

community

Action Notes

information and resources against
war and racism

September 8th, 2002, Issue 10

Displacement Issue

forced migration

loss of home, culture,
community

GENOCIDE ≠ JUSTICE

Uprooted:

The Crisis of Displacement and the Forced Migration of People

(continued on pg. 2)

The world is in the midst of a crisis of people being uprooted from their homes and forced to migrate to other regions. The United Nations estimates that over 150 million people are forced, in one way or another, to cross international borders in search of safety and livelihoods. This is the highest level of transnational (im)migration we have seen in human history. It is a direct result of many factors, including war and militarization; the destruction of rural communities and economies; growing unemployment; growing poverty worldwide; forced evictions by government/state forces, environmental disasters and the continuation of patriarchal violence and fundamentalisms.



Download this colour poster at www.ten12.com

Rumours of Borders (Excerpts) by Charlie "Wolf" Smoke

see page 4

Charlie Smoke, a First Nations man born on the Candian side of Akwesasne reserve near Cornwall tells the story of his attempted deportation by Canadian Immigration officials to the US after they removed him from his home in Regina. Smoke refused to claim either Canadian or American citizenship on the grounds that he is in fact a Pre-Canadian aboriginal person. While in jail, Smoke began a hunger strike, asserting his right as an indogenous citizen of Turtle Island to live on either side of the Canada-US border.

Community Action Notes

is a Toronto -based newsletter for community networking, outreach and information sharing against war and racism. Are you a group or individual with events, meetings demo information to share? Send it our way! We gladly welcome longer analysis as well. If you have feedback, or to get involved with planning or distribution send an e-mail to:

headsup@tao.ca

Or phone us at our **new number:**
(416) 760 3483

CAN is brought to you by: the **heads up collective**, a local sister group to **Colours of Resistance**. download CAN @ <http://www.tao.ca/~colours/can.html>

(CASSA) HATE CRIME HOTLINE

Council of Agencies Serving South Asians

Have you been assaulted or threatened because you are of South Asian origin? Report it:

· Call (416) 979 8611

· 911 Emergency

· Metro Toronto Police (416) 808 2222 (non emergency)

CANADA SEALS ITS BORDERS: On June 28th, new immigration legislation came into effect, further entrenching the injustices of a racist system. Amongst other things the new Immigration changes will: - Greatly expand powers of detention. - Bar people on welfare from sponsoring their children or spouses. - See the Liberal government abandon its promise to allow appeals for refugees on the merits of their cases. - Allow life-or-death decisions on refugee claims to be made by a single judge. - See the U.S. declared a "safe third country", a country that is known for its high detention rate and refugee rights violations. This agreement will effectively stop an estimated 40% of refugee claims from being processed.

Uprooted: The Crisis of Displacement and the Forced Migration of People

(continued from page one)

The United Nations estimates that Afghanistan is currently the world's largest refugee-producing country. Over 3.5 million refugees live in border camps and cities in Pakistan. Another 1.5 million Afghans live in Iran. A disproportionate number are women and their children.

The US-led "war on terrorism", in which Canada is the third largest military force, has led to even more displacement and forced migration of people. Since September 11th, hundreds of thousands of people have had to leave their homes, their farms and their only means of support to seek safety abroad. They are fleeing the bombs dropped by British and US military forces, but they are also fleeing the Northern Alliance.

We know that no amount of restrictions can prevent people compelled by life threatening circumstances from crossing national borders. More restrictions in a period of crisis of displacement mean only one thing: more and more people are forced to live "underground" as undocumented (im)migrants. Being undocumented means being more vulnerable to the demands of employers, corrupt landlords and arbitrary police actions.

Since the start of the bombings in Afghanistan, the Canadian government has not committed a single dollar to ensuring safe shelter in Canada for fleeing refugees. In November 2001, \$750 million was newly allocated to the armed forces: nothing for Afghan refugees.

