

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

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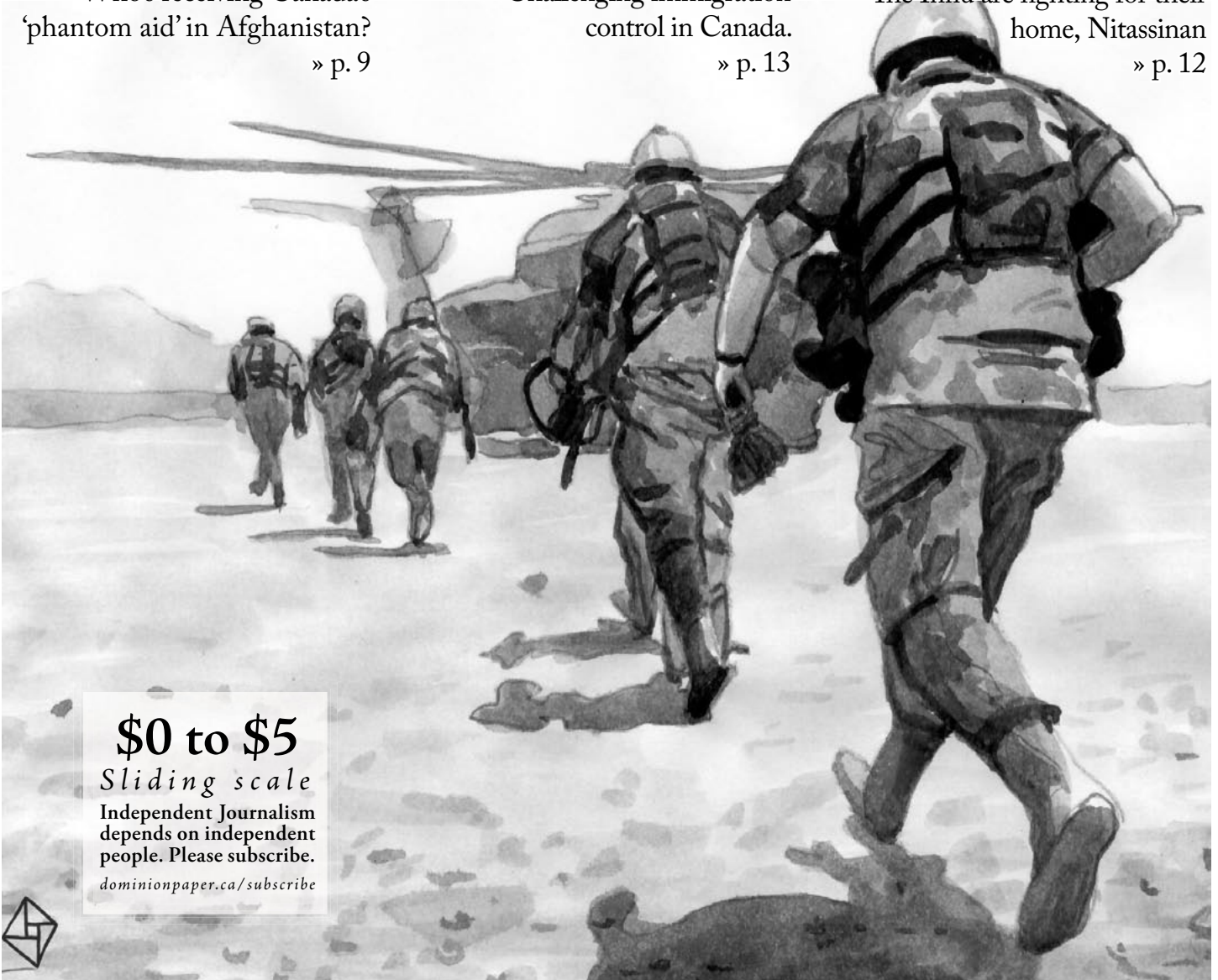
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Shell comes under attack in the Niger Delta

Tensions are high in the Niger Delta, where a group calling itself the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) is escalating its attacks on the oil multinational Royal Dutch Shell.

According to Amnesty International, Niger Delta communities see little of Nigeria's oil revenues, while frequent oil spills and gas flares have wreaked havoc on the local environment, culture and economy. Although government infrastructure, in the form of schools, health facilities and clean water, is almost non-existent in the Niger Delta region, the government does have a strong armed security presence, say Amnesty.

On February 17, Nigerian military helicopters attacked what the government says were barges used for smuggling oil, reports *Alternet*. Several people were injured and six are missing and feared dead after the attack.

MEND accused Royal Dutch Shell of providing its airstrip as the staging post for the helicopter attacks. The following day, nine foreign oil workers were kidnapped.

MEND has claimed responsibility for the kidnappings and, according to African Dimension News, has given multinational oil firms seven days to vacate their offices in the country.

—Hillary Bain Lindsay

Pakistan relaxes laws against Indian films

For the first time since the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965, a Hindi film will be screened in Pakistan. The news comes after an amendment to the laws of the Pakistani Censor Board, which had been preventing the screening of all films involving Indian actors or directors.

No final decisions or official announcements have been made, but the Times of India



Demonstration on International Boycott Shell Day. *IndyMedia.org*

has reported that the film *Sohni Mahiwal*, a joint production between India and the then Soviet Union, will be the first Bollywood film to hit Pakistani movie theatres in forty years.

Despite the ban and fears that Indian movies would have a negative influence on Islamic culture, their popularity in the country has exploded, as pirated versions, radio, and an affordable cable network have made both the films and their music readily available. The Pakistani piracy market, in particular, has mushroomed, generating some \$27 million a year. This has come at the expense of local movie theatres, which have seen their audience numbers plummet.

—Salvatore Ciolfi

Sweden to abandon oil and nuclear power

Sweden is attempting to become the world's first oil-free country by 2020, without the use of nuclear power. According to the Swedish government, "energy policy should create the conditions for efficient and sustainable energy use and a cost-effective Swedish energy supply which has minimum negative impact on health, the environment and the climate. It should also facilitate the transition to an ecologically sustainable society."

Currently 45 per cent of

Swedish electricity comes from nuclear power while 8 per cent comes from fossil fuels. In the last two years, however, Sweden has stopped importing electricity and has increased its production of hydroelectric power to compensate. A 1980 referendum called for the phasing out of nuclear power, allowing operating plants to operate only until the end of their technical life (assumed to be 25 years).

According to the *Guardian* "the Swedish government is working with carmakers Saab and Volvo to develop cars and lorries that burn ethanol and other biofuels." Public and private industries are being given grants to convert to other energy sources.

Sweden has decided to convert to renewable energy sources to prevent the problems of climate change and avoid the predicted high oil prices --problems similar to those Sweden faced in the 1970's. Brazil and Iceland have also developed plans to shift 80 to 100 per cent of the fuel used by their transport vehicles to renewable energy sources in the near future.

—Geordie Gwalgen Dent

African AIDS education may be working in Zimbabwe

A recently published census conducted in Zimbabwe

has shown a 50 per cent drop in prevalence of HIV in some groups. The study, conducted by researchers from London and Zimbabwe between 1997 and 2003, focused on nearly 10 000 people and found that a reduction of sexual partners, a delay on first-time sexual encounters and an increase in the use of condoms, has produced an overall decline in HIV.

Women, aged 15 to 24 saw a 49 per cent reduction in HIV prevalence, while men aged 17 to 29 saw a 23 per cent drop. Although Zimbabwe does not have the AIDS prevention resources or funds compared to some of its neighbors such as Zambia, the country has joined Uganda in being one of the only two Sub-Sahara countries to see a significant decline in their prevalence of HIV.

The decrease has been attributed to education programs launched in the 1990s which focused on a variety of behaviors which reduce the risk of HIV transmission, such as monogamy, abstinence and using condoms. Canadian support to fight against AIDS in Africa has mostly focused on the use of anti-retroviral drugs but high costs have meant that only 5 per cent of those in Zimbabwe in need of these drugs are receiving them.

Of global HIV infections, 70 per cent of them are in Africa and 80 per cent of all AIDS-related deaths are in Africa as well. Some countries such as Botswana, Lesotho and Zimbabwe have infection rates of over 30 per cent of the population.

—Geordie Gwalgen Dent

Netherlands to send more troops to Afghanistan

The Dutch parliament voted in favor of sending more troops to Afghanistan with the hope of raising its current number of 600 soldiers to roughly 1400 by the end of February. This marks the most significant Dutch military mission since the failure of

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OCAP occupies housing tribunal, warns provincial government

"Poor people are having to choose between feeding their families and paying rent," says John Clarke, an organizer for the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP). As quoted in Rabble News, Clarke explained why OCAP occupied and shut down the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal on February 10th, saving 30 Torontonians from being evicted from their homes.

In November 2005, the McGuinty government drastically cut the Special Diet Supplement (an allowance given to residents of Ontario receiving disability or special assistance who are deemed in need of extra money for food). According to OCAP, this cut on top of the Harris government's 22 per cent cut to welfare rates in 1995 has resulted in many families having to decide between going without food and facing eviction from their homes.

The occupation of the housing tribunal was a statement to the Ontario government that poor people need to be adequately represented in the next provincial budget.

