\$800 billion to the country's debt limit, which brings its total debt to US\$8.18 trillion. The new borrowing limit, approved on November 18 by a vote of 208-204 in the House of Representatives, will come into effect this Monday when US President George Bush signs the resolution into law.

Over the last four years, the Bush administration has increased the allowable debt by US\$2.23 trillion. That's more than the total actual debt the US accumulated from its founding to 1986. As the value of the US dollar drops against that of foreign currencies, Roach suggests that a "spectacular wave of bankruptcies" could follow.

U.S. has Invasive, High-Tech Plans for Fallujah's Returning Refugees

Occupation forces intend to erect a "model city" from the ruins of Fallujah, including a high-tech security infrastructure complete with DNA testing, retina scans and ID badges for all the city's residents, according to Marine Corps officers interviewed by the Boston Globe.

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Renewable Energy Policy Not Enough: Report

Ontario can go a lot further with its renewable energy policy than it has in recent

Legislation, says the David Suzuki Foundation. The Foundation recently released a report that coincided with the second reading of Ontario's new electricity legislation. The new legislation commits to 2,700 megawatts of renewable energy by 2010. The Foundation's report, "Smart Generation: Powering Ontario with Renewable Energy," states that the opportunity to invest in renewable energy is much greater.

Bush on Trial for War Crimes in Halifax, Nova Scotia

George W. Bush was on mock trial for war crimes this week in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The trial, attended by over 300 spectators, was based on a play by Lawyers Against the War (LAW) and was performed by the Halifax Peace Coalition. On Nov. 30, the eve of the US President's visit to the Eastern Canadian capital, protesters gathered in Victoria Park to hear the President's plea. He pled not guilty.

Although the trial was staged, the lawyers actors, and George W. Bush's accent distinctively East coast (not Texan), the verdict was meant to be taken seriously. The cries of "Guilty!" from the crowd, and the sombre testimony from the prosecution's witnesses (representatives of the Iraqi people, soldiers, prisoners, and Gaia, Mother Earth herself) all sought to raise the same question: could – and should – Bush be prosecuted under Canada's Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes Act?

In his Nov. 16th editorial in the Toronto Star, Thomas

Walkom admits the question is an interesting one. He writes that the act, passed in 2000 to bring Canada's ineffectual laws in line with the rules of the new International Criminal Court, holds that "Anyone who commits a war crime, even outside Canada, may be prosecuted by our courts."

What constitutes a war crime? As Walkom puts it, "Any conduct defined as such by customary international law or by conventions that Canada has adopted. War crimes also specifically include any breach of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, such as torture, degradation, willfully depriving prisoners of war of their rights 'to a fair and regular trial,' launching attacks 'in the knowledge that such attacks will cause incidental loss of life or injury to civilians' and deportation of persons from an area under occupation."

In a letter to Prime Minister Paul Martin, LAW outlines in detail Bush's responsibility for the estimated 100,000 Iraqi lives taken by the war. "This includes his personal involvement not only in the devising and waging of an aggressive, illegal war, but also of the unlawful refusal to grant prisoner of war status to prisoners of war, contrary to specific provisions of the Geneva Conventions, an act repudiated in the US Courts."

The reality of bringing these accusations to the court is much more complicated. Walkom mentions three great hurdles: 1) When Belgium attempted to formally indict Bush last year, the US reacted with such fury that Belgium not only backed down, but changed their law to avoid future problems. Canada would not be exempt from the same response; 2) Heads of state are immune from prosecution when in Canada on official business, so action would have to wait until Bush is out of office; 3) Such political decisions would have to be made by the Canadian government, and

so Canada would have to want to launch the suit against Bush.

Recognizing these hurdles, LAW also mentions in their letter to Martin that his own inaction and invitation to Bush could also be seen as a crime: "You and your colleagues could be personally liable to prosecution under the Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes Act by virtue of section 21 of the Canadian Criminal Code, for crimes so serious that they are punishable in Canada by up to life imprisonment." Golden Horseshoe Lands May Become Protected

Expand NATO, Says Joint Military Planning Group

An October 13 interim report from a joint Canada-U.S. military planning group recommends that Ottawa and Washington expand the North America Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) to include land and sea forces by the end of 2005. If the recommendations are put in place by the Martin government, the end result could very well be that the armies and navies of the U.S. and Canada would be under a single command, and this command would likely not originate from Canada.

The Liberals have until the end of the year to decide whether to renew the mandate of the binational planning group, which was set up two years ago in response to the September 11, 2001 World Trade Center bombings.

Participants and supporters know that the current Liberal minority government must tread carefully with the issue since support for military cooperation with the U.S. is low, both in Parliament and in public opinion. Liberal Senator Colin Kenny, chairman of the Senate National Security Committee says, "The military wants to get this deal done under the

radar." He adds that a new continental defence agreement could be reached "about a year from now when people cool down and get a better perspective of the relationship."

CCRC Demands Accountability from Canadian Banks

The Canadian Community Reinvestment Coalition (CCRC) has called on Finance Minister Ralph Goodale, Industry Minister David Emerson, and the entire federal Cabinet to require banks to prove that their business practices – which in a recent report earned the big six banks \$13.3 billion in total profits – do not gouge the public. Some federal Liberals, such as Revenue Minister John McCallum, have raised concerns over this matter before, but the Liberals have forced very little change.

The CCRC is asking for more accountability within three main areas. First, they want the banks to disclose the profit/loss records of bank branches that have been closed in most often low-income communities in order to prove that the closures were justified. Second, it wants disclosure of the profit margin for credit card divisions so that the banks will be required to justify their high interest rates. Third, the CCRC wants to see the profit margin for each service division (in-branch, machine, telephone, and Internet banking).

In polls, 90 per cent of Canadians view banking as an essential service in Canada. However, other essential service companies such as those who deliver heating, electricity, and phone service are required by law to prove their prices are fair. The banks have no such accountability placed on them by the federal government, and the CCRC says that this must change.

Latortue visit provokes protest

Montreal Haitians ask Canadians and Québécois(es) for Solidarity

by Dru Oja Jay

MONTREAL, Dec 10—"Latortue assassin; Paul Martin complice". This easy-to-translate chant was the charge of choice of a lively group of 100 members of the Montréal Haitian diaspora—some coming from the Ottawa, Toronto, and the United States—who staged a lively, loud four hour protest outside of Montreal's Centre Mont Royal on Saturday.

The occasion was a visit from Haiti's de facto interim Prime Minister, Gerard Latortue, who was in town to meet with Prime Minister Paul Martin and ranking Liberal MPs Pierre Pettigrew, Denis Paradis, and Denis Coderre. According to Team Martin, Canada has "a very special role to play" in Haiti's future. Organizers of the event, which was billed as a meeting with "the Haitian Diaspora" held to the now-common Liberal line that Canada is in Haiti for the long term, gathering aid, training judges, and organizing elections.

For the demonstrators outside, however, the focus was on Canada's complicity in what many observers call the US sponsored overthrow of the democratically elected government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Prime Minister Yvon Neptune and former head of Senate Yvon Feuillé are in jail. Most other party members are in hiding, and many have been murdered. By contrast, de facto Prime Minister Latortue has claimed that "there are no political prisoners in Haiti", though he has also publically stated that he will seek to arrest former President Aristide.

"The government of Canada has invited the illegal authorities... that they have installed, to talk about the future of Haiti without involving the Haitian people," said Jean Saint Vil, of the Haitian Lawyers' Leader-



Haitians protesting Gerard Latortue's visit to Montréal last week.

Jean Saint Vil

ship Network. "The people that are posing as leaders of Haiti are all unelected, and lack any legitimacy."

Protesters also point out that this view is shared by dozens of African and Caribbean nations which have refused to recognize Latortue's government. In the United States, Congresspersons Maxine Waters, Dennis Kucinich, Barbara Lee and others signed a statement condemning Latortue a US puppet.

One Canadian conference organizer expressed the apparent mood of those inside: "Aristide left. That's a fact, and we just have to deal with it."