Many of the millions of people displaced by current and previous imperialist wars would never be accepted under the restrictive definitions of "refugee" in Canada. They would be deemed "bogus refugee claimants," held in detention if entering Canada through the aid of smugglers (which they would have to do since Canada spends next to nothing on helping people seeking asylum), ordered deported to return to a war-torn, poverty-stricken region, and denied avenues of appealing this negative decision under the new Immigration Act.

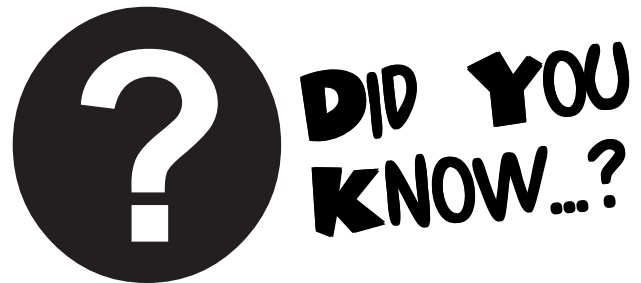


Voices of young pakistani and muslim activists from lahore and toronto. See www.brownbook.cjb.net/ for a copy.

Speaking out against the occupation.

Heads Up collective member Reena Katz speaks with Al-Awda's Mughir Al Hindi about the recent events in Palestine. See www.tao.ca/~colours/can.html for a copy.

NOT IN OUR NAME!



The new and tougher Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Bill C-11) came into effect in June, 2002.

On December 19, 1995, Nigerian refugee claimant Michael Akhimien died from medical neglect (diabetes related keto-acidosis) at the Celebrity Inn, an Immigration Holding Centre near the Toronto airport (see CAN issue 6 for an interview with a former detainee).

About 1/4 of the prison population at the Metro West Detention Centre (a maximum security prison), are immigrants and refugees placed under a deportation hold and held without a criminal charge. (source - <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/44/032.html>)

Internally Displaced People

The numbers of internally displaced people are often higher than those who are forced to cross national borders. Estimates of the number of internally displaced persons are often fragmentary and unreliable. Although internally displaced persons share many characteristics with refugees who cross international borders, they are not protected under international refugee law because they remain inside their own countries. In fact, many are actively attacked by their own governments and remain largely inaccessible to outside monitors and provider of humanitarian assistance.



Palestinian child in a refugee camp.

The US Committee for Refugees estimates that there were over 21 million internally displaced people (based on political reasons) at the end of 2001. High numbers of internally displaced peoples were found in Sudan (4 million), Columbia (2.5 million), Angola (3 million), Congo-Kinshasa (2 million), Indonesia (1.4 million), Afghanistan (1 million), Burma, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Palestine, Iraq, Burundi and Sierra Leone, to name a few. In many of these countries, reliable estimates of displaced persons are unavailable. Estimates can be highly inaccurate and vary according to sources.

Sources: <http://www.tao.ca/~mayworks/911/4/nandita.shtml>
<http://www.refugees.org/>
<http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home?page=basics>

IMMIGRATION FACTS...

Refugees are arrested and detained at Immigration Holding Centres like the Celebrity Inn (see CAN issue 6 for an interview with a former detainee) and the Metro West Detention Centre (a high security jail) on these three grounds: **identity, flight risk, or danger to the public.**



Bill C-11 gives immigration officers new powers to arrest and detain at the port of entry (e.g. airport or border) on the basis of administrative convenience (e.g. to complete an examination) or because they have “reasonable grounds to suspect” inadmissibility on grounds of security or human rights violations... i.e. arrest and detention on the basis of *convenience* or *suspicion* without a warrant!

Because refugees often cannot get all the necessary papers, international law prohibits governments from penalizing refugees who use false documents. For many refugees fleeing persecution or death, a false travel document is the only means of escape. Often governments refuse to issue passports to known political dissidents - or imprison them if they apply. Canada requires travellers to have visas, creating a huge obstacle for refugees trying to escape persecution. The more governments put up measures to stop people travelling to their territory, the more refugees are forced to use false documents and turn to smugglers to help them escape.

