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The Dominion

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Fight over Software Patents Rekindled in Europe

Around 400 programmers took to the streets in Brussels last week to protest proposed software patent legislation in the European Union. During the week, over 2,700 web sites replaced their front pages with a message protesting software patents.

Companies like IBM and Microsoft, which support software patent legislation, argue that patents are necessary to encourage innovation. In the US, large corporations make extensive use of software patents to protect their interests.

Critics, however, argue that software patents hinder innovation by making certain ideas off limits to small software developers. British Telecom, for example, holds a patent on the use of links in conjunction with a dialup network connection. If the patent were enforced, the company would have the right to demand a licensing fee from any company that wrote software to access the world wide web, or provided access to the web via a dialup connection.

There are currently over 30,000 software patents filed in Europe; many small software companies and independent programmers are claiming that they will be obligated to look through the entire list of patents before engaging in any new projects, effectively stifling innovation.

But according to well-known programmer and Free Software advocate Richard Stallman, large corporations have



Programmers protest software patents in Brussels. (Indymedia Belgium)

the resources and clout to avoid paying licensing fees. Companies like IBM, he argues, have a large number of patents, and can use these as leverage to avoid having to pay licensing fees for access to other patents. (Indymedia UK, Belgium) —Dru Oja Jay

Thousands of Non-citizens Serving in US Armed Forces

Many of the soldiers serving in the US armed forces in Afghanistan and Iraq are not US citizens. According to the Pentagon, 37,401 non-citizens are currently serving as active duty soldiers. A US Department of Defence spokesperson said that “the military services have processes and programs in place to help service members expedite their citizenship”. Since September 11th, 2001, it has become increasingly difficult for many immigrants to apply for US citi-

zenship.

In an interview with *Al Jazeera*, British MP George Galloway accused the US of continuing a “long tradition of using its underclass as cannon fodder.” During Vietnam “the proportion of blacks in the army was 40%, while in the US population the number of blacks was a quarter of that... nothing has changed,” he said. (*Al Jazeera*) —DOJ

Reporters Sans Frontières Releases Press Freedom Index

Journalist advocacy group *Reporters sans Frontières* (Reporters without Borders) recently released the first systematic index of press freedoms. Canada ranked a close fifth behind Finland, Iceland, Norway and the Netherlands.

Based on a questionnaire distributed to foreign and local journalists worldwide, the index

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.

granted each country a score based on several criteria, including violence against journalists, state interventions and censorship practices. The index does not take professional standards or ethical practices into account. (Reporters Sans Frontières) —DOJ

Venezuela to Stage “Fight” at WTO

Victor Alvarez, Venezuela’s Chief trade negotiator, says that Venezuela will propose that “no new commitments be adopted” at World Trade Organization negotiations next week in Cancún. “It makes no sense for countries like ours to add new points to the WTO agenda when there’s such a long list of issues that haven’t been satisfied,” said Alvarez.

Along with many other developing countries, Venezuela is insisting that Europe and the United States remove the estimated \$300 billion in subsidies that their governments give farmers annually before other negotiations can be considered. Poor countries say that these subsidies make it impossible for them to compete in international markets. (Reuters) —DOJ

British Arms Exports to Africa Double

According to a report released by the Campaign Against Arms Trade, a British activist group, arms exports from British countries to Africa have doubled over the last three years. (*Observer*) —DOJ



Demonstrators at an August 23 OCAP protest: "It's overwhelming, in a country with such wealth, to see people lining up for soup kitchens." *Indymedia Ontario*

OCAP Highlights Poverty in Toronto

With hard-line campaign promises boasting a strike ban for teachers and more tough talk for homeless people and immigrant families, Ontario's Conservative Premier, Ernie Eves, called an election for October 2.

Eves' announcement came a little over a week after the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) hosted its latest protest against the Tory government, now in its ninth year of provincial rule.

Over 500 poor and homeless people, social activists and trade unionists gathered in Toronto's prestigious Yorkville shopping district on August 23 to share a free meal and draw attention to the economic disparity in Canada's largest city.

"It's overwhelming, in a country with such wealth, to see people lining up for soup kitchens," said Kelly O'Sullivan, an inner city community worker and President of CUPE Local

4308. "These are things we saw and heard about in the 30's during the Depression. It happens everyday and there's no justification for it. It's a direct outcome of this government's policies and agenda."