—Hillary Bain Lindsay

New Quebec party has social justice as central goal

A new provincial party has been formed in Quebec with a stated commitment to ecology, universal social programs, feminism, international solidarity and diversity. Quebec Solidaire's secondary goal is Quebec sovereignty.

"Our first goal is social justice," said organizer Françoise David, according to *CBC Montreal*. "We are also ecologist, we are feminist. You don't have to be really sovereignist to be with us."

Spokesperson Amir Kader said the party's power would be decentralized. "[Voters] are fed



OCAP shut down the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal

OCAP

up with the cult of personality, for example, where all the power is in the hand of the chief," he said. "They want a party that will be more democratic."

The party currently has 4000 members and is hoping to attract disenchanted PQ voters.

According to the *Montreal Gazette*, Khadir said Quebec Solidaire's main issue with the PQ's platform was that there is no critique of "the dominant forces ruling over the world economy," like free-trade agreements. He also criticized the PQ's environmental policies.

—Hillary Bain Lindsay

Canada successful in push for new 'Terminator' policy

On January 27, at a meeting of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Granada, Spain, the international community agreed to allow experimentation with Genetic Use Restriction Technology (GURT), also known as "Terminator" technology. "GURT" is an umbrella term referring to genetic enhancement technology that produces plant varieties with sterile seeds at harvest.

Canada, together with Australia and New Zealand, successfully pushed for this change in international policy on GURTs.

While this move doesn't lift

the current ban on commercial use of Terminator seeds, opponents of Terminator technology see allowing experimentation as a step in that direction. According to a press release jointly written by the Ban Terminator Campaign and the Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration (ETC group), "Not only did the meeting fail to condemn Terminator as immoral and anti-farmer, Australia and the United States falsely claimed that Terminator, which creates sterility, would 'increase productivity.'"

Even under experimental conditions, GURT plant varieties could pass on sterility -- the "Terminator" or "suicide" trait -- to wild plants, or to non-GURT cultivated plants. Tests will take place in large-scale, outdoor agro-laboratories, meaning that surrounding ecosystems will be at risk of contamination.

Used commercially, critics argue that GURTs will imperil the global seed supply, contribute to the homogenization of the food supply, and threaten biodiversity in natural ecosystems. Indigenous peoples' rights to food sovereignty and self-determination are also threatened by GURTs, since socio-economic and cultural welfare is inextricably linked to environmental security.

According to close observers like the ETC group, the Canadian government is bowing

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Hot Politics

Women are leading Burlesque's international revival

by Jane Henderson and Edie Jackson

"Ladies and Gentlemen, Guys and Dolls, Chicks with Dicks.... Welcome to the show!"

It's the final evening of the first Vancouver International Burlesque Festival (February 9-11, 2006), and two young men in suits and straw boaters are opening the night with a catchy, cheesy, antiquated song about loving scores of girls.

The theatre is filled with couples and friend groups of all varieties. Slender, spangled young women catcall each other, sip cocktails through straws between red-painted lips, and eat brownies. Tattoos are peeking out from under those frilly panties and camisoles. One woman has lollipops sticking out of – not pin curls, but a fantastic set of dreads. Tonight is a nexus of the neo-burlesque and proof of the accelerating comeback of this metamorphic genre.

The newer style of burlesque, situated in the 21st century and hence exhibiting a different set of concerns about the body – including feminism, AIDS, body types, transgender and queer community politics, and plain old desire – self-consciously uses sexualized play and the act of witnessing as the basis of empowerment for messages about sexual or sexualized issues. Some of these issues are progressive, and some are less so. Progressive politics are mixed with old-fashioned heterosexist versions of desire. The two have ample space to feed off of and reform one another.

A hundred and sixty years ago, the burlesque form took root in the low-class variety show culture of Great Britain and America. "Burlesquing" meant lampooning the operas and affectations of the upper classes. Audience attention



Progressive politics and plain old desire come together in burlesque.

Vancouver International Burlesque Festival

was held by ribald parody and shapely underdressed dancers in an era when all proper women (not to mention tables) kept their legs well covered. By the 1960s though, shock value was redefined as full-nudity stripping. Performers joined the trend, by choice or just to survive professionally. Bump 'n' grind overtook campy comedy.

Over the last decade, an international, women-led revival has taken place. There's a whole variety of variety shows out there, with wide-ranging ratios of strip to tease. Styles are as divergent as the women who participate. Some set out to recreate, others to wholly reinvent, vintage aesthetics of glamour. Using a retro aesthetic in costumes, props, or music automatically puts the performers in dialogue with that era. They may be teasing its values or meshing it with contemporary concerns (exemplified by a performer peeling off satin evening gloves and clumsily putting on latex ones instead).

The performer who goes by Your Little Pony, 29, says that burlesque performers share "the experience of pushing the boundaries of self-presentation," with the added thrill of being watched while doing so. In comparing onstage and offstage sexualities, she explains, "The biggest thing is the witnessing. Both can be messy,

erotic, personal. But on stage you're witnessed without a lot of touch. Offstage you're witnessed mostly by touch. Then there's how you witness yourself: offstage is slower and less influenced by adrenalin; onstage is a whirlwind and often more planned."

Witnessing oneself is central to burlesque yoga, an inventive practice that its creator and instructor, Little Woo, describes as "low-brow art meets sacred spirituality." Moves expressing archetypes such as mermaids, belly dancers, and kung fu fighters are taught as yoga postures, with emphasis on meditative breathing, inner connection, and refreshing hilarity.

Not everyone agrees with the powerful intentions behind some performers' playfulness. One producer declared that the variety skits are just work for theatre people who can't get into real theatre or for women doing it "just for the strip." Another scornful dancer commented, "Burlesque is stripping for fat people – you can quote me – and that's why I've moved on from it." (California's Big Bottom troupe, on the other hand, revels in reviving burlesque's historical preference for shapely dancers.)

"Oh, some people want to see slick polished girls. But some just want to laugh," says Maz, 29, a member of BYO

(Bring Your Own) troupe. The troupe formed after Maz's roommate walked out of a burlesque performance one night, tired of repetitive body types and hetero plots, determined to bring a more gender-transformative, DIY-attitude to their own productions. Maz adds, "What I learned from burlesque class is you don't need to take a class. You can just do it."

"I always say amateurs are the new professionals," laughs fellow performer Coral, 33. "We're empowered as amateurs, more hot, edgy, raw. Everyone's got a repertoire. Just get those moves together!"

"It's not even about nakedness. If you have humour, you don't need nakedness," Coral continues. "Not that we'd want to impose limits or rule out full nudity!" Verotica143, Seattle's erotic mime, comes to mind as someone who can pretend to take her clothes off more sexily and more wittily than most people would imagine possible.

Your Little Pony explains a key point: "Dancers choose how they are portrayed, so you have the power over the dialogue, and the audience meets you in the middle with feedback." Burlesque gives women (and the less-numerous men and intergender folks who also participate) a chance to laugh, redefine gender archetypes and body type ideals, to form communities of sexual solidarity through interaction, and to just plain be sexy within a wider horizon of repercussions and contexts.

People love a little saucy sass, after all. Turns out that with the right music, female empowerment can look like pulling green onions out of a sequined corset. Or dressing up like a skunk. Or twirling pasties on your bum while, as Your Little Pony wrote, "a crowd of people FREAK OUT!"



The City Man
Howard Akler
Coach House Books, 2005

Torontonians will love *The City Man*, a quick-paced first novel set in the early spring of 1934 Toronto. Anyone who knows Toronto will recognize Union Station, Kensington Market, and a whole list of street names and buildings. For everyone else, the novel has a love story and a happy ending. The book employs what seem like conventional depression-era film noir characters – the crack reporter working the police

beat, the hard-done-by, but loveable pick-pocket – yet the end result is stunningly original and engaging. There are a few small falters – one unfortunate “RIIII-iip” of paper; a predilection for unusual words that occasionally fights against the gritty, no-nonsense, almost telegraphic style; and an overall sparseness of subplot and of secondary characters suggestive of a short story stretched too thin. The payoff comes

in the tautness resonating throughout, and a playfulness with language which seldom fails to delight. Akler’s prose is cinematic, tight-focused, and raw, capturing and presenting visual details in a visceral way that adds up to more than mere description. *The City Man* is an historically informative and entertaining read.

—Matthew Trafford



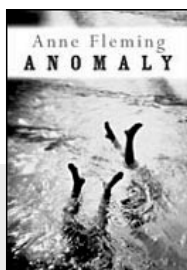
Living Will: Shakespeare After Dark
Harold Rhenisch
Wolsak and Wynn, 2005

Harold Rhenisch’s latest project is one of self-proclaimed urgency. In this, his eleventh poetry collection, Rhenisch lays out Shakespeare’s famed 154-strong sonnet sequence, and, on the opposite side of the page, translates them into a compelling and sexually explicit modern-day English. Where Shakespeare wrote, “But wherefore do not you a mightier way / Make war upon this bloody tyrant, Time?” Rhenisch trans-

lates, “Time is Stalin. There’s only way to really / outlive the bastard: join the underground. So, / why don’t you?” Rhenisch’s 154 poems aren’t composed in sonnet form, and a certain family of reader, appalled by Rhenisch’s capable coarseness, may very well retreat to the safety afforded by the historical distance, archaic language, and metrical formality of the originals. The overwhelming *Carpe Diem* flavour of Rhenisch’s work

makes it better to flip through than to read in sequence, since consumed too consecutively its subtleties blur to repetition. *Living Will*, right from its punning title through its pop-culture references to Britney Spears, Wal-Mart, and the like, is a call to life set against the English literary tradition’s habit of emphasizing death.