Rumours of Borders

by Charlie "Wolf" Smoke

Below are excerpts reprinted from an article printed in its entirety in Briarpatch magazine Jul/Aug 2002, Issue p.3-7. The entire text of 'Rumours of Borders' could not be printed here due to space restrictions. Through selecting these excerpts, we have attempted to keep Charlie Smoke's voice, but we strongly encourage you to read the whole piece online at www.tao.ca/~colours/can.html

"It was bound to happen, sooner or later, that an Indigenous person born in North America would be denied residency by the colonial governments that have stolen the continent from the Indigenous Peoples of this land. It seems unimaginable that the millions of people who escaped discrimination, oppression, dictatorship, famine, desolation and so many other forms of misery, by emigrating to Canada and the United States, would treat the original inhabitants as foreigners in their own land. But it is true. The plight of Charlie Smoke symbolizes so much of what is wrong with the Americas.

Charlie Smoke has insulted Canada by not declaring himself a Canadian citizen so now Canada wants to deport him. Poor Canada. In all its millions of acres of stolen land, they don't have a spot for Charlie. They want to export ungrateful Charlie to the United States which does not have a spot for Charlie in its millions of acres of stolen land either."

-Kenneth Deer in an editorial for The Eastern Door

"I am Sunkmanitu tanka Isnala Najin or Charlie "Wolf" Smoke. I am Lakota and Mohawk, originally from the Akwesasne Mohawk Reserve. My birth, 40 years ago, wasn't registered because I was born at home and my traditionalist parents were of the view that they would have as little as possible to do with the Canadian and American governments."

"I have a Saskatchewan driver's license but no social insurance number, no birth certificate and no native treaty card. I have a social security number in the United States, received under a treaty that allows Canadian natives to live and work in the United states."

"Akwesasne borders Ontario, Quebec, and the state of New York. My home though, (considering "home" as "where the heart is") is in South Dakota. I've lived close to half my life in what non-Indians call Canada, and half in what they refer to as the United States. Currently I reside in Regina, Saskatchewan.

"I took time off from my Conservation Biology program at Oglala Lakota College to accept a job in Regina at a predominantly Indian inner city highschool. I was hired in November 2000 as a counselor in Student Support Services at Scott Collegiate. Soon though, due to my science background, I also began co-teaching grade 9 science."

"But after I had showed Robert Redford's documentary, *Incident at Oglala*, everything changed. A couple of days later, two Canada Immigration agents came into my school with a cop – all of them with attitude.... They ordered me to quit my job. I refused. Then they stormed into the Principal's office and, interrupted a meeting, and demanded that she fire me. She refused. The Personnel Director of the Board Office wasn't able to defy them though, so I was fired that day. I finished out the school year as a volunteer so I could finish the projects I was working on. This was apparently acceptable- I could work, I just couldn't get paid."

"The two agents said that they would set up a hearing for me within two weeks. They told me that I would have to provide documentation to prove that I had a right to work in Canada. I told them that they were mistaken, they would have to provide me with documentation to prove that they had authority over me and that they have a right to work in Canada. I was upset that I had to prove to these guys that I was Native to Canada. Then I demanded to see their identification. They did not like that, and asked me why. I responded, 'I want to make sure I have your full names and badge numbers because as soon as you leave I'll be phoning the media to tell them that two white guys are trying to kick an Indian out of Canada.'"

"Following several delays, the day of the inquisition arrived. It lasted over 90 minutes. Basically, all it consisted of though, was their repeated requests for me to say that I was Canadian. I informed them that I am "Pre-Canadian." Then they asked me what country I was a citizen of, and I replied that I was a citizen of the Lakota Nation. I also demanded that they show me something in writing proving that they, as Canadians, had any authority over me, as an Indigenous person of the western Hemisphere. This apparently caused them considerable grief. They stated over and over that if I would just claim Canadian citizenship, there would be no need to proceed any further. But alas, I am a stubborn one! So they gave me 30 days to leave "THEIR" country."