The Conservative government's first act in power was to cut welfare rates by 21 per cent. Since then, they have legislated a 60 hour work week, clawed back the National Child Benefit and kept the minimum wage frozen at \$6.85 (\$6.40 for students). Tax cuts remain a staple of Tory policy in Ontario.

"Those tax cuts were financed by cutting social housing, by cutting welfare, by cutting people's basic entitlements," said John Clarke, an OCAP organizer, during the feast in Yorkville. "You have such injustice going on in this province that it needs to be challenged massively and with a force that can actually defeat it and defeat the political forces that are responsible for it."

The Walkerton tragedy, the

killing of (unarmed) First Nations activist Dudley George by provincial police and an escalating housing crisis in Toronto are among the issues expected to haunt the Conservative campaign.

For their part, OCAP members promise to confront the candidates over the next month, pressing for an end to what they call "an attack on the people".

"There's no plans to back off on the Tories until they're good and gone," OCAP organizer, Mike Desroche, told the Dominion on the day Eves called the election. "And we certainly have no intention of backing off on the Liberals as long as this (political) climate exists across the country."

Eve's predecessor, Conservative Premiere Mike Harris, resigned from office on the morning of an OCAP demonstration that shut down the Bay Street financial district for several hours in Toronto in October, 2001.

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What makes the WTO powerful?

What makes the WTO so powerful is that it has both the legislative and judicial authority to challenge laws, policies and programs of countries that do not conform to WTO rules and strike them down if they are seen to be too "trade restrictive." Cases are decided - in secret - by a panel of three trade bureaucrats. Once a WTO ruling is made, worldwide conformity is required. A country is obligated to harmonize its laws or face the prospect of perpetual trade sanctions or fines.

The WTO, which contains no minimum standards to protect the environment, labour rights, social programs or cultural diversity, has already been used to strike down a number of key nation-state environmental, food safety, and human rights laws. Recently, US laws to protect endangered Asian sea turtles from shrimp nets and dolphins from drift nets have been successfully challenged at the WTO. All WTO agreements set out detailed rules intended to constrain the extent to which governments can regulate international trade, or otherwise "interfere" with the activities of large corporations. WTO agreements provide extensive lists of things that governments can't do.

Says US-based Public Citizen, "The emerging case law indicates that the WTO keeps raising the bar against environmental laws." Renato Ruggiero, former WTO secretary-general, has admitted that environmental standards in the WTO are "doomed to fail and could only damage the global trading system." Another WTO official was quoted in the Financial Times in April, 1998, saying, "The WTO is the place where governments collude in private against their domestic pressure groups."

—**Maude Barlow**, "Who's In Charge of the Global Economy?" Fall 1999.

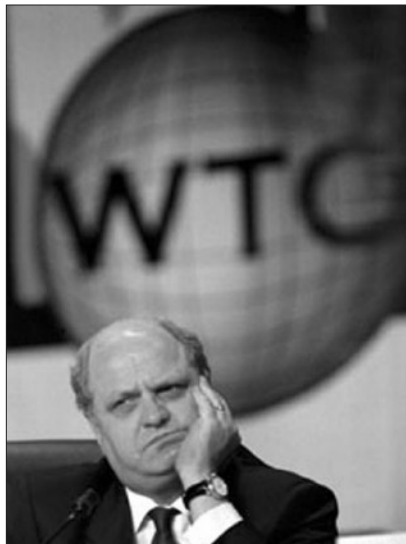
National Governments Must Serve Two Constituencies

QUESTION: In a text of yours you say that the world is ruled by a "virtual senate". Can you tell me something more about this?

CHOMSKY: The term is not mine. I am borrowing it from the professional literature on international economics. The "virtual senate" consists of investors and lenders. They can effectively decide social and economic policy by capital flight, attacks on currency that undermine the economy, and other means that have been provided by the neoliberal framework of the past thirty years. You can see it in Brazil right now. The "virtual senate" wants assurances that the neoliberal policies of the Cardoso government, from which foreign investors and domestic elites greatly benefit, will not be changed. As soon as international investors, lenders, banks, the IMF, domestic wealth, and so on, recognized that Lula might win the elections, they reacted with attacks on the currency, capital flight, and other means to place the country in a stranglehold and prevent the will of the majority from being implemented. When they regained confidence that Lula would not be able to depart fundamentally from the international neoliberal regime, they relaxed and welcomed him. As they put it, Lula reassured people that he would keep Brazil safe. That specific use of language has two faces: if he keeps it safe for the financial investors, will he keep it safe for the Brazilians? Governments face what economists call a "dual constituency": voters, and the "virtual senate." Lula promised his country that he will keep Brazil safe for the population, but the IMF wants to keep it safe for its own constituency: the "virtual senate." They

will act so that the money comes right after the elections and only if Lula keeps up with creditors. This is the effect of financial liberalization and other measures that have established the "virtual senate" as the dominant force in determining social and economic policy within a country. It means the population doesn't have control of the decisions taken by his own country. One consequence of liberalization of capital is rather clear: it undercuts democracy.