—Jane Henderson



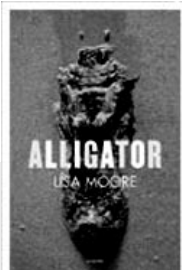
Anomaly
Anne Fleming
Raincoast Books, 2005.

This excellent first novel begins in typical Canadian fashion, with a scene set at a Brownie meeting in early 1970s Toronto. What sets the story apart, however, is its pair of believable and intriguing young protagonists, sisters Carol and Glynnis. Carol is an albino, tormented by classmates for her physical differences. Fleming skillfully illustrates the cruelty that little girls inflict on each other; she’s got the language of

grade-school exclusion down pat. When Carol’s rage finally spills over, the resulting accident has wide-reaching repercussions, and leaves younger, more popular Glynnis just as much an outsider as her sister. *Anomaly*’s only slight detraction is the depiction of its protagonists’ mother Rowena, who is alternately tough-as-nails and plagued with self-doubt, with little middle ground. This one false note aside, Fleming

stays perfectly in step with her characters as they grow, and in the book’s final third her language abandons the playground insults for a masterful evocation of awkward teenage rebellion. *Anomaly* resolves itself in a satisfying, not too-tidy manner, leaving the girls that much closer to adulthood, and the reader with a deft portrait of the ordeals of sisterhood.

—Regan Taylor



Alligator
Lisa Moore
Anansi, 2005.

Moore’s language is a kind of stained glass, illuminating her characters in the warping reds and blues of loneliness and lust. *Alligator* presents the nuanced interactions of, among others: a mother and daughter, a director and her film, and a teenage boy and Russian Mafioso, all of whom hurt and heal each other out of all proportion to what is deserved. Moore has an uncanny talent for the grotesque, and punctuates her

narrative with observations like, “She rubbed one of her eyes hard with a knuckle and there was the wet sound of the knuckle and eyelid and eyeball, a watery, interior, extremely private noise.” Moore never cheapens these private grotesqueries. In the hands of another novelist, the intensity of Frank’s desire for his own hotdog stand might have been too tempting a target for caricature, but Moore never allows us to laugh at the clichés

of Maritime poverty. *Alligator* builds agonizingly slowly, and the digressive style that Moore has chosen occasionally makes for frustration when the story doesn’t circle back to elaborate on scenes in which the reader has already invested. This brinkmanship, however, makes revelation all the more shocking when it comes.

—Linda Besner

“Holy Cow, Farmers Really Are Efficient”

Record corporate profits are linked to farmers’ woes: NFU

by Dru Oja Jay

The story of farming in the last few decades is a familiar one and a sad one. Competition means lower prices, and lower prices mean that farmers have to produce more to break even, which drives prices lower yet.

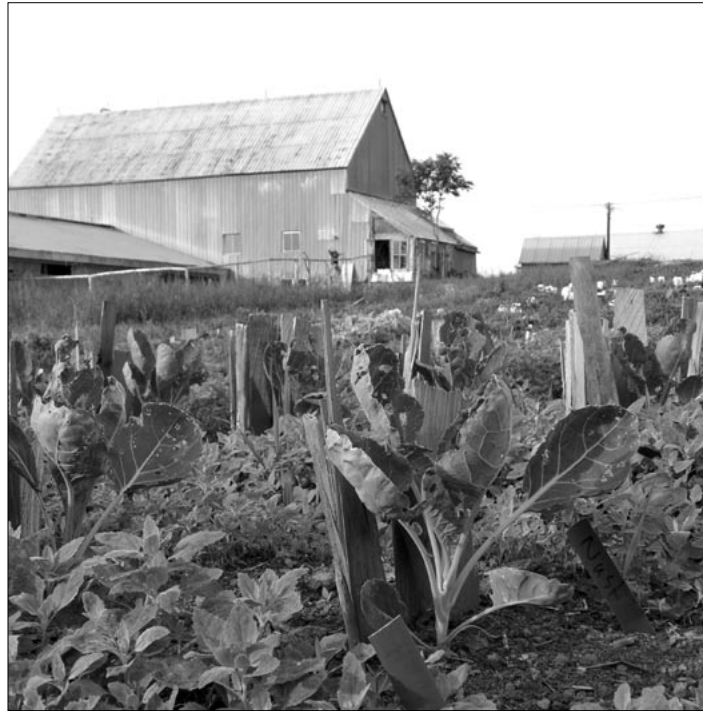
This story is present everywhere farming is discussed. Official government policy says that farms must become larger and more efficient. News reports chronicle the shut down of hundreds of family farms, which are no longer viable in the global economy. In a recent editorial on stagnant productivity growth, the *Globe and Mail* singled out farmers for their inefficiency. Farm subsidies, the conventional wisdom says, can only soften the impact of the inevitable transition to hyper-efficient, large-scale operations and imported food.

Canada’s National Farmers’ Union (NFU), however, says there’s a small problem with the story: it’s wrong.

The NFU’s director of research, Darren Qualman, says that farmers have achieved the largest increases in efficiency of any sector in the Canadian economy in the last 30 years. Farmers “can make and deliver products for 1970s prices. No one else can do that,” says Qualman. Only half joking he adds that someone should challenge the *Globe and Mail* editorialists to write for 1970s freelance rates.

In November of 2003, the NFU released a report entitled “The Farm Crisis, Bigger Farms, and the Myths of ‘Competition’ and ‘Efficiency,’” which details the drive for efficiency in government policy and its effects on farm income.

A series of graphs shows that while prices for food products have increased three- and fourfold, the prices farmers get for their crops have stayed con-



Dru Oja Jay

stant since the 1970s.

Farmers have made massive gains in efficiency, but have not received any financial benefits. Paradoxically, even as per-farm revenues have increased due to consolidation, farm profits today are at an all-time low. 2003 was the worst year ever for Canadian farmers, when per-farm Market Net Income was *negative* \$16 000. Farm profits *for the last 20 years*, the NFU says, have been near or lower than they were during the Depression.

“Today, farmers are paying to produce,” says a recent NFU report. “Were it not for taxpayer-funded support, off-farm income, depletion of savings, and access to debt, farming in Canada would have to cease.”

Why do farmers remain in such dire straits?

While news coverage often dwells on the plight of farmers, it rarely looks at the overall success enjoyed by agribusiness. This is the subject of the NFU’s November 2005 report, “The Farm Crisis and Corporate

Profits.”

The report examines the finances of 75 companies in the supply chain of food production, including meat packing, farm equipment, veterinary drug manufacturing, fertilizer, fuel, food processing, and food services. It finds that 41 companies posted *record profits* in 2004, which was at the same time the second worst year on record for farmers. For 76 per cent of the companies examined, 2004 was one of the three best years for profits.

The NFU says there is a direct connection between corporate profits and farmers’ losses.

Qualman says that the main problem is the difference in market power between farmers and the small number of corporations that control distribution. Because “a handful of companies” are buying from 250 000 farmers, they can effectively set prices as low as farmers will go, but can also raise prices for consumers. Corporations like Kellogg, Cargill, PepsiCo (which

owns Quaker Oats), and Tyson Foods were among those posting record profits while farmers were posting record losses.

The dynamic is similar for suppliers of farm equipment, pesticides, seeds, veterinary drugs and fertilizer. According to the report, “Huge profits and impressive ROE [return on equity] rates are the norm at the non-farm links in the agri-food chain.” Having consolidated ownership through mergers, the NFU says, corporations selling inputs and equipment are able to raise prices to account for any profits that farmers earn through increased productivity.

Qualman says there is a direct link between farmers’ relationships to powerful conglomerates and their lack of profits. “It’s farmers who are most hooked in to the input corporations who are having the hardest time making a profit.”

Because of their relatively direct channels of distribution and lack of dependence on fertilizer, veterinary drugs and pesticides, Qualman says organic farmers “have an easier time hanging on.”

The root problem, says Qualman, is that “policymakers, economists and media assume that markets work... these guys are market ideologues, and their *a priori* assumption is that markets work.”

“They say, ‘If these people are earning poor incomes, maybe it’s because they’re inefficient.”

“We just say ‘No no, the markets are failing.’ We’ve made tremendous progress” in pushing back against the prevailing wrong assumptions, says Qualman.

“Three ministers of agriculture have been largely forced to stop talking about inefficiency.” When shown the evidence, they’re forced to say, in Qualman’s paraphrase, “Holy cow, farmers really are efficient!”

A Bear Of A Deal

A decade of negotiations give way to an unprecedented agreement

by Yuill Herbert

In February, the Great Bear Rainforest agreement was announced in media around the world; the story was printed in over a thousand newspapers, including coverage in India, Russia and China.

The agreement covers an area that represents 45 per cent of North America's three temperate rainforest ecoregions. New parks total 1.8 million hectares, more than three times the size of Prince Edward Island. Another 4.6 million hectares are subject to a strict new management regime that puts the ecosystem first.

The Great Bear Rainforest contains the world's largest tracts of intact temperate rainforest, and it is home to spawning runs for 20 percent of the world's remaining wild salmon. The area is so rich in wildlife and flora that biologists have compared it to the Galapagos Islands and the Amazon jungles. The agreement means that habitat for endangered species including grizzlies, the total population of four hundred white spirit bears, coastal wolves, peregrine falcons, and the Northern Goshawk is preserved.