Colonial History, Colonial Present

The protest organizers expressed strong disagreement with the approach of sending aid to Haiti as a way to fix the country's problems, calling it "insulting" to the very real human misery that Haiti faces. Instead of aid, they say, the only just solution is to cancel the debt run up by illegitimate US-supported dictators and return the money stolen outright by the governments of France and the United States.

"Haiti is poor because we have never had the opportunity to invest in our infrastructure," said Saint Vil, citing the use of Haitian labour and resources to enrich foreign powers, but not Haitians.

In 1825, France forced Haiti to "compensate" former slave and plantation owners that had been driven out of the country by the independence movement in return for access to international markets. To make the first payment, every school in Haiti was closed. Jean Bertrand Aristide had mounted a high-profile campaign to force France to pay back this money, which is now equivalent to \$22 billion. "One of the first acts of that puppet government was to declare that France doesn't owe Haiti anything anymore," said Saint Vil.

François-Michelet Demas pointed out that the wealth and democracy of countries like France and the United States was built with wealth stolen from colonies like Haiti.

"What is needed," said Saint Vil, "is not the hypocrisy that Paul Martin is promoting," but "tangible reparation and restitution to Haiti of what our ancestors have fought for, and our money—the 150 million

francs that France collected is part of that restitution."

Instead of restitution, Saint Vil explained, Latortue and Martin are putting Haiti further into debt.

"The 'international community' has promised to give \$2 billion to the illegal Latortue

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Captivating Theatre Closes

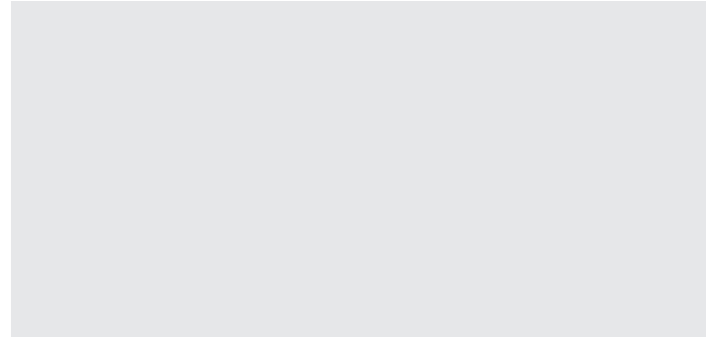
by Jane Henderson

Canada has just lost its only behind-bars theatre company that performs for the public. "William Head On Stage," a prisoner-run theatre company at William Head Federal Prison in Metchosin, British Columbia, has recently folded after twenty-three years of production and performance. This is a real loss to the arts community of the region and, more crucially, to the lives of the prisoners involved. Most prisoner participants, who are responsible for every aspect of each production, have never been involved with theatre before.

The Firebugs, running October 15–November 6, 2004, turns out to have been WHOS's last performance. Ryan Love, the final president of WHOS, has been at William Head for twelve years. (He will be eligible for day parole in five more.) Love has been predicting problems for WHOS ever since the prison's reclassification from medium to minimum-security prison last year. The institution's reorientation from confinement to pre-release facilities means a far higher turnover of inhabitants, and maintaining a continuing theatre society has become, with reluctance, impossible. Love explained that joining WHOS's Board of Directors used to be a three-year commitment. Today, the average stay at William Head is just six months. Last fall, for example, eighteen of the twenty production participants left the prison, most of them in the week following the show. It's "tough to maintain continuity," said Love. Back in 2001 the company had already cut down from two annual shows to just one.

Unlike most struggling theatre companies, finances were not the reason behind WHOS's disassembly. Budgeting is relevant, yes, but "not the point,"

says Love. WHOS could "make money every year by doing One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" but the hope has always been just to keep afloat and keep exploring. Between 1981-2004, WHOS built up a substantial patron base. About eight hundred regulars could be counted



Due to prison security requirements, there are no images to accompany this article.

on to attend each production, be it drama or farce. Losing the relationship between fenced-in performers and the surrounding public is disappointing for both. "People love us," Love explains, because "they get to see inside the prison, and they get to see us working hard, without pay, for the benefit of others."

Patrons realize immediately that a ticket to a WHOS production does not mean an ordinary theatre-going experience. William Head Prison occupies a peninsula facing Washington's Olympic Mountains and surrounded on three sides by the murderously cold Pacific. There is a surreal contrast between the prison's astonishingly beautiful natural setting and the barbed wire and security towers that surround it. Upon arrival, guests must empty their pockets, sign waivers, and assemble for the sniffer dogs. Then they are chauffeured by prisoners across William Head's grounds to its temporarily-renovated gym. WHOS has always used this dislocating introduction to its theatre to its best advantage.

Although WHOS's reper-

toire includes farce and comedy, its most powerful shows have considered themes drawn from its locale and performers. Alienation, entrapment, responsibility, and control have been explored by participants and audiences through famous scripts like "The Elephant Man"

and even, in recent years, in dramatic pieces penned by prisoners themselves. Love explains that the performance society itself has always selected the plays, often drawn to compelling dramas which "speak to our condition, and the human condition: as prisoners, in confinement, about class structure, power... the existentialism, all of that."

The Firebugs, WHOS's most recent and now final production, embraced and built from these confines. Max Frisch wrote The Firebugs, "a parable about the dangers of complacency," following the Second World War, wondering how such disaster could come from people with such good intentions. Director Britt Small described their production as "both cruel and strange," and the surreal set and costume design contributed greatly to this sensation. Viewer sympathies meshed with horror as the hapless main characters refused to understand that they were supporting the devilish Firebugs.

This script was also an excellent choice for its range of

central and supporting characters. The Firebugs showcased the talents of performers Andy Maxwell (playing Gottlieb Biedermann), Bruce D. Peters (Sepp Schmitz/Beelzebub), and Dustin Taliathan Olson (Willie Eisenring/Lord of the Underworld), each of whom have been involved with WHOS before. At the same time, it offered supporting roles for new performers like the Chorus of Firemen.

The relationship between WHOS and the William Head administration has been a complicated one. The institution's only involvement is for security—for one small example, The Firebugs requires candles, which aren't allowed in the prison, and so had to be officially signed in and out of each rehearsal.

As an entirely extracurricular activity, therefore, WHOS offers powerful personal rewards to prisoners whose lives are otherwise governed by the penal system. On the other hand, because it exists outside the institution's rehabilitation program, WHOS participation does not come up in parole hearings, for example, as something prisoners have achieved. Love spoke with some frustration that "We may as well be the William Head baseball team." Certainly WHOS cited lack of administrative support as a reason for its closure. Some degree of institutional involvement could perhaps lend the necessary continuity to keep WHOS alive.

No studies have assessed the impact of the dramatic society on the lives of its participants. WHOS's members have actually requested that the institution perform studies, believing that WHOS participation greatly reduces the chances of recidivism.

The dramatic society has certainly, over the last two

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Whereverville
by Josh Macdonald
Talonbooks, 2004

Whereverville unfolds in Loam Bay, an archetypal coastal Newfoundland town economically hung out to dry after fishery closures and faced with the prospect of the Smallwood government's resettlement in the late 1960's. Featuring a single set peopled by a mere five townspeople, the play benefits from its spareness and relies entirely on characterisation for interest. MacDonald paints his four townsmen—Cyril, Jacky, "Pick", MacLeish—and Abby, the schoolteacher, in precise

strokes. In the four men, this precision borders on caricature, although Abby comes across with strong humanity. Though he cites Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* as inspiration for the show, MacDonald's painstaking naturalism and focus on character minutiae erases *Whereverville's* connection to the epic playwright. Where both MacDonald and the promotional material for the show—which first received production at Halifax's Neptune theatre—emphasize Abby's growing pragmatism and

corresponding sense that "nothing really lasts", *Whereverville*, as a whole, asserts perhaps too much the opposite. Each Loam Bay resident feels inextricably linked to the town and its history and MacDonald's attention to their stories situates *Whereverville* too exactly. The detailed stage directions feel restrictive and make the play seem more a fixed historical document than a vital theatrical statement. The play itself is what doesn't really last.