—From an interview with **Noam Chomsky**, first appeared in *Antosphia*, fall 2002.



World Trade Organization

France, a Few Years Before the Revolution

The world is beginning to look like France, a few years before the Revolution. There are no reliable wealth statistics from that time, but the disparities are unlikely to have been greater than they are today. The wealthiest 5% of the world's people now earn 114 times as much as the poorest 5%. The 500 richest people on earth now own \$1.54 trillion - more than the entire gross domestic product of Africa, or the combined annual incomes of the poorest half of humanity. Now, just as then, the desperation of the poor counterpoises

the obscene consumption of the rich. Now, just as then, the sages employed by the global aristocrats - in the universities, the thinktanks, the newspapers and magazines - contrive to prove that we possess the best of all possible systems in the best of all possible worlds. In the fortress of Camp Delta in Guantanamo Bay we have our Bastille, in which men are imprisoned without charge or trial.

—**George Monbiot**, "The Worst of Times". *Guardian*, September 2, 2003.

Rich Demand Access to Markets, Offer Little in Return

All the rhetoric from the last big World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting in Doha in 2001 was that reducing poverty would be at the heart of the current round of trade talks.

This was supposed to be the Doha 'Development Round'.

But what have the poorest gained since Doha?

Virtually nothing. Take the key issue of agriculture (which is vital to the livelihoods of three quarters of humanity).

Rich countries promised to cut the \$330bn in subsidies they lavish on their farmers.

These subsidies destroy local markets and put farmers out of business in developing countries; they are flooded with cheap imports such as wheat, maize, milk and sugar, and they drive down world prices for exporters.

But instead of slashing subsidies, the US ramped up its support by \$175bn over 10 years and the EU has fudged reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, putting off any real cuts until 2013.

—**Adriano Campolina Soares**, "Trade must serve the poor". BBC Interactive, September 2003.

For links to full articles:
dominionpaper.ca/reading

The Gathering Storm in Mexico

Under NAFTA, Mexican farmers move from *ejido* to foreign *finca**

by Paul Harris

On the same day that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into force, January 1, 1994, a group of Mexican peasants marched out of the mountains and the jungles and directly into the media spotlight. At the time, President Carlos Salinas was celebrating Mexico's new status as a "first world" nation and basking in the glory of his own sudden prominence as a major world leader alongside United States President Reagan and Canadian Prime Minister Mulroney. It was only the peasants who recognized NAFTA for the disaster that it was destined to be, and said *¡Basta!*, – enough is enough.

The struggle of the so-called Zapatistas (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional or Zapatista National Liberation Army - EZLN) has, in the minds of many, become parallel to the struggles of the Mexican agricultural community, or the "campesino" movement. There are hundreds of organizations in the Mexican farmers' movement, such as a group called "The land can't take it anymore", but they have still managed to find an affinity with each other and with the Zapatistas. To be sure, neither the EZLN nor the Mexican farmers' movement is solely about NAFTA. But NAFTA provided a clear and obvious rallying point for both, and the EZLN's entry into the spotlight on the very day the agreement came into force helped to draw the world's attention to the actions of the Mexican government and to the consequences of trade agreements in general.



Mexicans in San Salvador Atenco at a rally in support of the Zapatistas and other indigenous movements. Farmers are at the centre of Mexico's growing social movements. *Indymedia Chiapas*

What went wrong?

A reasonable question for society to answer is whether there is a need for family farms in our economies. In general, Canadians would probably agree there is a need and most Americans would also likely concur. In Mexico, it's not even a question: it would be very much like asking if the sky should remain up today, instead of trying down for a change. Mexico's economy cannot function effectively without the family farm. It is a millennia-old system that has been the backbone of the Mesoamerican economy. More than 25% of the Mexican population makes its living from agriculture (for comparison, less than 2% in the US) and about 80% of those farmers still use pre-Columbian agricultural techniques.