Unprecedented collaboration

In 1993, following protests and blockades, the British Columbia government announced the Clayoquot Compromise - a deal that protected 33 per cent of the region, leaving the rest to be logged. The decision sparked one of the largest campaigns of civil disobedience in the last decade; that summer more than 850 people were arrested. First Nations were not consulted during the process and these communities remain divided over logging in Clayo-



The fight to save the Great Bear Rainforest has been a long one.

The Coast Forest Conservation Initiative

quot Sound.

The focus shifted to the Great Bear Rainforest with its hundreds of pristine and intact watersheds. In a high profile international campaign, a collaboration of environmental groups forced customers of the companies operating in the Great Bear Rainforest to cancel contracts. Over eighty companies, including Ikea, Home Depot, Staples and IBM, committed to stop selling wood and paper products made from ancient forests.

As a result of the market pressure lumber companies on the coast began to shift their approach and agreed to sit down with environmental groups.

"It was tough in the beginning, but everyone agreed in the end," says Lisa Matthauss of the Sierra Club. "People came to accept that they no longer had the social licence to log in the way, or in the places, that they were [logging], so it had to change".

The Joint Solutions Project was formed in 2000 as an initiative between coastal forest companies and a coalition of environmental groups including ForestEthics, Sierra Club of BC, Greenpeace and Rainforest Action Network.

While a land use plan was being developed, the coastal

forest industry agreed to stop logging in exchange for a hold on the environmental groups' markets campaigns. They then agreed to create a team of international and local scientists to create ecosystem-based management (EBM) for the coastal forests using the best available conservation biology. Environmental groups and industry each raised \$600,000 to support this process with provincial and federal governments providing the remainder.

Two multi-stakeholder processes had been mandated by the province to develop land use plans for the Great Bear Rainforest region. The Joint Solutions Project fed the conclusions of its scientific work into this process.

Meanwhile, but separately, the David Suzuki Foundation was working with a group of eight coastal First Nations in an initiative called the Turning Point to develop a set of principles for EBM. To many coastal First Nations, EBM represents a scientific articulation of thousands of years of cultural practice and traditional resource use.

The area that is not protected will be managed according to the EBM process. "This is a transformation of what [presently] happens in the British

Columbia forest," Merran Smith of ForestEthics says. "The revolution is looking at a standing forest not as a commodity, but as an economic model based on conservation."

The BC government took the land use plans developed by the multi-stakeholder committees and entered into unprecedented government-to-government negotiations with the First Nations, who had developed their own land use plans. The final outcome is a compromise between the two parties.

"It's a cultural shift," says Shawn Kenmuir, an area manager for Triumph Timber, which has already forsaken old clear-cut practices and begun consulting with the Gitga'at before cutting on their traditional lands. "We've started the transition from entitlement to collaboration."

Many areas that will be preserved have been chosen based on the oral tradition of native groups and the opinions of their elders. These include areas with cultural significance such as ancient cemeteries, or areas that contain medicinal herbs and cedars big enough to make totem poles, canoes and longhouses.

"We are [excited]. We all [coastal First Nations] came together and agreed to something that hasn't happened for a long time", said Ross Wilson, chairman of the tribal council of the Heiltsuk, one of the First Nations involved.

"Now we can manage our destiny. Without this agreement, we would be going to court forever and we would have to put our children and old ladies dressed in button blankets in the way of the chain saws".

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Canada's Military-Media Complex

What's the difference between government, defense contractors and media?

by Anthony Fenton

The lines separating Canada's government, military, media, and private defense contractors are, if not imaginary, then ill-defined.

The case of the new Minister of Defense Gordon O'Connor is illustrative. A veteran of the Canadian Forces, he was a tank squadron commander and is now a retired Brigadier-General who spent eight years as a lobbyist for some of Canada's largest military contractors. In his words, he was "helping defense companies navigate complicated government procurement rules." He ended his career as a lobbyist only to run for public office. He won a seat and became a Member of Parliament in June 2004. He then became the Conservative Party's Critic for National Defense and was a member of the Standing Committee on National Defense and Veterans Affairs.

When he was new to the House of Commons in November 2004, O'Connor's lobbyist past was scrutinized by journalists. At the time he flatly denied that his work as a military lobbyist could pose a potential conflict of interest in his role as defense critic. "I don't decide who wins and loses contracts," said O'Connor at the time. Now that's he's Minister of Defense, he *will* decide who wins and loses contracts.

O'Connor has made it clear that the Conservatives will only be following through on policy objectives that were established under the Liberals. "I'm pretty confident that our platform and the previous Liberal [policy] will blend quite well," O'Connor recently told the press.

The transformation of Canada's military was well underway before the Conservatives took power, but there are indications that the Conservative Government will outdo the Liberals. Military spending under the Liberals was already

at its highest level since World War II, with additional spending of \$12.8 billion promised by in 2004. The Conservatives will add at least another \$5.3 billion to this. They will also be expanding the Canadian forces by 13,000 soldiers, 8,000 more than the Liberals had planned, all geared at allowing Canada to play "a more aggressive role in fighting terrorism."

The military's new direction involves greater emphasis on interoperability with US and other militaries committed to "the long war." Chief of Defense Staff, Rick Hillier, makes frequent appearances in the press, appealing for more money for the military. On February 25th, the second headline on Mike Blanchfield's *National Post* article was Hillier's assertion: "we need money."

A few days after Hillier's exhortations, the *Globe and Mail* and CTV published the result of a poll, showing 62 per cent of Canadians opposed to sending troops to Afghanistan.

The *Globe and Mail's* February 25th cover story announced a potential Prime Ministerial visit to Afghanistan. The *Globe* cites the anticipated trip—the first by a Canadian Prime Minister since Canada has occupied Afghanistan—as "a means of asserting support for a revitalized Canadian military." Top military brass, including Hillier, are quoted as being excited by the prospect of a "heartening," and "encouraging" visit that would certainly "be a major boost to the soldiers' morale." the *Globe* describes the purpose of the Canadian troop presence in Afghanistan, "to support the Afghans and help rebuild their infrastructure."

The article shifts focus to remarks made by Hillier in his keynote address at the Conference of Defense Associations (CDA) annual general meeting the previous day. The CDA describes itself as the "oldest and most influential advocacy

group in Canada's defense community." According to the *Globe*, Hillier "made a passionate pitch for greater Canadian public support for the Afghan mission, saying the objectives are worth the costs and risks."

The CDA's sister organization, the Canadian Defense Associations Institute (CDAI), hosted a seminar on February 23rd, entitled "NATO in Transition: The impact on Canada" that also made headlines. Many high-ranking military officials, politicians, and diplomats were in attendance, including Minister O'Connor.

The CDAI's board of directors includes Jack Granatstein, and Hugh Segal, a Senator and former Chief of Staff to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, who is today a close advisor to PM Harper's "transition team." Granatstein, a well known and prolific revisionist historian, is an advocate for Canada's increased global military presence.

The headline of Granatstein's *Globe* op/ed, written in response to the negative poll, in which 62% of Canadians opposed sending troops to Afghanistan, conveys the singular message of recent Afghanistan coverage: "Wake up! This is our war too; We must accept reality: Our Afghan mission is very much in our national interests and in the interests of democracy." Noting that "Canadian anti-Americanism is at a record peak in 2006," Granatstein appeals to Canadians "to recognize what is at stake and to support their government and their soldiers in advancing their country's--and the world's--interests." Granatstein's column appeared in the February 28th edition of the *Globe* right below Margaret Wentze's. Wentze sits with Granatstein on the Advisory Council of another prominent lobby group, the Canadian defense and Foreign Affairs Institute (CDFAI). CDFAI's donors include General Dynam-

ics, the sixth largest defense contractor in the world, and the Canadian Council of Chief Executives.

Among other connections, the chairman of the *Globe's* parent company BCE's board, Richard J. Currie, is also a director on the board of CAE, one of Canada's largest defense contractors. In the BCE boardroom, Currie sits with other directors representing the defense and energy lobbies, like billionaire James Pattison, a close friend of George Bush Sr. and a board member of the Ronald Reagan Foundation.

The most striking thing about corporate media war coverage in Canada is the omission of the majority view.

Immediately after publishing a poll showing that 62 per cent of Canadians opposed the Canadian occupation in Afghanistan, the *Globe* (among others) did not seek out any of the majority of Canadians to justify their views. With near exclusivity, both the *Globe* and the *Post* seek only the viewpoints of military officials, politicians, embedded reporters, and pro-military think tanks. Reading the country's "national" newspapers, one is scarcely aware of the numerous anti-war organizations, all of which have spokespeople across Canada.

While media support for war and marginalization of anti-war views is long-standing, so are the devastating effects of war and occupation that rely on public support. An online poll conducted by the *Globe* after the initial poll, indicates that the nationalist appeals geared at winning Canadian public opinion are having their impact. A week after the original poll, the *Globe* reported that out of 32,499 online respondents, 53 per cent support Canadian troops leading NATO combat missions in southern Afghanistan.