—Steph Berntson



The Tale of Don L'Original
by Antonine Maillet
Goose Lane Editions, 2004

Antonine Maillet has created a work which refuses to settle into any easily definable slot. The English is flowing and contemporary, yet also evocative of medieval French texts: *Gargantua, Aucassin et Nicolette*, and even *Le Mort D'Arthur*. The historical atmosphere works well with the simple story, which is about troubled relations between islanders and mainlanders, and yet the pre-industrial mood is

punctuated with seeming anachronisms like motorboats and women's emancipation. The plot covers the usual elements for dueling towns: star-crossed lovers, military manoeuvres, and the eventual realization that the people on both sides of the water are essentially the same. The book's strength lies in its vibrant and pithy characters and its rare startling scenes, like the one in which Citrouille sends an armada of love notes across

the channel, each hand-written on birch bark and placed inside a fleet of "bottles, jugs, even a little barrel decked with a mast and sail." The intent of the novel, though, remains vague – while it is tempting to read it as a fable about war, the narrative tends toward the absurd maybe once too often. Like reading a cross between *Catch 22* and *The Little Prince*, it's hard to know when to take it seriously.

—Matthew Trafford



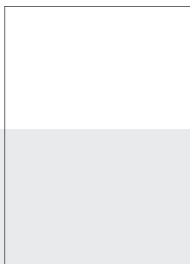
Postscript
by Geoffrey Cook
Signal, 2004

Cook's first collection presents a series of experiments with formal structures; standard sonnets, quatrains, and the more recently standard haiku and ghazal as well. Some poems inhabit their forms snugly, pushing lightly at the confines of fixed verse with their loaded lines, while reading with smooth rhythmically satisfying musicality. In "Chopping Wood", Cook writes, "Or,

when the stroke was followed through/ for once, and blocks would fall from stress/ and burden on the stumps, I'd cleft/ honeycomb-hollowed slews". On the whole, however, Cook's poetry suffers from a certain lack of individuality; his subject matter and word choice are perhaps too conventional to be paired to new effect with the conventional forms he has chosen. "You almost see it:"

Cook writes, "stung by salt in morning light,/ that pale skin flushing." Lyrical, yes, but of a worn out quality impermissible in a rigorously edited collection. Without the requisite streak of original imagination to galvanize his traditional themes and topics, *Postscript* is left a competent but insufficiently inspired exercise.

—Linda Besner



Learning to Swim
by Larry Lynch
Gaspereau, 2004

The two longest stories, "Learning to Swim" and "Topography", draw their strength from their parallel plotlines. In one case the protagonist's swimming lessons with his bossy lover are intercut with notes for a story about an author's love-life, while in another a relief worker's travels in Nicaragua are paired with his girlfriend's preparations for her body-building competition. "Topography" in particular stands out for its quirky evoca-

tion of character: Denis looks over the soiled sheets where Corinne slept after dying her muscular body with strong tanning lotion, and notes, "The twist of her hips in the night were the smaller helter-skelter tributaries, and south of that was the basin, smooth and evenly shaded where her hips had rested... the places where the heel of her hand had rested were shells and fossils and the bones of birds". This poetic passage is a rare indulgence

for Lynch, whose other stories tend towards an intentional fuzziness, with characters manoeuvring heavily through indistinct, waterlogged landscapes. A few fall flat: "Scramble" succeeds only in being odd, while "Absolutes" puzzles with its archaism, which can only be deliberate, and yet nudges us towards no exceptional revelation. In general, however, Lynch inspires trust, providing a memorable, if uneven, collection. —Linda Besner

Arctic Climate Change

The fight to preserve the Arctic Way of Life

by Kim Petersen

In 2002, the ablation of the over three-millennia-old Ward Hunt Ice Shelf off Ellesmere Island in the Canadian Arctic provoked the scientific community to higher awareness of the threat posed by climate-change processes. The erosion of the glacier resulted in the dissipation of almost all of the freshwater from the Arctic's largest epishelf lake (a freshwater layer that sits atop salt water).

These monumental changes presaged the pronouncements that emanated this month from the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) in Iceland. Scientists warn, "The Arctic is extremely vulnerable to observed and projected climate change and its impacts. The Arctic is now experiencing some of the most rapid and severe climate change on Earth." The scientists pointed to the burning of fossil fuels as the primary cause of global warming that imperils the traditional northern way of life.

The Arctic thaw will likely have far-reaching ramifications for the land, sea, weather, flora and fauna, and people inhabiting the earth's northern regions.

Geological and Meteorological Change

Increasing temperatures will result in the melting of glaciers and ice covering the Arctic Ocean. The ice-free seas will further exacerbate the melt, as the reduced reflection of light will result in the dark seas absorbing more warmth. Rising sea levels and an inundated coastline are the predictable outcome.

Not all the changes concomitant with a warming environment might be construed as negative. The thawing tundra will, some speculate, enable forms of agriculture previously impossible. Loosened soil will



A warmer climate will open the arctic to shipping, but will play havoc with the region's delicate ecosystem, say scientists. NOAA

permit the northward creep of the treeline. Since forests absorb more heat than tundra, the cycle will feed upon itself.

Melting permafrost would also increase the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Global warming is also implicated in increasingly erratic arctic weather patterns. Increased precipitation and freezing rains will, say scientists, become more common. The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) predicts that once rare phenomena such as thunderstorms would become more prevalent in the Northwest Territories and Yukon.

Threat to Arctic Wildlife

Wildlife dependent on the northern ice will be affected. The word Arctic means "land of the Great Bear." Yet the northern warming endangers the predator at the top of the Arctic food chain, the polar bear. Polar bears must consume large amounts of food to survive the harsh northern winters, and seal hunting on the frozen seas is the primary mode of fattening up for a long hibernation.

The loss of the polar bear would impact Inuit hunters, such as those in areas of Nunavut, who still depend on sustainable hunts of polar bears to maintain their culture and well-being.

Sea creatures will also be affected. Seals, walrus, and birds will lose breeding areas and fish species will be susceptible to sea changes such as increased temperature and decreased salinity.

The ACIA finds, "Not only are some threatened species very likely to become extinct, some currently widespread species are projected to decline sharply."

Nunavut journalist Jane George has reported on an Inuvialuit man from Sachs Harbour, John Keogak, who traveled for days to be in Iceland for the ICC. Keogak, of the Inuvialuit Game Council, is a witness to the effects of a warming Arctic climate. He has seen sporadic fish catches, and described the ghastly spectacle of thousands of musk ox dying from hunger or drowning after attempting to cross a sheet of ice in search of food on another island because frozen rain had hindered their

normal foraging patterns. Foraging caribou are likely to be similarly affected if their means of sustenance is trapped under ice. The encroaching treeline also threatens to reduce areas of tundra that caribou depend on for foraging.

Threats to the Inuit and Northern Inhabitants

Keogak was unique. No one from the Government of Nunavut, Nunavik, or Labrador attended the ICC. ICC chair Sheila Watt-Cloutier noted the lack of Inuit and Arctic Canada politicians and civil servants at the conference, which discussed the massive changes to the Arctic ecosystem. The ACIA cautioned: "Warming is likely to disrupt or even destroy their hunting and food-sharing culture as reduced sea ice causes the animals on which they depend to decline, become less accessible, and possibly become extinct."

Climate change is impacting on Inuit culture. Travel over regions of shifting ice is fraught with greater risk, making access to traditional food sources more difficult. Inuit, who are dependent on seasonal migrations of caribou, have reported not encountering the tundra foragers when expected.

Some coastal villages are exposed to the seas by the lack of ice. The village of Tuktoyaktuk is situated on the shores of the Beaufort Sea. Its beautiful location is now vulnerable to the ravages of coastal erosion.

The health of people in the Arctic is more and more susceptible to the climate changes. Longer exposure to sunlight and UV radiation can lead to an increased incidence of sunburn, skin cancer, immune-suppression-related disorders such as stress, and the introduction of new diseases to the Arctic by

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No CHEERS for the EPA

Study halted over ethical controversy

by Andrea Smith

On November 11, 2004, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced it was temporarily suspending the Children's Environmental Exposure Research Study (CHEERS) after public outcry to news that the study had accepted \$2.1 million from the American Chemistry Council.