"On the date of their deadline, I informed the press that I would not willingly leave my land. If they illegally apprehend me, and forcibly exile me from this northern portion of my land, as I told the media, as soon as they take the shackles of me, I will turn around and walk back towards Regina. Eventually, even though I have no money for a lawyer, this case will have to go

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Report Back from Colombia

by Rebeka Tabobondung

In case it wasn't reported in any of our 'respected' mainstream Canadian presses, I want you to know that on July 28, 2002 some 60,000 Colombian women converged in Bogota for an unprecedented peace march. Thanks to the Canada Colombia Solidarity Campaign (CCSC) the march included a show of Canadian solidarity (Toronto style) in five of us joined women from the Colombian Postal Workers Union for this massive mobilization. Our delegation was diverse and included activists such as a human rights lawyer and legal representative for the Canadian Arab Federation, an advocate for anti-violence from the Ontario Public Interest Research Group, our group leader from the CCSC, a union activist, and myself, a dedicated community activist and member of Wasauksing First Nation.

Prior to leaving for the march, the CCSC briefed us on security issues, history, and the political situation of Colombia. Like Canada, Colombia has experienced the legacy of colonialism, which left the Indigenous population at a marginal 3%. 30% of the population is made up of Afro-Colombians, whom the Spanish brought as slaves, but who still maintain a distinct culture and have established territories along the coast. This leaves the mestizos, who form the majority of Colombians and are a mix of Spanish and Indigenous decent that identify with their European roots. In 2001, the CCSC reported that 5000 individual mestizos owned 40% of Colombia's land base. It is a myth that Colombia is a 'poor' country. Because of its rich natural resources, it is one of the wealthiest countries in the world and no doubt the wealthiest in the Americas. Like most of the developing world, what makes Colombia 'poor' is that its wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few elite politicians and corporations.

As our plane descended upon the capital, security issues were at the forefront of my mind. Last year the late Rodney Bobiwash, activist and member of the Mississaugas First Nation introduced me to the brutal reality that Colombians face daily. He told me about his friend, Indigenous brother and activist Kimy Pernia Dominco of the Embara Katio nation who was kidnapped and killed (disappeared) by armed paramilitaries for speaking out against a plan to dam his nation's main river. Kimy's murder is far from unusual. One person in Colombia is killed every 15 minutes due to their political positions. International solidarity delegations are not excluded from this grisly statistic. In 1999,

two Native American leaders who were doing solidarity work with the U'wa Indigenous nation against Occidental Petroleum were also kidnapped and disappeared'.

After spending a day in the capital, I wondered what all the fuss was about. The city of Bogota is fairly 'developed' and boasts a modern bus system. Even Moses Zneimer's City T.V. was "everywhere". One could live and work in the capital and be practically oblivious to the horrors of the war and daily terror that many Colombians. The term "invisible struggle" has been coined to describe this situation and the many blatant and hidden paradoxes that exist within the context of this complex war. The peacefulness I discovered in the city was both comforting and disturbing.



In the two days that led up to the march our delegation participated in an Afro-Colombian women's conference as well as an Indigenous women's conference. Both days were filled with listening to testimonials of discrimination based on race, sex, poverty, and culture. The Afro-Colombian and Indigenous women shared many similarities within their struggles, and point out that they still have a lot to learn and share with each other.

There were representatives from many diverse nations and regions of Colombia at the Indigenous womens conference. Once they heard I was Indigenous from Canada, they were eager to hear about the Canadian experience and called on me to speak. I offered them some of our general history and the host organization a gift of sweetgrass. The women then requested that I smudge the conference attendees. (Indigenous groups in Colombia also burn medicines in much the same way we do in Canada).