Canada's Phantom Menace in Afghanistan

Who is receiving Canada's "Phantom Aid?"

by **Geordie Gwalgen Dent**

Afghanistan became Canada's largest recipient of foreign aid in 2002, but critics say that this money may be aiding Canada more than Afghanistan.

According to the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) website, Canada has given \$100 million to Afghanistan since March 2005, up from \$10 million in 2001. In an interview with CBC in February, senior CIDA official Bob Johnson predicted that between 2001 and 2009, Canada will spend \$616 million in Afghanistan.

Recent claims by a former minister in Afghanistan, however, have called into question the effectiveness of that aid. Ramazan Bashardost, a former planning minister, said the billions of dollars Afghanistan has received in aid from donor countries, including Canada, has not resulted in "the least improvement" in Afghani people's lives.

Responding to questions about Canadian aid in Afghanistan, New-Democratic Party's (NDP) Foreign Policy critic Alexa McDonough said it is difficult to determine how much of the aid sent to Afghanistan is going to development assistance (education, transport infrastructure, health clinics) and how much is going to indirect military assistance. A January op/ed piece from *mediamonitors.net* pegged current direct Canadian military costs in Afghanistan at \$600 million a year.

How is it that a Member of Parliament and foreign affairs critic on the foreign affairs committee does not know how millions of Canadian dollars are being used?

"All of this is happening in the never-never land of no committees in the PMO [Prime Minister's Office]," said McDonough, referring to the government's lack of transparency.

A 2005 report by Action Aid suggests that even the aid that is earmarked for beneficial infrastructure may not be reaching its nominal destination. Action Aid found that many countries are donating "phantom aid": aid that does not help the people it is intended for in

last year's famine in Niger, 90 per cent of the food money given by Canada had to be spent on food from Canada. A report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) found that this kind of policy can result in food taking four to five months longer to arrive and, when it does, can drive down prices for local farmers if the famine has already passed.

Most OECD countries, including Canada, signed onto the UN's 1070 mandate to

spending. 17 per cent of Canadian phantom aid is spent on technical assistance that could be spent in the donor country and therefore cost less, be more effective and better coordinated. In addition, the Action Aid report states that 47 per cent of Canadian phantom aid is tied to spending in Canada.

McDonough hopes that the new Conservative government will improve Canada's reputation in aid spending. She points out that in February 2005, all of the then opposition parties, including the Conservatives, committed to an increase in aid and a restructuring of how aid is used. In a recent letter to Prime Minister Harper, NDP Leader Jack Layton reminded Conservatives of their election promise to increase aid by over \$400 million over the next five years. This would bring Canada's aid up to 0.42 per cent of its GNI by 2010.

When asked if she felt the Prime Minister would rescind on these commitments McDonough responded, "You don't speculate on the odds of whether or not [the Prime Minister] will live up to [his commitments], you use every tool you can to push them through."

After last year's famines in Niger and Mauritania, the Canadian government changed its aid policy, requiring 50 per cent of food aid be purchased from Canada, down from 90 per cent. This may be a sign that Canada's aid programs are on the verge of reducing other tied aid, which is good news for countries like Afghanistan; the country is scheduled to receive hundreds of millions of aid dollars from Canada over the next four years.



How much of Canada's funding in Afghanistan is going to clean water and how much to military assistance?

Sylvia Nickerson

the donor country. Phantom aid includes spending on overpriced technical assistance, aid tied to spending in the donor country, double-counted debt relief, and other aid that never materializes for poor countries.

Canada's habit of tying aid to spending in Canada, effectively transforming aid into subsidies for Canadian corporations, has given us "a black eye in the international community" said McDonough.

A September 2005 article in Reuters reported that during

have overseas aid reach 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI); however, very few, save Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Luxemburg, have managed to come even close to that goal. In 2003 Canada donated 0.22 per cent of its GNI to aid but spent 1.1 per cent of its GNI on the military. In addition, research by Action Aid shows that when phantom aid is taken into account, the percentage of real aid given is even lower.

Phantom aid accounts for over half of Canada's aid

A Picture Says 1000 Words

“Harmless” cartoons are more than meets the eye

by Harsha Walia

From the burning of its flag to a boycott of its brands of butter and cookies, Denmark is feeling global outrage over newspaper cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad.

The Danish paper *Jyllands-Posten* first published the cartoons on Sept. 30, 2005. The drawings included a caricature of Prophet Muhammad wearing a turban shaped as a bomb with a lit fuse. Another portrayed him with a bushy grey beard and holding a sword, his eyes covered by a black rectangle. A third depicted a middle-aged prophet standing in the desert with a walking stick, in front of a donkey and a sunset. The purpose of the cartoons, the paper's editor-in-chief said, was “to examine whether people would succumb to self-censorship, as we have seen in other cases when it comes to Muslim issues.” The paper insisted that it meant no offence.

In the first week of February alone, crowds of angry people in several Arab countries burned the Danish flag. In Palestine, the European Union offices in Gaza were surrounded; Saudi Arabia withdrew its ambassador from Denmark; Libya closed its embassy; and Iraq, Iran, Jordan and Sudan lodged official protests. Danish products were taken off the shelves in Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Kuwait, Bahrain and other countries, forcing one Danish dairy firm to lay off 800 workers.

With growing political and economic pressure, the editors of *Jyllands-Posten* apologised, while defending their right to publish the cartoons. A French newspaper, *France Soir*, reprinted the Danish cartoons along with drawings of Buddha and Christian and Jewish gods. Its editor declared “no religious dogma can impose its view on a democratic and secular society...we will never apologise for



Journalists crowd around Peter March, a professor at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, who posted one of the offending cartoons on his office door citing 'academic freedom.'

IMC Maritimes

being free to speak, to think and to believe.”

In the media, this incident is being framed as a struggle in Western democracies to reconcile the right to free expression with respect for religious belief. Many Muslims believe that the cartoons are offensive because pictorial depictions are prohibited in the religion. Others, however, have offered an alternative explanation. For example, Mr. Akkari, a spokesperson for the Danish Muslim delegates, denies that Muslims were unable to accept any portrayals of the Prophet Muhammad without reacting in outrage. In an interview with the *Telegraph* on February 3, he stated that there were reference books in libraries in Denmark carrying ancient Persian images of the Prophet that caused no offence, but the stereotyping effect of the newspaper cartoons was deeply offensive.

I come from a region of the world where religious dogma has been manipulated to stir up fanatic frenzies. Hindutva, a right-wing religious fundamentalist ideology, has formulated a political experiment based on communal hatred, and the slogan “India for Hindus” has an immensely popular appeal with a formidable blend of religion and ideology. Usually, any explanation for an uprising that utilizes religion sets off alarms bells in my head.

But I agree that the car-

toons are offensive. Not primarily because they violate religious tenets, but because they are offensive in the way that they depict and stereotype the entire Arab community and those perceived to be Muslim.

For example, the dominant media representation surrounding the Danish cartoon controversy is, unsurprisingly, of the stereotypical irrational, uncivilized, frothing Muslim mobster. Even the terminology used such as “rioters” invokes images of senseless people gone wild, much like the media response to the Paris riots. The controversy over these cartoons is also dominating discourse on many weblogs, with emphatic calls to “Free the West!”, slanderous rhetoric such as “Welcome to the multicultural society. We let in the bigots, anti-Semites, homophobes and religious lunatics,” and images of veiled women with the caption “What is more obscene? Depicting the Prophet in cartoons or forcing girls and women to live like this in the name of the Prophet?”

The media is increasingly becoming an agent for the communication of societal values. Those who control media are powerful because they are able to control the construction of representations and hence, of what is real. In a world of media spin doctors, our awkward embrace of an ideal of objectivity can make us passive recipients of the news rather

than active analyzers of the inherent biases within it. Let us be clear that the Western media have not used the explanation of religious doctrine- that the Prophet is not supposed to be pictorially depicted- in an effort to offer a respectful and educational explanation to non-believers. Instead, the effect of this explanation is to invoke the rigidity and intolerance of the Muslim community in what has been dubbed a “clash of values”: “freedom of religion versus freedom of expression.”

In “Disturbing Remains: Memory, History, and Crisis in the Twentieth Century” (edited by Michael S. Roth and Charles G. Salas, Getty Research Institute, 2001), a collection of essays that explores the transformation of traumatic events into social memory, Roth and Salas explain that “it is through the extreme that the normal is revealed.” Media accounts of the protests in reaction to the Danish cartoons represent such an extreme through which the “normal” attitude towards Muslim communities within Denmark and beyond is revealed. A mixture of Arabs, Turks, and Kurds, Muslims make up about 3 per cent of Denmark's population of 5.3 million. As in much of Europe, the Muslim minority remains marginalized and largely alienated from Denmark's dominant culture. After a series of trips across the country in 2005, a delegation of Muslim and Arab community members assembled a 43-page dossier on racism and Islamophobia in Denmark, which is most evident in the success of far-right, anti-immigrant political parties. The Danish People's Party, riding anti-Muslim resentment, emerged as the third-largest party in the past two parliamentary elections in 2001 and 2005.

It is easy for non-Muslims

continues on page 16 »

Fairytale Squat Faces Political Squalor

Denmark's Christiania prepares to take on the state

by Shaughn McArthur

There is little heating in the sparsely furnished ex-barracks. The ashtrays need emptying, the tables need customers, and the walls are desperate for a fresh coat of paint, but 22-year-old, Montreal-born Nicco doesn't seem to mind.