CHEERS aims to provide researchers with knowledge about how children ingest, inhale, or absorb pesticides, phthalates, brominated flame retardants, and perfluorinated chemicals. Sixty children under 13 months of age will be monitored for two years, and their families will be asked to keep records of their pesticide and household product use. As

little is known about how and to what extent children come into contact with these chemicals, researchers see this knowledge as useful for characterizing children's exposure in risk assessments.

In October, the EPA accepted \$2.1 million towards the study from the American Chemistry Council (ACC), a chemical industry lobby group whose members include Dow, Exxon, and Monsanto. According to an EPA news release, "public-private partnership is essential to finding solutions to today's complex environmental issues." Yet this public-private partnership is one which has granted the ACC "considerable leverage" in the study, as well as special advance access to study results that the public

and independent scientists will not have. CHEERS critics such as the Environmental Working Group and the Organic Consumers Association see this as a guarantee that the results will be biased in favour of industry.

Kenneth Cook of the Environmental Working Group (EWG) wrote in a letter to Michael Leavitt that the EWG "strongly supports greater study of children's exposure to chemicals, but not through a 'partnership' between polluters and the government that grants the regulated industry access to, and power over critical aspects of study design, study methods, data collection, data review and analysis, and data interpretation. Such research should be completely independent of industry funding to ensure the accuracy of the results.

Evidence of the toxicity of many of the chemicals being researched exists. For example, polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) which are used as flame retardants on electrical equipment, fabrics and carpets have been shown to bioaccumulate in animal and human tissue. Studies have also shown that PBDEs can disrupt thyroid hormone balance and interferes with brain development. In fact, concern about PBDEs is so great that the State of California has nominated PBDEs to the National Toxicology Program for assessment of their carcinogenicity and neurotoxicity.

"We aren't criticizing these companies for *not* doing studies, we criticize them for ignoring and/or burying the mountains of already existing research that clearly indicate many of their products are dangerous" states the Organic Consumers Association. "We also criticize them for being responsible for some of the most vile environmental crimes this planet has ever seen. Exxon still hasn't paid a dime to clean up the Valdez oil

spill. Dow continues to claim that Agent Orange is safe and had no negative impacts on U.S. soldiers or the Vietnamese."

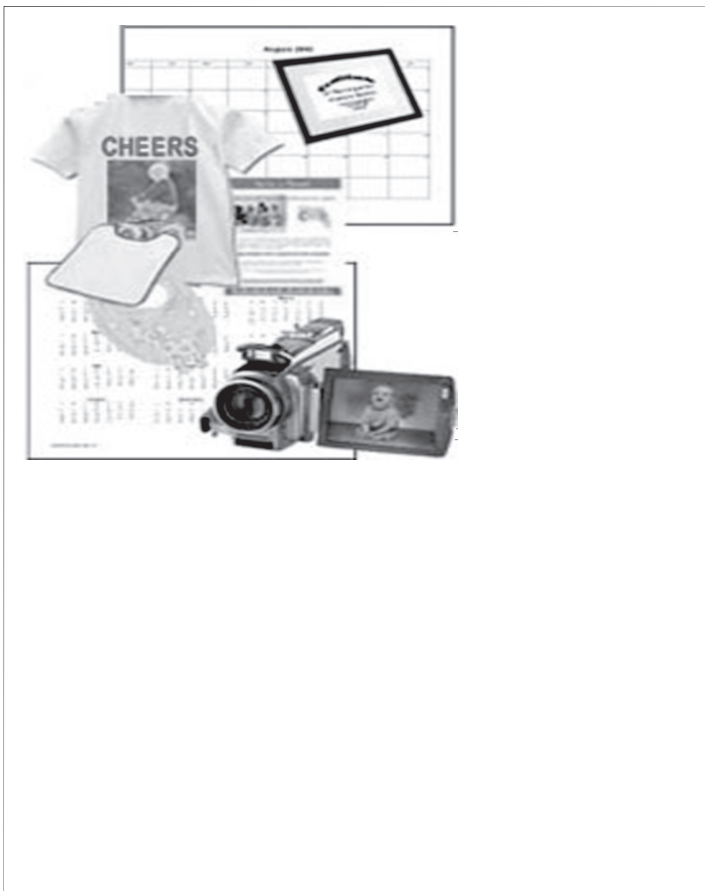
The ethics of recruiting of low-income families is also cited as a concern. Each family who completes the study will receive \$970, a free video camera, a T-

"We aren't criticizing these companies for *not* doing studies, we criticize them for ignoring and/or burying the mountains of already existing research that clearly indicate many of their products are dangerous"

—Organic Consumers' Association

shirt, calendars, and a framed certificate of appreciation. Critics are concerned that low-income applicants may increase their toxic chemical use in order to be eligible for the study and rewards. While the study does not require participants increase their chemical use, it does require that chosen applicants demonstrate that they regularly use the toxic chemicals under investigation in and around their home.

Although the EPA cites that the study has already been approved by several institutional review boards, this approval was gained prior to study's receipt of ACC funds. Thus the EPA is 'taking the extraordinary step - of sending the study design for another external, independent review' which will likely be completed by spring 2005.



Promotional material indicating items that CHEERS participants will receive.

L'oléoduc Tchad-Cameroun

ou le cynisme de la Banque Mondiale

par Vivien Jaboeuf

Le projet de construction et d'exploitation de l'oléoduc tchado camerounais, supervisé par le Groupe de la Banque Mondiale (GBM), intervient au moment où les Institutions Financières Internationales (IFI) voient leurs programmes pour le développement économique et social de plus en plus contestés. Malgré les deux années de consultations, de conférences, de débats et de discussions qui ont précédé la signature du contrat, les décisions prises par le GBM, font encore l'objet de vives critiques. De nombreuses organisations non gouvernementales (ONG), des scientifiques, des analystes de la politique internationale et la société civile tchadienne et camerounaise discutent les supposés bienfaits qu'apporterait une telle réalisation.

Inauguré en octobre 2003 et mis en service en juillet 2004, l'oléoduc, long de 1070 km, relie les 300 puits de pétrole de la région de Doba (Sud du Tchad) au terminal d'exportation du brut de Kribi, sur la côte camerounaise. Les gisements devraient générer 225 000 barils de pétrole par jour sur une période de 30 ans. Autrement dit, le plus grand projet privé en Afrique dans lequel la Banque Mondiale se soit impliquée.

Un dossier gonflé de promesses

La création de l'oléoduc représente « un cadre sans précédent pour transformer la richesse pétrolière au profit direct des pauvres, des plus démunis et de l'environnement ». C'est avec une vision prometteuse que, le 6 juin 2000, la Banque mondiale donnait son aval au projet de construction dont la valeur totale de 4,6 milliards de dollars canadiens (CAD) est financée en majeure partie par



Président de Tchad Idriss Derby inaugurant le terminal de l'oléoduc.

le consortium pétrolier Exxon Mobil-Chevron-Petronas. Sous la pression de la communauté internationale et pour parer à un éventuel échec du bras de fer déontologique, le GBM a pris de multiples précautions, en affichant notamment sa transparence dans le montage du dossier.

Ainsi, une « structure de suivi et d'établissement de rapports », examinant les aspects sociaux et environnementaux du projet, a été constituée. Elle comporte principalement un dispositif de supervision qui s'attache à ce que la société civile participe aux activités des deux gouvernements, et travaille à l'adoption d'une gestion saine des dépenses publiques et au renforcement des institutions nationales. Un groupe consultatif international (GIS) complémentaire, composé de conseillers internationaux « impartiaux et indépendants », rend compte également de ses observations au GBM et aux États tchadien et camerounais par l'émission de rapports et de recommandations.

De plus, la Société Financière Internationale (SFI), membre du GBM, a initié un

programme d'aide aux Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (PME) du Tchad pour leur permettre de participer à l'activité économique créée autour de l'oléoduc. En s'associant avec la Financial Bank Tchad, la SFI supporte la création de 12000 emplois, finance les travaux d'amélioration des infrastructures à hauteur de 500 millions CAD, et offre 500 millions CAD de « marchés » aux entreprises locales.