During the conference we met a group of women from the Putu Mayo nation. They live in rural mountain communities and are facing serious threats to both their lives and traditional lands. The threats are exacerbated because they are directed not only by one source but many. There are the FARC (the armed insurgency), the paramilitaries (armed government sponsored forces formed to quash the FARC), and multi-national corporate interests. Each group has interests in controlling the Putu Mayo and their territories. The most popular problem that comes to mind when one thinks about Colombia: the illicit coca and poppy

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Roma Protest in Toronto

On Sept. 3rd, the Roma Community and Advocacy Centre of Toronto (RCAC) sponsored a peaceful demonstration to protest the low rate of acceptance of Roma refugees from Hungary. Part of their statement follows below.

“We are protesting against the current rate of acceptance for Hungarian-Roma refugees, which has been hovering around 12% of claims heard at the Adjudication Board of the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) compared with 89% acceptance of Czech-Roma refugees who began arriving in Canada in 1997. recent publications and reports on Roma in Hungary show that Roma in Hungary face the same persecution and systemic discrimination as in the Czech Republic and elsewhere in central-eastern Europe?”

In January 1999, testimony by three so-called ‘experts’ from Hungary invited to two lead-case hearings at the IRB resulted in negative decisions. The IRB then released an Issue Paper informing its adjudicators that there was ‘insufficient evidence’ to prove that Roma in Hungary were suffering from persecution and that they were protected by law from such persecution. Jenó Kaltenbach, the Ombudsman for Minorities in Hungary, who gave this testimony was interviewed by Reuters News Service in Hungary on April 19, 2001, and said quite clearly that there were no laws to protect Roma from discrimination in Hungary. Obviously, he lied under oath at Canada’s lead-case hearings in January 1999.

RCAC and many immigration lawyers believe that the lead-case hearings were illegal. Such hearings have never been held for any other refugee group, the refugees whose cases were heard were not allowed to bring their own witnesses from Hungary to testify, and the lead-case principle violates the mandate of the IRB, which is to judge each case on its own merit. The lead-case decisions therefore anticipated the merit of all future cases involving Hungarian-Roma refugee claimants to Canada.

A press kit outlining details of this discrimination against Hungarian Roma and its illegality (is) available. For more information contact: Ronald Lee
Roma Community & Advocacy Centre, 560 Parliament St., 2nd. Floor, Toronto ON M4X 1P8, Tel/Fax: 416-972-1323, leerom@interlog.com

To: Burnaby RCMP and Vancouver Police Department

During the early morning of June 16, 2002 Kulwinder Singh Parhar was driving his Taxi, when he picked up 4 passengers. The passengers in Mr. Parhar's taxi began to yell racial slurs, then began to beat him while he was driving. The four men had knocked off Mr. Parhar's turban, this attack was clearly racially and religiously motivated. Mr. Parhar was called a terrorist among other things. We demand that the four individuals who were responsible for this hate crime be charged and face the strictest sentence that is available for hate crimes. One of the four individuals has been identified as a Vancouver Police Department Officer, we demand that this officer be formally discharged from the Police Department, as he is in no position to serve the public in a responsible way.

Add your voice to the resistance to state sponsored violence and racism at <http://www.petitiononline.com/jfks/petition.html>

Status Coalition

demanding the regularization of non status immigrants
statuscoalition@hotmail.com

US to fingerprint Muslims

By Anwar Iqbal Dawn, Karachi, 14 August 2002

WASHINGTON, Aug 13: The United States has decided to fingerprint and photograph tens of thousands of visitors from Middle Eastern and Muslim countries entering the country after Sept 11, US officials said on Monday. Sept 11 has been chosen as the starting date for the new programme because of its symbolic importance as the day when America faced the worst terrorist attack in its history. “After an initial 20-day period for testing and evaluating the system at selected ports of entry, all remaining ports of entry - including land, air and sea - will have the new system in place on Oct 1,” said Attorney General John Ashcroft while announcing the first phase of the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System. He said: “The visitors will be selected according to intelligence criteria reflecting patterns of terrorist organizations’ activities.” The US government has identified five countries - Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan and Syria by name. All visitors from these countries, considered sponsors of terrorism by the State Department, will be photographed and fingerprinted. The programme will also apply to non-immigrant aliens whom the State Department determines to present an elevated national security risk, based on criteria reflecting current intelligence. Aliens identified by Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) inspectors at the port of entry, using similar criteria, will also be scrutinized.