It's the end of a day's work at the Infocafé. The Canadian-Dane-Christianite is pouring leftover coffee down the sink. He has spent most of his adult life living and working in the "Free State of Christiania."

Christiania was established in Copenhagen 35 years ago when a group of hippies breached fences around disused military barracks, and its land has since been collectively owned and administered. The community began in 1971 as a self-governing safe haven for artists and intellectuals who wanted to live simply, affordably, and by their own rules. Young families moved in, built homes, and declared cars, hard drugs and violence banned within Christiania's borders.

Today, much of the idealism that founded Denmark's famous fairytale squat has faded, and what remains is under threat.

Still a place to escape capitalism yet remain close to its best amenities, the "inner-city," or commercial area, of Christiania is now populated with drunkards, pushers, and outlaws. Gathered around trash-barrel fires and on the verandas of bars, drinking, smoking and dealing their wares, they make the unsuspecting visitor feel unwelcome, to say the least.

Nevertheless, Christiania retains a certain level of social cohesion. The community runs its own kindergartens, waste management program, successful businesses and a radio show, but citizens must turn to the city for benefits such as higher education and healthcare.



Christiania's 85 acres are still dotted with alternative housing.

Shaughn McArthur

When a vacancy arises in the community, the Citizens' Council decides by consensus on the next Christianite from the long waiting list.

At least, they did.

On January 1, 2006, an amendment to the Christiania Act ended the 'collective right to use' agreement that had allowed the urban commune to exist on the fringes of the free market.

"It's all a dream in my eyes," says Nicco. The self-proclaimed cynic speaks grimly of the impending changes facing Denmark's social experiment.

"They want to make it into a rich people's paradise," he says.

Since the politically conservative Liberal Party—an accepted contradiction of terms in Danish politics—formed a majority coalition in 2001 with the Conservative Party, Christianites have been fighting to preserve their alternative lifestyle.

"Christiania for them is

a symbol of hippie socialism. They just don't like it," says Ole Lykke, 59, a Christianite for 26 years. The editor of Christiania's newspaper, he is part of the coalition negotiating with the state.

Beginning with the crack-down on its multi-million dollar open-air hash market in 2004, Christiania now faces real-estate development and urbanization of the state-owned land it occupies. 'Normalization' is the term the government uses.

"'Normalizing' means shutting us down," Nicco says.

Authorities insist that's not the case.

"We don't want to interfere in the life they want to live in Christiania. They just have to live by the same rules," says Peter Christensen, a Liberal Party spokesperson. "We have said to every man and woman there now that we guarantee them a place to live in Christiania"

Championing a unique consensus democracy, property has always been owned collectively in Christiania. Now, more than three decades later and with a housing crisis forcing prices ever higher in the capital, that's all changing.

Last December, residents and business operators in Christiania were required to register the properties they occupy in order for it to be leased back to them individually by the state.

"Now, legally, there's no such thing as collective ownership," says Lykke.

This summer the Palace and Properties Agency will submit a plan to build private housing for up to 400 residents, restore and convert historical military buildings into state-owned social housing, and restore a sixteenth-century rampart along Christiania's waterfront.

On March 16, the Christiania advocacy group to which Lykke belongs will take the Agency to court. "I'm for compromise," says Lykke.

One compromise both sides of this debate seem to accept is being developed in dialogue with the City of Copenhagen. It is a plan whereby individual residents and business operators in Christiania could maintain a sort of collective ownership by renting their properties from a fund. The fund then leases the land from the state on their behalf.

"Christiania should be a place where all Danes have access to live, without being exempt from the normal laws of the country," said Peter Fangel, team manager in the Planning and Architecture department of the City of Copenhagen.

"Things are going to change," he admits, but "it is important to preserve whatever is worth preserving out there."

Leaving Christiania, a sign over the gate reads like a prediction: "You are now entering the EU."

To Reclaim and Reconnect

Nitassinan: home of the Innu

by Kim Petersen

A vast unceded territory comprises more than 777,000 square kilometres of eastern Québec and most of Labrador. It is home to the Innu, an Indigenous People who have inhabited the area for 2,000 years and maybe as long as 7,500 years. The Innu (not to be confused with the Inuit), are a formerly nomadic people who have traditionally subsisted on fishing, hunting, trapping, and using the mineral and forest resources of the land. Their name means 'the People', and today there are over 16,000 Innu who live in this territory they call Nitassinan.

Colin Samson, a University of Essex sociology professor, describes his 12 years working with the Innu and witnessing the effects of forced assimilation as "documenting horror." Samson finds that the entrenchment of the village and a settled lifestyle on the Innu has been "absolutely catastrophic."

Samson and Innu lawyer Armand MacKenzie see the drafting of a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as one way of undoing some of the horrors of the past.

The Innu were probably the first Turtle Islanders to make contact with Europeans when the Norsemen made their voyages along the Atlantic coast from Baffin Island down to Newfoundland during the late 10th century AD.

The Innu's subsequent contact with outsiders has been plagued with tragedy, from the lethal diseases introduced by Europeans to the erosion of their culture due to the encroachment of mining industries and the influx of non-indigenous people. Most recently, the James Bay hydroelectric megaproject has flooded vast tracts of Innu territory, and a huge nickel mine is currently being constructed in



Innu Grandmother and her grandson in Labrador.

Susan Connell, SECA Travel

Voisey's Bay, Labrador.

The legacy of colonization has resulted in Innu communities plagued by poverty, high unemployment, alcohol and substance abuse, and a threatened language and culture. This makes the Innu's struggle for justice difficult, says Samson, as they are forced to play "on the lop-sided playing field that Canada has established."

"If the Canadian government would spend a fraction of the money [on land-based activities] that is invested in medical clinics, social workers, psychologists and all those activities, there would be a real change," says Samson. The people, their spirit and morale would improve immeasurably."

One hope, for Samson, is the drafting at the United Nations of a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Article 27 of the draft affirms the right of Indigenous Peoples to the "restitution of the lands,

territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, occupied, used or damaged without their free and informed consent."

Samson admits that there are many obstacles to getting such a declaration ratified, and once ratified it would remain non-binding under international law. However, he notes, "It would just have a kind of moral force." Samson believes Canada would be compelled to abide by such a declaration through concern for its international reputation.

The Innu Nation is currently involved in a land claims negotiation process, during which they are being put under "tremendous pressure" to cede most of their land. The sincerity of Canadian officials involved in the negotiating process is dubious, says Samson. The Innu are being pressured to reduce the

size of their land claim and to make a quick deal. Samson says that the bad faith negotiations have had "a really psychologically devastating effect on the people."

Innu lawyer Armand MacKenzie considers the land claims settlement process in Canada to be inherently unfair. He has brought the Innu's struggle for their rights to the United Nations. In a December 2005 interview with *Indian Country Today*, MacKenzie states, "Canada requires that as a precondition for addressing Innu grievances, we must acknowledge that our homeland belongs to the Crown. All that remains to negotiate are the terms in which we are to formally surrender it."

MacKenzie also pins much hope on the drafting of the UN Declaration: "The right to redress says we should have lands back in size, quality and the same condition as what was taken. That's one way we can address what happened with the unilateral extinguishment of our land rights."

In the meantime, the Innu have developed their own plan for an environmentally sensitive economy that will preserve the land for future generations and ensure that the Innu can meet their subsistence needs. Sustainable forestry and ecotourism are industries based on respect for the needs of the land, animals, the rights of the Innu, and their communal tradition of sharing with people.

Samson is hopeful that, although scarred, the entire Innu territory will remain intact. Through a renewed relation to the land, he hopes that the Innu will thrive again. "Innu people tend to be much happier, healthier, more confident, and have higher self-esteem, when they have a connection with the land."

Bordering On Apartheid

Challenging immigration control in Canada

by Hillary Bain Lindsay

Abdelkader Belaoui is telling me about his day. "Every day I wake at seven," he begins. "Ten after seven at the latest. I make my bed, listen to the news. Around seven twenty or seven thirty I head down to the kitchen." He methodically lists his daily activities. "I play the piano—I'm getting lessons now. Around one—after lunch—I use the stationary bike for fifteen or twenty minutes."

Belaoui can't get his exercise outside. He can't go outside.

Abdelkader Belaoui has not left St. Gabriel's Church in Montreal since he took sanctuary there on January 1st 2006, defying Immigration Canada's deportation order.

The nights are the hardest. "I have a lot of nightmares." His voice is quiet. He explains that he can't sleep without medication; even with the medication he often wakes at 3 in the morning. "I think a lot... I think too much."

Belaoui has a lot on his mind. On November 21st, 2005 Immigration Canada notified him that on January 5th 2006 he would be deported; forced to abandon a life and community that has taken him three years to build and over a decade to find.

Belaoui fled Algeria, his country of birth, in 1996. He left behind a civil war that took the lives of over 100 000 people and a country where he no longer felt safe. He moved to New York City, but after September 11th 2001, he no longer felt safe there either. Belaoui crossed the border, filed a refugee claim, and became one of more than 200 000 people in Canada living without status.