De son côté, la Banque Européenne d'Investissement (BEI) soutient cette démarche en injectant 220 millions CAD dans le budget total. La BEI y voit de multiples avantages comme la formation de la main d'œuvre, l'accroissement de l'activité économique, la stabilité politique à long terme, des recettes annuelles assurées pour 28 ans, et l'amélioration des infrastructures (routes, ponts, voies ferrées). Afin d'obtenir la résolution du Parlement européen (janvier 2000) sur son engagement, elle assurait qu'aucun déplacement de population n'était prévu au Cameroun et que seulement 150 familles tchadiennes se verraient expulsées et correctement

indemnisées. La BEI s'appuyait également sur les études publiées par le GBM, en juin 99, pour montrer que le projet n'aurait qu'une « incidence nette relativement minime sur l'environnement naturel et humain », et qu'un plan « de prévention et de procédures d'urgences spécifiques à la lutte contre la pollution » était en place.

Enfin, le Parlement tchadien, sous la pression de la Banque Mondiale et des compagnies internationales, a adopté une loi relative à la gestion des revenus pétroliers (déc.1998) dont l'application est suivie par une commission indépendante. Cette loi prévoit que 10% des revenus seront versés sur un compte bloqué à Londres et destinés au Fonds pour les Futures Générations, que 80% serviront à financer des projets de développement socio-économiques avec l'objectif de réduire la pauvreté, et 5% iront en aide à la région de Doba—le gouvernement tchadien ne bénéficiant que de 5% restants.

Le ton de la campagne de séduction orchestrée par la Banque Mondiale est

donné : transparence, éthique, contrôle des mouvements d'argent, structure anti-corruption, participation et consultation des populations, lutte contre la pauvreté, respect de l'environnement. Toutes les garanties des bénéficiaires et du bon déroulement du projet sont présentes.

Retour à la réalité

Cependant, la construction d'un tel chantier sur le territoire de pays à la politique instable n'est pas aussi simple et les résultats observés semblent loin des promesses idylliques. Le bilan évolutif, dressé par les ONG nationales et étrangères et les nombreux observateurs, interpelle par l'accumulation de points négatifs.

Selon l'organisation écologiste *Les Amis de la Terre*, l'oléoduc sème « misère et dévastation ». Contrairement aux prévisions du GBM, des milliers de Camerounais ont été expropriés de leur terre, les cultures et la végétation ont été détruites, les réserves d'eau et les écosystèmes de grands fleuves pollués et les compensations insuffisantes. Au Tchad, des villages sont pratiquement « emprisonnés » entre les puits de pétrole, les stations de pompage et l'oléoduc.

D'après Jacques Ngun de l'association *Survival*, l'étude d'impact sur le mode de vie des populations Bakola et Bagyeli du Cameroun a été bâclée par les experts mandatés par le GBM, duquel ils n'ont reçu aucune indemnité. Subissant une exploitation par le travail, un ostracisme d'état et le développement des maladies exogènes, ils font face désormais à la déforestation implicite du projet.

Concernant les emplois, sur les 5000 promis aux populations locales du Cameroun, la plupart ont échoué à des étrangers. La migration sur les lieux de travail a provoqué des troubles sociaux dans les communautés, une recrudescence de l'alcoolisme et de maladies sexuellement transmissibles,

et attiré de jeunes prostituées venues de tout le pays.

Du côté financier, le projet montre aussi des faiblesses. Le président Idriss Déby a utilisé le premier versement de 5,6 millions CAD, payé par le consortium pétrolier, pour l'achat de matériel militaire. Par ailleurs, le FMI a constaté que 9,3 millions CAD avaient été détournés par son gouvernement.

La loi sur les revenus pétroliers adoptée par le Parlement tchadien est elle-même fortement critiquée pour son manque d'efficacité et son flou pragmatique. Selon le rapport de l'ONG *Catholic Relief Services* de juin 2003, « l'application de cette loi fait apparaître d'importantes lacunes », principalement son cadre législatif qui n'inclut pas « les revenus tirés des taxes et des droits de douanes ». La Banque Mondiale prévoit aussi que, sur le total de 4,6 milliards CAD, « seulement 2 milliards iront aux cinq secteurs prioritaires, aux peuples de la région de Doba et au Fonds pour les Générations Futures ».

Des dérives prévisibles n'est cependant pas surprenant de voir se développer des problèmes sociaux, environnementaux et financiers dans des pays où le gouvernement détourne l'argent public et méprise sa propre population.

En 1999 et 2000, *Transparency International* a décerné à Paul Biya et son gouvernement le prix du régime le plus corrompu en Afrique. D'après *Les amis de la Terre*, les forêts tropicales au Cameroun, « sont pillées du fait de la collusion du gouvernement au détriment des communautés locales », malgré « les efforts de la Banque mondiale (...) pour tenter de persuader le Cameroun de gérer ses forêts de manière plus rationnelle ».

Idriss Déby, quant à lui, avait annoncé la couleur de ses intentions en refusant le contrôle international de l'utilisation des revenus du pétrole. Selon lui, « la souveraineté nationale n'est pas marchandise », et « les instruments juridiques » mis en place par le Parlement



Greenpeace

tchadien sont « suffisants ». Rappelons que le président Déby, « arrivé au pouvoir par un coup d'État », a été réélu à la suite d'élections truquées et dénoncées par la communauté internationale. *Amnesty International* considère que son gouvernement est impliqué dans « la mort de centaines de civils dans la région de production du pétrole », entre 1997 et 1998, et responsable de « la disparition et l'assassinat de civils ». Sans compter que la population a subi une augmentation de la répression et de l'insécurité avant même le début de la mise en œuvre du projet.

Dans ces conditions démocratiques difficiles, le bon déroulement des opérations paraissait improbable d'autant plus que de nombreuses irrégularités étaient signalées avant et après le début de la construction de l'oléoduc.

Un rapport indépendant publié en septembre 1999 faisait déjà mention du manque d'information, de l'intimidation sur la population, de l'absence ou de la faiblesse des différents plans sociaux, environnementaux et financiers ainsi que de la violation des lois imposées par le GBM. Les organisations internationales et camerounaises avertissaient du danger potentiel de l'oléoduc sur la sécurité, la santé, l'écologie, notamment par la réduction et la pollution des eaux potables, côtières et fluviales, la destruction et l'empêchement des écosystèmes fragiles et des cultures vivrières. Le bouleversement du mode de vie, de l'habitat et des moyens de subsistance des populations autochtones Bakola et Bagyeli

du Cameroun était prévu par les différents observateurs.

Le Parlement européen avait également voté, en juin 2000, une résolution demandant à la BEI de suspendre son financement tant que les « exigences sociales et environnementales » n'auraient pas été garanties. Puis, de nombreux rapports internes sont venus entacher les propres initiatives de la Banque Mondiale. En septembre 2002, le groupe d'experts indépendants du GBM affichait « de sérieuses préoccupations concernant » la capacité « du gouvernement tchadien à contrôler efficacement le projet avant que celui-ci ne commence à dégager des revenus ». Il stipulait également que le choix des répartitions financières, inscrites dans la loi sur les revenus pétroliers, était totalement arbitraire.

Changer de politique Symbole du déséquilibre démocratique : un collectif d'associations tchadiennes de défense des droits de l'homme avait appelé à une journée de deuil nationale, le 10 octobre 2003, tandis que 500 personnalités politiques inauguraient l'oléoduc. Quelque mois plus tard, les gisements de Doba fournissaient leurs premiers barils de brut que déjà l'organisation du Groupe de la Banque Mondiale montrait des insuffisances dans le respect des contraintes du dossier.

L'histoire tragique des investissements dans les projets pétroliers en Afrique, notamment celui du Nigéria et du Congo-Brazzaville, semble se répéter ; l'abandon des populations et la destruction de leur

continued on page 16 »

Confessions of an Economic Hitman

Democracy Now! interviews John Perkins

The following interview originally appeared on DemocracyNow.org. It is partially reprinted here with permission. John Perkins is the author of *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man: How the US Uses Globalization to Cheat Poor Countries Out of Trillions*.