Yet the survival of these family farms is threatened by

NAFTA. Some may remember that when the deal was sold to North American citizens, farmers were assured that NAFTA was going to bring them higher prices. In Mexico the opposite is true. Commodities are underpriced and farm income is below the cost of production. There are government subsidies but these benefit large industrial producers rather than cash croppers. Many of them have been forced off fertile land that was previously guaranteed to them by the Mexican government (under the "ejido" system) because of privatization pressures. And with the elimination of most agricultural tariffs, US products have flooded Mexican markets and further degraded the prices paid to native farmers. Recent estimates show that Mexican farmers earn an average of 35 cents a day.

In order to feed its people, Mexico now imports about six

million tons of corn every year. Corn is the staple of the Mexican diet, it is the crop most campesinos grow, and it has never before happened that Mexico could not produce enough for its own needs. Despite its use of "primitive" techniques, Mexico was also once largely self-sufficient in basic grains production. Today it is importing about 95% of its soy, 58% of its rice, and 49% of its wheat. All of these pressures have contributed to the growing popular unrest among Mexico's farming community.

Renegotiating NAFTA won't help

One of the goals of the campesino movement in Mexico is the renegotiation of at least the agricultural portions of NAFTA. Unfortunately, this will never happen.

[* *Ejido* is the Spanish word for 'common land'. 'Finca' means real estate; but in the Americas it means 'ranch' or 'farm'.]

There is a mechanism for changing NAFTA contained in Chapter 22 of the agreement. It seems relatively benign in that all it requires is for one country to call for a renegotiation, which must then be discussed and agreed upon by all three countries. The problem lies in the fact that NAFTA is not a tool of government—it is a tool of industry. Neither Mexico nor the other two parties can alter this agreement without the concurrence of major industrial players, and industry has no interest in reopening this agreement unless it is to allow themselves to strip even more power and authority from government and the people.

Mexico's President Vicente Fox said the politically expedient thing in Zacatecas state at the beginning of 2003 by indicating his government was open to the possibility of renegotiating the agricultural clauses. In fact, he was simply buying himself some time knowing that in the end no renegotiation would occur. He actually took the step of signing an agreement with a representative group of campesinos in April 2003 promising to ask Canada and the United States about renegotiating NAFTA guidelines on white corn and beans. White corn is the staple of Mexican agriculture and food. Fox knows this agreement of his is a callous sham. He is well aware that neither Canada nor the US will agree to renegotiation - they haven't, and they can't - and that there was never any chance that they would. This was purely politics for local consumption.

And with the elimination of tariffs on another 80 or so US agricultural products on January 1, 2003 as part of the phased-in NAFTA rules, the Mexican agricultural economy is primed for destruction. There is little doubt then that the increasingly active campesinos and Zapatistas will not see their concerns dealt with any time soon.

Mexican unrest has deep roots

One of the things that makes agriculture different in Mexico as compared to Canada and the United States is the high percentage of farmers who are Indians. [For ease of use, I will use the word 'Indian' to include Tzotzil, Tzeltal, Tojolobal, Chol, and other Mayan groups along with non-Mayan indigenous

More than 25% of the Mexican population makes its living from agriculture... Recent estimates show that Mexican farmers earn an average of 35 cents a day.

peoples.] There has long been simmering resentment between those Indian farmers and Mexico City although, quite frankly, many consider themselves to be Indian first, Yucatecan second, Mexican third. At the same time, there is overt racism toward the Indians in much the same way there is in Canada and the United States. But as a fairly homogenized subclass of workers (farmers), the Mexican Indians are readily marginalized. It is a small leap for them to see NAFTA as racially discriminatory.

In many ways, it is difficult to separate the aspirations of the Zapatistas from the campesinos; even when ethnicity isn't an issue, poverty is. Farmers are farmers; that's what they want to do and they want to be able to do it in peace and with the ability to earn enough to feed and house their families. Social status and political power would be nice, but being able to eat and live are more important.

Historically, the Zapatistas draw their lineage back to the days of Spanish colonialism. In

the words of the Zapatista "Declaration of War": "We are a product of 500 years of struggle ... we have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even a roof over our heads, no land, no work, no health care, no food nor education. Neither are we able to freely and democratically elect our political representatives, nor is there independence from foreigners, nor is there peace nor justice for ourselves and for our children."