Dislocation and Palestine

Looking back on the past year, we can see how intensely the events of September 11th have affected Palestinians and the diasporic Palestinian community. We can also see the ways in which Israel, Israelis and Zionists worldwide have been deeply affected. Rather than bringing people together and opening hearts, the events of September 11th seemed to have closed minds and placed everyone into the role of the eternal 'victim.' Dislocation of Palestinian families, individuals, mind and spirit rages on. Re-enforcement of Israeli and Zionist nationalism has marched forward. But from within that dislocation and stubbornness, there has also been a consolidation of resistance against it that has brought dialogue and action to more and more communities, and has seen an amazing blossoming of inter-community coalition building.

Since September 11/01, Bush's 'war on terrorism' allowed Israel's prime minister Ariel Sharon and the Israeli Defense Forces to consolidate their efforts against the Intifadah, the Palestinian uprising for liberation. How did Sharon use the 'war on terrorism' to his advantage? He transformed the language of Israeli apartheid, occupation, dislocation, curfew, house demolition and expanded settlement into Bush's anti-terror language. As world opinion was beginning to understand the need for Palestinian liberation, Sharon and the anti-Palestinian agenda in Israel demonized suicide bombers as 'evil' just as George Bush spoke of the September 11th attackers. Israeli citizens were once again seen as 'victims' instead of as collaborators with an illegal Occupation. Bush's ridiculous speech in June against the re-election of Arafat gave the blatant message that the U.S. and its allies including Canada are backing the brutal apartheid of Ariel Sharon. Democracy has become a joke, as Bush's speech clearly tells us. His agenda: American puppet governments in as much of the Middle East as possible.

Sadly, a year after September 11th and indeed 2 years after the al-Aqsa Intifadah, we are no closer to peace and justice in Palestine and Israel. Despite the growing numbers of resisters in Palestine, Israel itself, and all over the world, the attacks, curfews, seizures, house demolitions, olive tree destructions, mass arrests and murders of Palestinian activists, civilians and Palestinian Authority personnel continue

daily. Life under the Occupation continues to mean lack of access to water, local food, employment, education, medical services, and housing. Violations of basic freedoms in the Occupied Territories have grown to unprecedented proportions.

Many international observers including the Mitchell Commission, Amnesty International and numerous grassroots organizations on the ground have released detailed evidence of Israeli security forces regular use of excessive force against unarmed demonstrators and in firing into densely populated areas; Israel's execution of Palestinian prisoners suspected of actions against Israel without trial; its illegal restrictions on the freedom of movement of Palestinians; and its security forces overlooking of Israeli civilian attacks against Palestinians. None of these phenomena are new, but all of them increased in severity in the past twelve months.

Dislocation has always been part of the Zionist agenda against Palestinians. Mass deportation in both 1948 and 1967 created millions of Palestinian refugees who continue to be prevented from their right of return to this day. Thousands of Palestinian villages were razed and their residents either killed, deported, or forced to flee. The population of refugee camps inside Israel continues to grow and this April's massacre in Jenin refugee camp proves the governmental and military intentions for refugees in Israel.

Despite the continued misery and hopelessness, grassroots organizing continues, much of it within Palestine and Israel separately, and some of it inter-community. Palestinian community organizing has a strong history and is able to exist clandestinely and with very little economic support. Similarly, Israeli resistance to military service has expanded and deeply affected international understanding of the Occupation. Groups such as the Women in Black, Ta'ayush and the Alternative Information Centre exist intentionally to build links between the Palestinian and progressive Jewish communities inside Palestine and Israel. Here in Toronto, local diasporic communities are doing the same important work with such organizations as Women Against the Occupation, the Coalition for Peace and Justice in Palestine, Creative Response and various dialogue groups. This organizing offers a glimmer of hope in what has been a year of worsening and despair in Palestine.