Amy Goodman: Explain this term, “economic hit man,” e.h.m., as you call it.

John Perkins: Basically what we were trained to do and what our job is to do is to build up the American empire. To create situations where as many resources as possible flow into this country, to our corporations, and our government. In fact, we’ve been very successful. We’ve built the largest empire in the history of the world. It’s been done over the last 50 years since World War II with very little military might. It’s only in rare instances like Iraq where the military comes in as a last resort. This empire, unlike any other in the history of the world, has been built primarily through economic manipulation, through cheating, through fraud, through seducing people into our way of life, through the economic hit men. I was very much a part of that.

How did you become one? Who did you work for?

Well, I was initially recruited while I was in business school back in the late sixties by the National Security Agency [NSA], the nation’s largest and least understood spy organization; but ultimately I worked for private corporations. The first real economic hit man was back in the early 1950s, Kermit Roosevelt, the grandson of Teddy, who overthrew of government of Iran, a democratically elected government. [Prime Minister] Mossadegh’s government—he

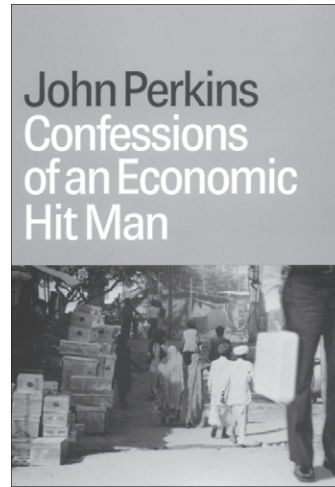
was Time’s magazine person of the year. Roosevelt was so successful at doing this without bloodshed—well, there was a little bloodshed, but no military intervention, just millions of dollars spent—and we replaced Mossadegh with the Shah of Iran. At that point, we understood that this idea of economic hit man was an extremely good one. We didn’t have to worry about the threat of war with Russia when we did it this way. The problem with that was that Roosevelt was a CIA agent. He was a government employee. Had he been caught, we would have been in a lot of trouble. It would have been very embarrassing. So, at that point, the decision was made to use organizations like the CIA and the NSA to recruit potential economic hit men like me and then send us to work for private con-

“My job... was giving loans to other countries, huge loans, much bigger than they could possibly repay.”

sulting companies, engineering firms, construction companies, so that if we were caught, there would be no connection with the government.

Okay. Explain the company you worked for.

Well, the company I worked for was a company named Chas. T. Main in Boston, Massachusetts. We were about 2,000 employees, and I became its chief econ-



omist. I ended up having fifty people working for me. But my real job was deal-making. It was giving loans to other countries, huge loans, much bigger than they could possibly repay. One of the conditions of the loan—let’s say a \$1 billion to a country like Indonesia or Ecuador—was that the country would then have to give ninety percent of that loan back to US companies, to build the infrastructure—companies like Halliburton or a Bechtel. Those companies would then go in and build an electrical system or ports or highways, and these would basically serve just a few of the very wealthiest families in those countries. The poor people in those countries would be stuck ultimately with this amazing debt that they couldn’t possibly repay. A country today like Ecuador owes over fifty percent of its national budget just to pay down its debt. And it really can’t do it. So we have them over a barrel. When we want more oil, we go to Ecuador and say, “Look, you’re not able to repay your debts, so give our oil companies your Amazon rain forest, which are filled with oil.” And today we’re going in and destroying Amazonian rain forests, forcing Ecuador to give them to us because they’ve accumulated all this debt.

So we make this big loan,

most of it comes back to the United States, the country is left with the debt plus lots of interest, and they basically become our servants, our slaves. It’s an empire. There’s no two ways about it.

How closely did you work with the World Bank?

Very, very closely. The World Bank provides most of the money that’s used by economic hit men, along with the [International Monetary Fund]. But when 9/11 struck, I had a change of heart. I knew the story had to be told, because what happened at 9/11 is a direct result of what the economic hit men are doing. And the only way that we’re going to feel secure in this country again and that we’re going to feel good about ourselves is if we use these systems we’ve

“Look, you’re not able to repay your debts, so give our oil companies your Amazon rain forest, which is filled with oil.”

put into place to create positive change around the world. I really believe we can do that. I believe the World Bank and other institutions can be turned around and do what they were originally intended to do, which is help reconstruct devastated parts of the world. Help—genuinely help poor people. There are twenty-four thousand people starving to death every day. We can change that.

Buy Nothing Year

Matt Watkins' quest to want not, waste not

by Hillary Lindsay

(This article originally appeared in *The Coast*.)

Friday November 26th was Buy Nothing Day. For Matt Watkins it was a day like any other. On July 6 (his birthday), Matt Watkins closed his bank accounts, gave away his small savings and stopped buying anything. Nearly five months into his Buy Nothing Year, Watkins has spent nothing and thought a lot about the costs of living in a consumer society. "I stopped using money in order to express my discontent towards a capitalist system of exchange that I believe to be exploitative, oppressive and destructive," Watkins explains. "Buy Nothing Year is a rejection of an economic system which values profit over people and which uses economic advantage to maintain an unjust power structure. ...It is also an effort to contribute as little as possible to the waste stream, by living as much as possible on the excesses of society." Living without money in a culture that treats poverty like a crime and values most things and people by their monetary worth has been a huge learning experience for Watkins. An experience that he readily recognizes he has had the privilege to choose. As a young, white, healthy, educated male, Watkins says his Buy Nothing Year is partly "...an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the realities of daily life for the economically underprivileged." He admits, however, that even without money, his privileged background continues to offer him advantages that many people are denied.

"A combination of house-sitting, work exchange, tenting, working on organic farms, hitch-hiking, dumpster-diving, dish-washing, gardening and simply asking has so far pro-



vided me with the things I need," explains Watkins, who has found buying nothing the least of his worries.

"Obviously, Buy Nothing Year takes a lot of energy, and presents many challenges. There is a constant danger of developing exploitative or dependent relationships, and [there is] the necessity of constant resistance to an ideology that teaches that the only meaningful contribution [to society] is financial. Overcoming these expectations has been a far greater challenge than going without a few luxuries."

Watkins is currently house-sitting a home with a wood stove. He has an agreement with a neighbour to chop his wood and in return will receive as much wood as he needs to heat his home for the winter. Since Watkins no longer works eight hours a day, he has ample time to spend with people he cares about, and to volunteer for organizations he believes in. Whether it's taking an autistic child swimming every morning or cooking for Food Not Bombs in Halifax, Watkins has spent his time doing things he enjoys and believes in - with no expectation of receiving anything in return. Buy Nothing Year, according to Watkins is partly an "actualization of a personal philosophy which proposes that generosity is infectious." He has

been pleasantly surprised by the response.

"People have alternately responded to Buy Nothing Year with interest, disbelief, gratitude, generosity and often overwhelming support," he says. It has been the support of friends and the wider community that has made Buy Nothing Year possible for Watkins. He has spent a lot of time in public spaces such as parks and libraries and has also spent a lot of time in the houses of friends. During the summer and early fall Watkins often pitched his tent in a friend's backyard and also cooked communally in friends' kitchens. Watkins is uninterested in debating with those who see this kind of community support as 'cheating.' "I'm tired of trying to convince people on whether Buy Nothing Year is a sham or not. If they're really looking, they're bound to find something wrong, and if they're doing that, they're missing the point....It is only the co-operation and generosity of a supportive community that permit Buy Nothing Year to happen. It is this spirit and energy that I want to encourage and generate."

Buy Nothing Year has not only made Watkins more conscious of his relationships with people and his community, but also of his relationship with the environment. No longer able to

buy food from the local grocery store, much of what Watkins ate in the summer and fall was grown in his garden in a friend's backyard. More recently, Watkins has been volunteering on a local organic farm in exchange for meals. Growing his own food organically is a stark contrast to Watkins other food source: the dumpsters of big box stores.