The Zapatista movement, at least according to its nominal spokesperson Subcomandante Marcos, is not a political movement out to seize power. It is truly a revolutionary movement intending to transform society. It sees the peasants of Mexico as its constituency and there is little doubt that the continued frustration of efforts to improve the lot of Mexican farmers is almost sure to result in action. Given the intransigence of the federal government and its complete emasculation by NAFTA, WTO, and the IMF, etc., it is quite possible that such action is going to be bloody.

Where to now?

During an interview I gave to a Mexican newspaper in March 2003 regarding an article I published on economics, I took the opportunity to interview the reporter about the Mexican farmer's movement. [I do not presume he speaks for his news organization so I will neither quote him directly nor name him.] As it happens, although he is based in northern Mexico, in Monterrey, he is originally from Quintana Roo, one of the states that makes up the Yucatán region of Mexico, home of the Zapatista movement. He spoke eloquently and passionately about the downtrodden Mexican peasants (he is not one himself) and he predicted that there will eventually be a solid alliance between the Zapatistas and many of the farmers' groups. He also predicted that the federal government is powerless to address

their concerns, even in the unlikely circumstance that they would want to, owing to NAFTA. And, finally, he says there is sure to be a civil war.

The Yucatán declared independence from Mexico City in 1841. To be sure, there is still a movement among various Indian groups for autonomy at least, separation at best. The poor south is where most of the Indians live in Mexico and

Most of the turmoil in Mexico and much of the anger in the farming community can be readily traced to one source: racism.

there is not a lot of love lost between the Indians and the descendants of the Conquistadores del España. These natives have suffered the same indignations as native peoples throughout North America (and, I suppose, most of the rest of the world) and they now have similar social problems: low literacy, poverty, poor life expectancy, inadequate employment and housing - all the usual benefits of having been conquered by white people. For agriculture, there is also the complicating factor that these unhappy people comprise the bulk of the farming community.

Most of the turmoil in Mexico and much of the anger in the farming community can be readily traced to one source: racism. The massive poverty of the south derives from the racial disdain of the north. In that regard, the Mexicans are no different from Canadians and Americans who have subjugated their native people, who have promised them all sorts of things

North America is in the Dark: the Blackout in Context

by Yuill Herbert

On August 15th, 50 million people in the United States and Ontario found themselves in the dark, but many argue that North Americans have been 'in the dark' about the global context of their energy consumption for far too long. The 'biggest blackout in history' can shed some light on the inequalities of global energy consumption. The course that policy makers chart in the future must stretch beyond blackouts to looming problems that face all societies across the globe.

"America, welcome to Kenya, see what we go through," said Alex Mwaura, a logistics officer with an aid agency in Nairobi, according to Reuters. "I'm happy -- let them experience how bushmen live without power, even for just one minute," added Emma Nzau, a 28 year-old receptionist. "Americans are so used to electricity, they should be like the Chinese and ride bicycles to work."

Figures from the International Energy Agency illustrate the global inequities of access to electricity. The power that wasn't consumed as a result of the recent blackout could have satisfied all the power requirements of India's nearly one billion people for twenty four hours. Or Africa's 760 million people for a day and a half. Or Burma's 44 million residents for a year.

North American's energy gluttony goes beyond the issue of inequities in energy consumption; the pollution from the burning of fossil fuels in the US and Canada is causing disproportionate harm to communities around the world. The United States has five percent of the world's population but accounts for twenty five percent of the global greenhouse gas emissions. Greenhouse gas emissions are altering the climate around the planet, causing extreme weather events such as storms and droughts. The devel-

opment charity Christian Aid reports "The burden of dealing with such enormous disruption will fall on countries where many already lead subsistence lives. The most affected will be people with the least access to adequate health systems, alternative housing and other social safety nets. These are countries which already survive with little room for error when growing food. Small amounts of disrupted production due to changed weather patterns, drought and flooding, could wipe out marginal agricultural surpluses".

Because there are major costs associated with climate change, in particular for poor countries, yet the benefits of using the fossil fuels were primarily incurred by wealthy nations, the idea of a carbon debt has become a significant discussion point at climate negotiations. Christian Aid is unequivocal. "The rich countries' carbon debt is now the clearest argument for conventional debt cancellation, but should also be linked to a better deal on trade, aid, greater technology transfer from rich to poor and, vitally, a commitment to tackling climate change built on the foundations of equity".