Refugee claimants will wait months or even years to learn whether Canada will award them permanent status. In the meantime, "you're a second class



Belaoui (centre) relaxes with friends during happier times. CMAQ

citizen," notes Jordan Topp, a member of The Committee to Support Abdelkader Belaoui. Lack of permanent status makes finding work extremely difficult, "even if you're a professional—a nurse or an engineer—your degree doesn't mean anything once you get here," she explains. "[Non-status people] end up doing the shit jobs that no one else wants." Belaoui reports that many of his non-status friends also suffer from stress and depression—as he does—while living under the constant threat of deportation. Non-status people (like refugee claimants) are only covered for essentials and emergencies under Canada's medical system, and some—like Belaoui—are not covered at all.

Living in such a precarious state is not a choice that many people make willingly, says Topp. "People generally don't want to leave their homes and families," she says. "They don't want to uproot their entire lives and move." But many people—like Belaoui—do. They do, says Topp, because they're fleeing—among other things—war, poverty, and oppression. And although many refugee claimants may count themselves as 'lucky' to be here, Topp says Canada is partly to blame for many people's initial displace-

ment.

Canada's foreign policy and immigration system contribute to what Topp calls the 'global apartheid:' a system where a minority of the world's population controls a vast majority of its wealth and power, a system where capital can move freely but the majority of people cannot. "Canada's economic and geographic interests take priority over people's well-being," she asserts. Topp gives the example of mining projects in the global south that benefit Canadian multinationals: people are displaced and livelihoods lost due to Canada's economic interests, "yet we won't let them into Canada because they don't fit the bill" says Topp. "Immigration Canada makes boxes that you have to fit into," boxes into which few people can fit.

One of these boxes used to assess Humanitarian and Compassionate Applications for permanent residence is based on whether or not an individual has "established" themselves in Canada. According to Immigration Canada, the fact that Belaoui does not have a job, and does not have a wife and child here means that he has failed to establish himself in Montreal.

Belaoui argues, however,

that he does have a family in Canada: he has a family of friends and supporters. His connections and contributions to his community are reflected in the over 40 organizations in Montreal that are supporting his demand for status, most recently the French-speaking branch of Amnesty International in Canada. Belaoui also says that he was working, he just wasn't being paid. For over a year he had been volunteering with The Multi-Ethnic Association for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities. His involvement with that particular organization points to another reason he couldn't find paid work despite his best efforts: Belaoui is blind. According to Topp, this, along with his non-permanent status means that he's facing "huge systematic barriers [to employment]."

According to a study conducted by the Canadian National Institute for the Blind last year, only 25 per cent of blind and visually impaired people are employed, and only 30 per cent of those people have permanent employment. As a non-permanent resident, Belaoui didn't qualify for government programs that may have increased his chances of employment. "We ask people to prove that they're established," explains Topp, "but then create a system where it's next to impossible for them to become established." Topp is tired of the hoops non-status people are expected to jump through, and the boxes they are expected to fit into, in order to prove that they deserve to stay in Canada.

Topp is not alone. Last June up to a thousand people took part in the No One Is Illegal March On Ottawa. The 200 km march from Montreal to Ottawa was organized by Solidarity Across Borders, a network of self organized migrants, refugees, immigrants

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Copyfight

Internet freedom comes of age

by Becky Hodge

As many a policy wonk/green lobbyist/aging ex-frontman of the Boomtown Rats will tell you, there comes a time in the life of a political rebel when you cut your hair, put on a tie, put down the placard and walk into the building. Entering the corridors of power to make your case may involve a little compromise of your principles, but that's all part of growing up.

Similarly, it seems, the internet is entering a new age of responsibility. Where once the out-of-control look seemed sexy – all off-the-cuff and emergent in an oversized Grateful Dead t-shirt – now as the World Wide Web is increasingly finding its place in polite, and profitable, society, something a little more refined is in order. Something with a degree of self-control.

Before November's World Summit of the Information Society in Tunis, the idea that the internet could be controlled was anathema to the "network of ends". Then when Google went into China last month, it cast light into the shadowy corners of a regime bent on censoring the net and controlling the packets of data that pass between its citizens and the outside world, to perpetuate its iron grip over a nation by depriving them of information. The image of internet control that was projected back out to the rest of the world spurred the US Congress to draft the Global Internet Freedom Bill, bringing the impulse to legislate into the open.

But legislation to harness the net's unstoppable flow of information has been drafted, away from the public eye, ever since powerful rightsholder lobbies realised that the internet's potential to distribute information at zero cost had grave implications for the way they did business.



Creative Commons and the Electronic Frontier Foundation are two of the organizations leading the "copyfight". *Rob Maguire*

A disparate group of campaigners has been the only voice for internet freedom in this often rarefied and remote debate. Sitting in on working groups in forgotten corners of Brussels, attending endless hearings of court cases in Washington, it has marked up both defeats and successes in the quest to keep technological innovation in the information age free from inappropriate constraints pursued by rightsholder groups.

In January 2003, creative commons frontman Lawrence Lessig failed to persuade the US Supreme Court that extending the period of copyright to nearly a century hinders the progress of science and the useful arts. The case against copyright term extension is now being fought by Brewster Kahle of the Internet Archive on free speech grounds.

In May 2005, the Electronic Frontier Foundation successfully persuaded the DC Circuit Court of Appeals that a ruling by the Federal Communications Commission to disable digital recordings of television broadcasts and criminalize the sale of hardware that did not conform to the specifications of rightsholder groups was beyond the organization's remit. Following the US ruling's defeat, a similar piece of legislation developed by the Digital Video Broadcasting

project is now making its way through Brussels.

In June 2005, the Supreme Court ruled that Grokster, the manufacturer of the peer-to-peer networking service Morpheus, was liable for copyright infringement that took place over its network. This reversed the precedent set by the famous Sony Betamax case against the video recorders, which decided that technologists working in the information field were free to create new ways of distributing and copying information so long as their inventions had significant non-copyright-infringing uses.

In July 2005, the European Parliament voted overwhelmingly to reject a European Commission recommendation to allow patents on software code, a development that could have led to the demise of free and open source software and the fossilisation of one of the most dynamic, innovative industries in "new Europe".

As these cases show, the fight between internet freedom and intellectual property law – the "copyfight" – is a never-ending one. Many characterise its protagonists as techno-utopians, or geeks worried that someone might take their toys away. But as the narrative of control over internet freedom joins the mainstream, it is

worth remembering how long, and against what adversaries, the fight has been fought up until now.

The movement to keep the internet free will be the defining fight in the information age, just as the environmental movement is the defining fight of the industrial age. As our physical make-up is reduced to a string of ones and zeros, and knowledge replaces property and labour as the means of production, democratic access to information becomes a basic civil right.

The copyfight has many parallels with the early environmental movement. Valid interest in access to information unhindered by intellectual property law is diverse – from librarians to scientists to developing world campaigners fighting for the right to distribute lifesaving generic antiretrovirals in Africa. These parties are beginning to organise together, as shown by Consumers International's recent condemnation of the UN World Intellectual Property Organization's pursuit of tighter intellectual property controls. Just as peace campaigners joined with conservationists, animal rights activists with anti-nuclear protesters, so will the people who fight on the fringes of the information war join forces.

Copyfighters, like environmentalists, seek to protect a complex ecology. The abolition of copyright and patent law is not the goal of these defenders of internet freedom – they merely seek a balance between the needs of creators to profit from their work and the needs of the public eventually to own it. As players in the knowledge economy continue to prospect in the pool of collective wisdom, copyfighters ask only that they do not over-farm.

Now that the fight for internet freedom has become a basic civil right, it continues on page 15 »

“Copyfight” continued from previous page »

net freedom has moved from the corporate to the political stage, it is likely to gain more exposure and more support. But it should be noted that the arguments used in this fight – such as freedom of speech and transparency

of government – are similar to those used in the copyfight.

On 14 February, Condoleezza Rice announced a Global Internet Freedom Task Force. It will “consider the foreign policy aspects of internet freedom,

including the use of technology to restrict access to political content and...efforts to modify internet governance structures in order to restrict the free flow of information.” The fight for internet freedom has finally

entered the corridors of power. Let’s hope it remembers its roots.

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“A Bear of a Deal” continued from page 7 »**Transforming the economy**

“For all the First Nations the value to protect the Great Bear Rainforest is utmost, not only for cultural and environmental but also for economic reasons,” says Ross Wilson. To emphasize the economic benefits of preservation, he adds “The hunter comes in and pays a lot for one night but you can never see that bear again; with wildlife viewing as long as that bear lives you can have tourism activities that happen year after year”.

This philosophy is supported by an innovative \$120 million endowment to support the creation of a conservation economy in the Great Bear Rainforest. It includes \$30 million contributed by the BC govern-

ment to help ease the transition of impacted forestry workers; \$60 million raised by the US-based Nature Conservancy from donors and foundations; and a \$30 million contribution from the federal government that remains outstanding.

The endowment includes a Coast Conservation Fund that will invest in skills development and monitoring amongst First Nations to guarantee the implementation of the Great Bear Agreement. A Coast Economic Development Fund will invest in shellfish aquaculture, cruise-ship tourism, sustainable forestry, conservation activities, fisheries, high-end lodge tourism, and pine mushroom harvesting, potentially creating up to 1700 new jobs.

In addition, Vancouver-based credit union VanCity will create an innovative fund with up to \$80 million dollars from

socially responsible investors for sustainable economic initiatives on the coast.

Challenges Remain

Environmental groups acknowledge that challenges remain. It is not clear what EBM will actually look like on the ground. A number of First Nations groups have yet to sign government-to-government agreements.