Watkins is overwhelmed by the amount of bread, vegetables, and just about everything else that gets thrown out every day. He believes it's a symptom of a society that has become completely disconnected from the impacts of how money is spent. "Greed and mismanagement of natural resources have brought our planet to the brink of destruction," says Watkins. "The lifestyle most Canadians lead is unsustainable. At some point we have to start taking individual responsibility for our own patterns of consumption. Individual consumers are ultimately the cause of environmental degradation, and I believe that taking responsibility for our own consumer decisions is the solution."

Although there are plenty of altruistic reasons to live more simply, according to Watkins, buying nothing (or buying less) has unexpected benefits. "Participating in genuine exchanges and relationships that are not mediated by money has caused me to rethink my system of assigning value to the things I use, and the people I meet. It has also shown me how dependent we are on each other, and the earth. Money causes us to take these things for granted; buying nothing has taught me to be thankful for them. I believe that this sort of exchange brings out the best in people." Matt Watkins plans to continue to live without money until July 6th 2005.

Manufacturing Democracy

The politics of media coverage: Haiti, Ukraine, Georgia

by Dru Oja Jay

Two months ago, many Canadians would have been hard-pressed to name Ukraine's capital, but recent weeks have seen a barrage of breathless headlines tracking the political situation in the eastern European nation.

"Ukraine moves to control official investigations into Yushchenko's illness"; "Doubts arise: can poisoning of Ukrainian opposition candidate be proven?"; "Ukrainian opposition leader Yushchenko poisoned with dioxin: Austrian doctors"; "Doctors 'closing in' on cause of Ukrainian candidate's face disfigurement"; "Ukraine's opposition takes campaign to hostile east".

All of these headlines appeared on the CBC's Web site within a 24-hour period, a saturation of coverage more reminiscent of a typical Canadian election rather than one that took place weeks ago, thousands of miles away. Why the sudden flood of coverage? What is its meaning, and more importantly, what has been excluded?

Perhaps, as the cliché has it, the "Orange Revolution" has "captured the imaginations" of Canadians. But why this one in particular? There is no shortage of potentially inspiring mobilizations of thousands of citizens in defense of democracy. The tenacious popular revolt against the three-day coup in Venezuela comes to mind; it received minimal coverage.

In terms of explaining the enthusiasm of the Canadian media in covering the situation in Ukraine and our government's glorious role in cultivating democracy there, the most useful counterexample is the comparatively stark situation with respect to media coverage of events occurring in Haiti.

Just under a year ago, hun-



Canadian media have focused on protests, but ignored essential facts about US and Canadian involvement in Ukraine.

dreds of thousands of Haitians filled the streets of Port-au-Prince in opposition to ongoing attempts to unseat their democratically elected president, Jean Bertrand Aristide. The anti-Aristide demonstrations topped out at a few thousand participants, their numbers occasionally bolstered by sweatshop workers forced to protest under threat of losing their jobs. It would not be an exaggeration to say that mainstream Canadian media failed to report these basic facts, deciding instead to take every opportunity to demonize Aristide, depicting him as corrupt and unpopular.

Just this week, a reporter for CTV news revisited this apotheosis of disinformation, writing that Aristide "left for exile in late February after massive demonstrations." That the massive demonstrations were in support of the Haitian leader does not seem to concern the reporter, or any other Canadian reporters who regularly report this assertion as fact. This practice continues, despite former Canadian ambassador Kenneth Cook's recent acknowledgement that if elections were held today in Haiti, the Aristide's Lavalas party would win.

In contrast, it would be an understatement to say that

the Canadian media is friendly to Viktor Yushchenko, the "pro-western" presidential candidate in the 2004 Ukraine election. For example, footage appearing on the CBC's news program *The National* featured positive images of hundreds of young protesters in Kiev, which were immediately followed by images of a mere handful of Viktor Yanukovich's (the Putin-backed presidential candidate) supporters. The small group was shown milling around a bus at night, with one individual dressed in military uniform. Similarly, *The Globe and Mail* recently featured a cover photo of two pro-Yanukovich protesters "sharing a tender moment". The binary symbolism is more worthy of an issue of the Soviet-era *Pravda* than of a free press: west vs. east, young vs. old, democracy vs. autocracy, day vs. night.

There are, of course, legitimate reasons for Canadians and Canadian media to be sympathetic to the Ukrainian-speaking westerners. In the years following the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia continued to intervene in the economic and political lives of its former colonial charges, often using Russian-speaking minorities as pawns. Russian President

Putin's backing of Yanukovich is as real as his autocratic tendencies and his murderous policies in Chechnya, and comes with real consequences.

But Putin is not the only one meddling.

In the last two years, the Bush Administration spent more than \$65 million helping political organizations in the Ukraine. Additional funds have come from George Soros, Great Britain, Canada, Norway and the Netherlands, according to the Associated Press (AP). The money was key to funding the exit polls that cast doubt on the legitimacy of the election results, which showed Yanukovich as the winner. That the story came from the AP is significant; while the CBC saw fit to run four AP stories on the details of Ukrainian politics in one night, it omitted the story regarding the funding arrangements for the exit polls. Other Canadian media have also ignored US and Canadian funding of Yushchenko and affiliated political organizations.

As the Canadian and American press would have it, Russia is cynically manipulating Ukrainian politics, but our own countries have only a high-minded concern for democracy.

Is there a debate to be had about US and Canadian intervention in the internal affairs of other countries? With essential facts suppressed, a rational discussion is impossible.

While the press provides plenty of arguments to depict Yushchenko as one of the good guys, Ukraine is not the first place that a "democratic revolution" has been enthusiastically embraced by the Canadian and American press, only to go awry after the media spotlight fades. The combined effects of privatization and inequality have had devastating effects throughout

continues next page »

continued from prev. page »

the post-Soviet world, but there is little or no criticism--much less awareness--of Yushenko's advocacy of massive privatization of the Ukrainian economy.

Similar replacements by "democratic" oppositions occurred in Serbia, Georgia, and may soon occur in Romania. In Georgia, the initial enthusiastic press coverage of US- and Soros-backed Mikhail Saakashvili has abated, yet subsequent findings show that the new President has consolidated power, put further constraints on the press, and has used violence on demonstrators--not

what most Canadians would call democratic reforms.

However, Saakashvili has fulfilled the European and American requests to privatize the economy, impose fiscal discipline, and "modernize the military and police force". Yet these changes have not been deemed newsworthy. Will the public be informed if Yushenko follows in Saakashvili's footsteps? To whom does Yushenko owe more loyalty: his voters, or his foreign investors?

While nominal democracy makes for good public relations, it is never the primary

motivation for investing millions of dollars into a political outcome in a foreign country. In Haiti, Georgia and Ukraine, the foreign policy of the US (with Canada in tow) is oriented toward increasing US power, spreading "free trade" and privatization as dominant economic policies, gaining valuable trade deals, and minimizing Russia's regional influence. The press supports the official line with startling regularity, while frequently neglecting to report the true motivations fuelling these policies.

In the absence of meaning-

ful and consistent criticism, the media will support the official policy, as it is the journalistic path of least resistance.

Will the press continue to pay such close attention to Ukrainian politics if Yushenko assumes power? If the precedents of Haiti and Georgia serve as indicators, the answer is no. In any case, serious considerations of the interests of the people of the Ukraine, Georgia, or Haiti have yet to make an appearance in the Canadian media, that's as worthy of concern as any election fraud.

Arctic Climage Change, continued from page 6:

pests such as mosquitoes.

Dr. Chris Furgal of Quebec's Nasivvik Centre for Inuit Health and Changing Environments said, "In regions where we do have the projections of cooling and more temperature extremes, where we'd see more cold or hot days, there's potential thermal stress on individuals who are already compromised, [such as] elders or people that have respiratory problems."

The shareholders in petroleum and gas companies are the winners in the Arctic thaw, a thaw precipitated in large part by the burning of these fossil fuels. Groups that profit from

the causes of global warming will stand to benefit from its effects as well. The residents of the sparsely populated Arctic, it seems, will reap only the consequences.

Warmer weather will ease access northern resources, and the opening of northern sea routes will ease transportation of the cargo. The increased tanker traffic in the northern sea passage will increase the likelihood of pollution and pose a challenge to Canadian sovereignty over waterways that it claims.