"There must be limits on all greenhouse gases if the danger to our climate is to be averted... A globally agreed ceiling of greenhouse gas emissions can only be achieved by adopting the principle of per capita emissions rights..." declared the Africa group of nations at the climate negotiations in Berlin, five years ago. The proposed policy framework for stabilizing the climate in an equitable manner is titled contraction and convergence. The industrialised countries must contract their emissions and all countries converge at



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a safe emissions level of 0.4 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per capita. North Americans currently emit around 20 tonnes.

This is the context that policy makers face when they are devising a system to fix North America's energy network.

The first step is to save energy. The Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) is headquartered at an elevation of 7000 feet in the mountains of Colorado. Home to banana trees and an iguana, the Institute is heated by the passive thermal power of the sun and electricity is generated by solar panels. Amory Lovins is one of the founders and has been a prominent ana-

This isn't about shivering in the dark, knitting sweaters out of mopheads. It's about taking some time to reflect on the role of fossil fuel in our lives and its impact on our ecological life support systems... and to take some time to just have fun in the dark!"

Next is the matter of choosing the appropriate technology. Solar energy is touted as a solution both to a changing climate and problems with the grid, as it is decentralised and can be installed in a variety of locations. Jeremy Leggett, CEO of solar-century and Associate Fellow at Oxford University's Environmental Change Institute doesn't

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New Brain Machine Improves Musical Creativity

by Matt Brennan

Yes, you read the headline correctly, and no, I can't believe it either, but apparently scientists have invented a brain machine that dramatically enhances musical performance, thus paving the way for a new race of highly skilled super-musicians. According to the BBC, "the system - called neurofeedback - trains musicians to clear their minds and produce more creative brain waves. Research, to be published in the journal *Neuroreport*, indicates the technique helps musicians to improve by an average of 17% - the equivalent of one grade or class of honours. Some improved by as much as 50%."

The brain machine was tested on 97 students at the Royal College of Music in London, UK, and the percentage scores refer to examinations conducted by professional adjudicators. Anyone who has ever taken piano lessons as a child and gone through the trials of Royal Conservatory exams will understand that a 17% grade boost represents an incredible increase in musical proficiency (enough to send even the crankiest of teachers into fits of joy). But the student wouldn't be able to take the credit - thank the brain machine instead.

Most musicians feel that their best performances are the ones where the music just pours out naturally, and such moments of effortless vitality are usually rooted in a clear state of mind. Teachers will try to describe this state of awareness to students, but it's very difficult to put such a thing into words. As it turns out, it's not so difficult to put it on a video screen.

The brain activity of a healthy human being can be understood as a collection of brain waves which scientists have learned to identify and isolate. With no musical instruments in sight, the technique



ftrain.com

consists of attaching sensors to your scalp so the machine can identify three main patterns - dubbed the alpha, beta, and theta waves - and display your own brain waves on a video screen in front of you. From there, as if playing a video game controlled by her mind, a musician can learn to concentrate and hone in on certain brain waves while the machine happily chimes a bell as she successfully learns to isolate one from the other. By teaching patients to increase their theta wave activity, scientists at Imperial College London and Charing Cross Hospital have effectively used the machine to help patients with epilepsy, alcoholism, attention deficit and post-traumatic stress disorders. The new development is that scientists have discovered that increased theta wave activity also enhances performance skills including musical under-

standing, imagination, and communication with the audience.

And so it is that machines have become far more effective than traditional human teachers in helping us to clear our minds and enhance our creative side. If such technology manages to spread beyond the limits of the experiment and grow in availability it will surely provoke no end of debate between the technophiles and luddites of the arts community. Since it so dramatically boosts performance skills, should musicians who use the machine be banned from competition with those who never had a chance to get hooked up? And from a philosophical standpoint, will this discovery come to be seen as the moment when all of our creative impulses were reduced to waves on a screen, shattering the mystery of the muse and sucking the wonder out of grace and inspiration?

I hope not. I can envision professional musicians who might chastise students for using such a machine, but what I cannot see is a good reason for their scorn. In its time, the invention of the metronome was no doubt met with similar resistance based on similar, unfounded reasons. The machine is not a performance-enhancing drug; it is a teaching tool. Its availability is prohibitive, of course, but so are the costs of tuition and of owning a professional musical instrument. Nor does the machine eliminate the need for practice; instead, if the technology becomes more widely available, it will simply raise expected performance standards for the next generation of musicians.