Both the David Suzuki Foundation and the Raincoast Conservation Society point out that the agreement does not meet the minimum target of 44 per cent protection that the scientific body indicated was required to ensure that biodiversity is maintained.

“Raincoast supports the legislating of the proposed protected areas, but the province should do so with the full

knowledge and recognition that lasting protection of the Great Bear Rainforest will require additional steps and commitment from all parties,” says Raincoast Conservation Society’s executive director, Chris Genovali.

And, as the *Globe and Mail* article pointed out, if lifting the oil and gas moratorium on the BC coast will mean that supertankers loaded with tar sands oil enter the Queen Charlottes basin, then an ecosystem that is inextricably linked with the ocean will be endangered.

“Greenpeace will be watching to see if the British Columbian government follows through on these commitments and takes this opportunity to make the Great Bear Rainforest a global model of forest sustainability,” said Amanda Carr, forest campaigner for Greenpeace Canada.

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and their allies. With a rallying cry of “No Borders, No Nations, Stop The Deportations!” Solidarity Across Borders asserts that all people—not just wealthy and educated people—should be able to decide where they wish to live and work. To this end, they call for an end to deportations and the regularization of all non-status people.

Belaoui and his supporters have reframed the debate. Instead of focusing on risks he may face if forced to return to Algeria, they are making the case that he should be allowed to stay based on his right—to the right of all human beings—to choose where he lives his life.

But won’t Canada’s borders be flooded with refugees? “That’s exactly the point,” says Topp.

Topp’s analysis is shared by Samir Shaheen-Hussain, a member of the No One Is Illegal collective in Montreal. “Because of the primal injustices that exist globally, people should be able to move wherever they wish,” says Shaheen-Hussain. “So long as wealthy, powerful corporations and nation-states continue to benefit from the oppression and exploitation of those living in the global South, those people who are displaced should have the freedom of movement to determine where they will live.”

This economic and political analysis of the immigration system may seem radical to some, and the proposed solutions may be dismissed as ‘unrealistic’, but the No One Is Illegal movement is gaining ground; No One Is Illegal groups have been established across Canada

and around the world.

Besides, argues Topp the normalization of immigration controls is a relatively new phenomenon.

“Until recently, people have been able to migrate to where they are best able to live and survive. Today, that’s not possible unless you have a bank account with over \$200 000 in it or are one of the people who meet the very narrow criteria of persecution required for refugee status.”

These narrow criteria are also applied in an arbitrary manner, continues Topp. In the last two years Belaoui’s refugee officer sat on the Immigration and Refugee Board he accepted only one person. “That’s why people call it a lottery,” she explains. “It has little to do with the actual case and more to do with the person you

end up in front of.”

Although The Committee to Support Abdelkader Belaoui is doing everything it can to help Belaoui win the legal ‘lottery’ for permanent status, it is also trying to shift the terms of debate about refugees from ideas of charity to ones of justice, dignity and autonomy; from benevolence to solidarity. At a press conference announcing his intention to take sanctuary in St Gabriel’s Church, Belaoui was clear. “I’m not hiding from Immigration Canada, but I want to tell them clearly, I will not be presenting myself for deportation. I’ve been able to achieve autonomy and dignity in Montreal, and I don’t want to lose that. My family are my friends here. I am here to defend myself; I am here to defend justice”.

“1000 Words” continued from page 10 »

to comment on the harmless nature of cartoons. It is equally simplistic for media commentators to talk about how “open-minded” Western societies are in accepting caricatures of Jesus Christ or other Christian-based satirical representations. The crucial difference in the Danish cartoons is that the depictions in the Danish cartoons perpetuate the stereotypes of an entire community. Although the cartoons only depicted Prophet Muhammad, his image nonetheless signified and personified all Arabs as savages, terrorists, and desert-dwellers in the Western imagination.

A short section in Edward Said’s book *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979) on popular images and social science representations of Arabs is worth mentioning at length here:

“From a faintly outlined stereotype as a camel-riding nomad to an accepted caricature as the embodiment of incompetence and easy defeat: that was all the scope given to an Arab.... In the films and television the Arab is associated either with lechery or bloodthirsty dishonesty. He appears as an oversexed degenerate, capable, it is true, of cleverly devious intrigues, but essentially sadistic, treacherous, low. Slave trader, camel driver, moneychanger, colorful scoundrel: these are some of

the traditional Arab roles in the cinema” (pp. 285-287).

Former president Bill Clinton, whose stock as statesman seems to be on the rise, commented on the cartoons, warning of rising anti-Arab and anti-Islamic prejudice, comparing it to historic anti-Semitism. “So now what are we going to do? ... Replace the anti-Semitic prejudice with anti-Islamic prejudice?” he asked at an economic conference in the Qatari capital of Doha. Edward Said also discusses the relationship between anti-Semitism and anti-Arabism of the sort expressed by the cartoons:

“The transference of a popular anti-Semitic animus from a Jewish to an Arab target [is] made smoothly, since the figure was essentially the same.... Thus the Arab is conceived of now as a shadow that dogs the Jew. In that shadow--because Arabs and Jews are Oriental Semites--can be placed whatever traditional, latent mistrust a Westerner feels toward the Orient. For the Jew of pre-Nazi Europe has bifurcated: what we now have is a Jewish hero, constructed out of a reconstructed cult of the adventurer-pioneer-Orientalist....and his creeping, mysteriously fearsome shadow, the Arab Oriental.” (p286).

Many cartoons depicting Ariel Sharon or other representatives of the Israeli government have prompted immediate protests. Such blatant hypocrisy is

not lost on the Arab world; Jews can protest anti-Jewish stereotypes (even when often times allegations of anti-Semitism are attempts to invalidate criticism of Israeli government policies), but Arabs and Muslims cannot protest anti-Arab or Muslim stereotypes. “In (the West) it is considered freedom of speech if they insult Islam and Muslims,” Mohammed al-Shaibani, a columnist, wrote in Kuwait’s *Al-Qabas* daily Monday. “But such freedom becomes racism and a breach of human rights and anti-Semitism if Arabs and Muslims criticize their religion and religious laws.”

Freedom of expression in some cases is legally limited when it becomes hateful speech. The rationale for this is that certain forms of hateful speech actually hinder the freedom of those who have been targeted for humiliation and derision, and they are effectively silenced. In Canada, for example, it is a criminal offence to advocate genocide, publicly incite hatred, and wilfully promote hatred against an “identifiable group,” and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms states that the exercise of the freedom of expression, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to conditions and restrictions. Some libertarian commentators, however, argue that the best response to hate speech is

not criminalization but more speech. Regardless of whether one agrees that such restrictions on free speech are justifiable or not, it is clear that if such standards are to exist, they should apply equally to protect all communities. Therefore it is not a Western over-tolerance of multiculturalism that has fuelled this indignation; it is because of a shallow and hypocritical multiculturalism.

The huge outcry against these cartoons has less to do with the doctrinal limitations of Islam itself than with the social context in the post 9/11 climate and the never-ending “War on Terrorism” within which Muslim and Arab communities operate today. The construction of the Arab terrorist in a Danish cartoon is not harmless or a simple experiment in free speech. It is deeply hateful and affects the inherent dignity of all Arab and Muslim people. The Bush administration and sensationalist media outlets depend on both the cartoons and the subsequent images of violent Arabs to justify their racism and to sell their illegal war. In response, what such communities are demanding and deserve is an end to the demonization of their communities and the right to full dignity, a genuine and egalitarian multiculturalism, and self-determination within Western borders and beyond Western borders in Iraq, Palestine, and Afghanistan.

“Netherlands” continued from page 2 »

its peacekeepers to prevent the Serbian massacre of Muslims in Srebrenica, now 10 years ago.

There was, however, a lot more riding on the outcome of the vote than international reputation and the healing of past wounds. If the Labour party refused to support the vote, the Dutch government was in jeopardy of falling.

The decision comes less than a week after U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan met with Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende. “Let me say to the population that the work

that is being done in Afghanistan is extremely important. It is an international effort and I think we all have a stake in it. No-one can afford to see a destabilized Afghanistan,” the Secretary-General said to the press.

Balkenende’s center right party openly discussed sending 1200 troops to the embattled country last year, but backed off when polls showed close to 70 per cent of the Dutch population was opposed to the idea. Polls this week displayed a dip in those numbers, however, with disapproval ratings in the 40 per cent range. Because this

was still higher than those who supported the plan, however, the debate that followed was reportedly fiery and emotional. Nevertheless, only the Liberal D66 party, the smallest party in the governing coalition, officially voiced opposition to the plan. Their argument was based on the belief that the Netherlands would inherit hostility generated by US failures in the region.

The Dutch deployment will come as good news for the British and Canadian forces already in Kabul and Kandahar, as both countries are expected to shoulder much of the load once the

thinly stretched U.S. army withdraws from the region. Canada recently added 140 soldiers to the 650 already stationed in the increasingly unstable southern Afghanistan, and it plans to send 1300 more troops in February.

—Salvatore Ciolfi

cont’d from page 3 »

to pressure from the powerful biotechnology and agribusiness lobby, which sees GURTs as a way to extract unprecedented profits by completely privatizing plant varieties on which the majority of the world’s population depends for survival.

—Anna Carastathis