Industrial activity facilitates the release of toxic mer-

cury into the environment. Mercury thereby gets into the food chain and jeopardizes the health of northern inhabitants.

As for solutions, the ACIA concluded, "Strong near-term action to reduce [greenhouse gas] emissions is required É to alter the future path of human-induced warming." Northern residents must also begin to adapt to the changes that have already occurred. In addition, the report pointed out the need to be ready for "surprises."

The US, which is responsible for the release of approximately a quarter of the world's greenhouse gases--gases which fuel

global warming--was singled out for censure by Watt-Cloutier. The George Bush administration in the US refuses to ratify the Kyoto Accord that limits the emission of greenhouse gases to below 1990 levels. Watt-Cloutier denounced this selfishness: "The short-term economic policy of one country should not be able to trump the entire survival of one people."

"Climate change is not just about weather or sea ice conditions," said Watt-Cloutier, "It's a fight to preserve a way of life."

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Under plans currently on the table, before re-entering their rubble-strewn city the more than 200,000 refugees who fled the month-long American offensive in Fallujah will be required to pass through what are being called "citizen processing centers," where they will be screened and a database of their identities will be created through a series of procedures, including DNA testing and retina scans.

Identification badges displaying the individual's home address would be mandatory in the new Fallujah described by Marines, and cars -- the make-shift delivery device of choice for insurgent bombings -- would

be banned altogether.

According to the Globe, Marine officers are also debating compulsory employment for all Fallujah's men in military-type reconstruction corps, a system they compare to that established in post-World War Two Germany.

"They're never going to like us," said Lieutenant Colonel Dave Bellon, a Marine intelligence officer who believes the US military should exploit Sunni Arabs' traditional ways. "They want to figure out who the dominant tribe is and say, 'I'm with you.' We need to be the benevolent, dominant tribe."

Major General Richard Natonski, who commanded last

month's invasion of Fallujah by US and Iraqi forces, credited Iraq's interim government as coming up with all the ideas for rebuilding Fallujah.

—Jon Elmer, *The New Standard*

Foreign Aid Budgets Decreasing: Oxfam

In a report released this week, Oxfam claims that levels of foreign aid money set aside for development NGOs by rich countries have fallen by half since the 1960s, despite increasing prosperity among donor nations. Warning that the UN's Millennium Development Goals on poverty reduction are at risk, the development advocacy

group called on donor countries to set aside at least \$50 billion in new overseas aid and to shore up aid budgets to 0.7 per cent of GDP.

US foreign aid spending in 2003 was 0.14 per cent of GDP, one-tenth of what the country spent on Iraq in the same year. Canada's contribution level was 0.26 per cent, down from 0.45 in 1992. Only five countries - Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Sweden - are above the 0.7 per cent mark. The report also challenges the World Bank and the IMF to focus on attaching fewer conditions such as spending caps and fiscal targets to foreign aid contributions.

Haitians protest Latortue visit, continued from page 3:

government. It is not explained that at least a good billion of that is actually going to be loans, that Haiti will have to repay. They're making decisions to further put Haiti into debt, for generations to come."

The view of the Canadian government stands in stark contrast, with frequent reference to the "failed state" in Haiti, the "responsibility" of Canada to intervene, and the "incompetence and corruption" of Haitian leadership "since independence".

**Need for Solidarity;
Lack of Press**

"We need the solidarity of Canadians and Québécois(es)," said Jean-Laurent Nelson. "It's

the same planet, we all have the same problem, and there's one solution: solidarity."

Many organizers identified a similar need for Canadians and Québécois(es) to understand the situation of the Haitian people and put pressure on their government accordingly. In this context, the theme of disinformation was frequently mentioned.

"People don't know what's going on, because the press is hiding it from them," said Nelson. "Thousands of cadavres are showing up every day in Haiti, and nothing is reported."

Demas added: "To have the the solidarity of people in Canada, they have to be informed; people are kept in total ignorance." He accused the

press of demonizing Aristide in order to enable his ouster, but now engaging in the "complicity of silence."

He also pointed out the racial divide in support for Aristide. "The countries with black people, in Africa and the Caribbean, are supporting Aristide. France and the United States, with the colonialist and racist pasts, are going the other way. Canada, which has not been considered a colonialist power, has unfortunately decided to follow the latter two."

Both the racial split, and the lack of media attention were apparent throughout the day. Of a few hundred protesters, only a handful had white skin. Though 190 journalists were invited to the press conference,

none came from the mainstream press, save for a cameraman who stayed only long enough to get "visuals".

Magalee, who organized the press conference, accused journalists of not paying attention while atrocities are happening. "If they had to come here and know how many people are dying in Haiti right now, they would say 'how come we didn't know that before?'" She cited the case of Rwanda, where "there were massacres going on all the time, and we only heard it at the end."

"There could be a genocide coming on in Haiti, people are getting killed. A former soldier shot a six year old girl in Haiti, and everyone knows who he is, but he has not been arrested."

Haitians protest Latortue visit, continued from page 3:

decades, changed some barriers between the prisoners and the public that they are to someday rejoin. One of WHOS's most immediate rewards for both communities has been simply the mingling of the theatre-going public with their convict hosts on performance nights. WHOS's ongoing support from

both patrons and community sponsors bespeaks this positive relationship.

The most significant loss, however, is of WHOS's uncalculated effects on its prisoner participants. As one former WHOS member described, life in prison consists of anger and frustration. To be part of such a

project and to explore, through drama, the emotional range of ordinary life is invaluable. The loss of this innovative, controversial, means of rehabilitation is a serious one.

Readers interested in supporting the creative output of William Head prisoners may appreciate *Out of Bounds*, a

prison-produced quarterly magazine for both occupants and public. Those interested in learning more about William Head On Stage can check out "Criminal Acts—Inside Prison Theatre," a 2003 NFB production.

L'oléoduc Tchad-Cameroun, de page 9:

environnement paraissent inexorables. L'oléoduc Tchad-Cameroun n'a été jusqu'à maintenant qu'une opportunité commerciale pour les sociétés transnationales, principalement américaines et françaises. Elles doivent ces avantages aux Institutions Financières Internationales (IFI), qui ont une position quasi hégémonique dans les instances de décision mondiale, puisque sans leur aval, ce genre de projet ne verrait pas le jour. Doit-on alors redéfinir les fondements de ces institutions en vue de les accorder avec leur politique officielle de développement économique et social ?

Contrairement à une partie des objectifs annoncés, la Banque Mondiale soutient que « son mandat limité »

la « restreint à des activités purement économiques ». Un programme d'étude du Centre des Droits de l'Homme de l'Université du Minnesota dénonce ce rôle restrictif, en particulier la tyrannie engendrée par les « ajustements structurels » qu'impose la BM au pays en développement en échange de financements. D'après le groupe activiste, ces ajustements induisent qu'il faille « réduire les dépenses des États, anéantir des organes publics, dévaluer des devises et privatiser des entreprises publiques ». Un désastre social et humain qui s'ajoute aux « amples dégâts environnementaux » inhérents aux « projets » de la BM.

Si les bases

méthodologiques et idéologiques de la BM ne participent pas au respect des droits de l'homme et de son environnement, pourquoi ne pas « transformer profondément » l'ensemble du « système international » comme le propose un mouvement citoyen dans son programme pour la « Réforme des Institutions Financières Internationales ».

A juste titre, ce réseau réclame « un fonctionnement plus transparent, plus équitable et plus démocratique, la définition et la mise en œuvre d'une réelle politique de développement durable, une véritable participation des populations à la définition de leurs politiques, un règlement global du problème de la dette, et une régula-

tion de l'économie mondiale au service des droits fondamentaux et de l'environnement ». Cette demande unanime de la société civile, bien que légitime, n'a peu de chance d'aboutir tant que les règles qui régissent les institutions publiques internationales seront définies par les États membres et non par les citoyens qu'ils représentent. Par conséquent, aussi longtemps que le principe d'« un vote par dollars » primera sur celui d'« un vote par pays », les peuples subiront les dérives des priorités financières.