The philosophical implications may be another source for apprehension, but those who dismiss the discovery are probably the same people who want to cling to the notion of creative talent as being reserved for a chosen few, something you have to be anointed with at birth. But such views are as ignorant as they are selfish - musical talent is something that can be developed, and in a few cases, revealed dramatically by a special teacher. Perhaps this technology will be able to open up creative potential in those who were discouraged from pursuing music but have always secretly wished to be able to strum a chord. Which has to be a good thing.

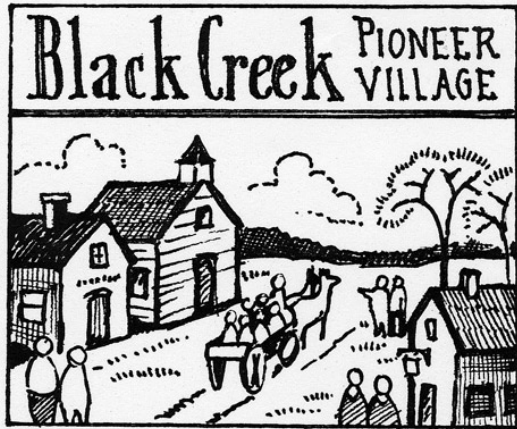
Matt Brennan is studying media and culture at Stirling University.

“Mexico”, continued from page 7 »

only to snap them away at the last minute, who have herded these people into little corrals, and who feel sort of guilty about what they have done but resent every effort to redress.

And while Canadians and Americans complain in varying degrees about NAFTA, the Mexicans probably got short-changed more than anyone because the agreement is set up to guarantee they remain in poverty. They cannot get ahead as a people; the rich will get richer while the poor do no better than maintain status quo. Mexico remains the “third world” component of NAFTA.

So although from the outside, Mexico seems to be a sleepy land of sombreros, salsa, and siestas, it is in fact a very divided country with a wide range of social and political aspirations that make it anything but stable. Someday, the siesta may be over and those disparate and desperate groups may finally rise up to take charge of their destinies. If that happens, all those Canadian and American enterprises that moved their business facilities to Mexico to avoid giving safe working conditions and decent wages to their employees may find those



HEATHER MEEK '03 hlmk@mta.ca



MY AUNT GOT ME A JOB AT THE “PIONEER VILLAGE.” I WANTED TO BE A HISTORICAL CHARACTER... BUT...



IT WAS DETERMINED THAT I WAS SUITED TO THE ICE CREAM TRAILER. MY COUSIN LOUISE GOT TO BE THE 19TH CENTURY HEROINE...



ON WEEK-2, LOUISE WAS STRICKEN BY HEAT STROKE ON ACCOUNT OF THE CORSET, AND DIDN'T COME BACK TO WORK. I WAS BORED BUT HEALTHY FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE SUMMER!



A campesina at a demonstration in Mexico. Indymedia Chiapas

employees running for their lives. It is almost certain to be the farmers who are leading the charge. NAFTA will have been the last straw.

Paul Harris is self-employed as a consultant providing businesses with the tools and expertise to reintegrate their sick or injured employees into the workplace. Canadian businesses can reach him at paul@working-solutions.ca. He has traveled extensively in what is usually known as “the Third World” and has an abiding interest in history, social justice, morality and, well, just about everything. Paul is also a freelance writer and can be reached at paul@escritoire.ca. He lives in Canada.

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mince words on the lack of widespread use of solar: “I literally seethe with frustration that the solutions to global warming are ready for mass deployment - technologies like solar power which ironically needs nothing like this amount of sun to work, just a bit of light. It is bewildering to me that governments are not galvanised into action by what is happening to the world’s weather.”

Solar power has the added benefit of addressing global energy inequities. The Worldwatch Institute reports “Already the cheapest source of power in many remote, off-grid locations, solar cells can help meet the power needs of some of the 2 billion people who now lack access to modern energy services. Having rejected new coal plants for environmental reasons, Thai-

land will soon host Southeast Asia’s largest solar installation and plans to expand capacity in the vicinity to 4.7 MW over the next several years. The Indian government aims to electrify 18,000 villages by 2012, most with solar power”.

Technology will play a major role in addressing the issue of climate change but it must be in a framework of equality to satisfy political insecurities. “We cannot lecture developing countries about the importance of protecting their environment from behind the luxury of our own high living standards,” said former British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook in an interview with United Nations Environment Program. ...