Biggest National Rally in Support of Palestinian Human Rights

A momentous and long overdue event will be taking place in the Ottawa on September 27 & 28, 2002. The event, "Unite for Justice", is organized by Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR) - a non-profit association based in Montréal with chapters in Ottawa and Toronto whose aim is to educate the public about the human rights status of the Palestinian people. The event intends to mobilize masses from across Canada to show support for universal human rights. More specifically, to bring attention to the plight of the Palestinian people under occupation and to call upon the Canadian government and civil society to take measures to ensure justice and freedom for the oppressed people of Palestine. Let us show the world and our nation a unified front behind this worthy humanitarian cause.

****Friday September 27 ORGANISATIONS INFORMATION KIOSKS** The event will provide you with a forum to speak out about the work of your organization and the issues that are of importance to it as well as the ability to promote it to other organizations, the general public and the media. To reserve a kiosk, please e-mail: table@sphr.org

Saturday September 28, WE WANT NUMBERS □TORONTO to OTTAWA!

The 28th will be a full day of events: a rally, a peaceful march in the streets of Ottawa, followed by dance and musical performances, speakers, documentary screenings and ending with a silent candlelight vigil to commemorate the death of innocent Palestinians. Buses, based on advance ticket sales, will be organized from Toronto to Ottawa to attend the September 28 event, on a same day return basis.

Buses will be available from downtown, North York, Scarborough and Mississauga. Buses will be leaving from Toronto at 6:00 a.m. sharp on Saturday September 28, 2002 and departing on the same day from Ottawa at 7:30 p.m.

You need to book your tickets in advance. A two-way bus ticket to Ottawa and back to Toronto only costs \$40.00 per ticket. Block bookings can be arranged. If you can't make it, you can still donate money to purchase ticket(s) for those who would like to go but cannot otherwise afford it.

For more information or bus ticket purchases, contact us: Toronto@sphr.org. (416) 772-4656 <http://www.sphr.org/demo/info.html>.

Useful Progressive Jewish Web sites about Israel/Palestine

www.batshalom.or
www.alternativenews.org
www.creativeresponsesteam.net
Local group of artists and cultural workers organizing against the Occupation.

**Asian Canadians Against Racism □Pan □Asian National
Conference**
‘Our Voices, Our Strategies’ □Ont. Regional Consultation
September 14th, 2002, 9am-5pm, Toronto, Ontario

What is the Asian Network on Anti Racism?

The network consists of Asian Canadian activists, scholars, artists and agencies involved in anti-racism work. It formed during preparations for the WCAR (United Nations World Conference Against Racism) conference which took place in Durban, South Africa, in August 2001. Throughout the Consultation for the Americas in Santiago Chile, in December 2000, Asian advocacy groups found that there was no mention of Asians in the Americas, in terms of their contributions, histories and experiences of discrimination. An Asian caucus was formed consisting of Asian descendants living outside their homeland. The caucus remained a strong, well-established voice throughout the WCAR process where successful lobbying lead to the inclusion of ‘Asians’ in government documents used at future WCAR meetings.

Representatives from Canada built on the momentum from the WCAR experience and created a space for a National Pan-Asian Network. Funded by Heritage Canada, the national conference was held in June, 2002, in Vancouver, British Columbia. The National Conference was the first time such a gathering of Asian advocacy groups had ever taken place. The sharing of experiences within an Asian diasporic space presented an opportunity to create a larger voice for mobilizing advocacy work for and by Asians Canadians across the country. Along with a report back from attendees from WCAR in Durban, several workshops addressed key issues such as access to services, racism in the media, hate crimes, immigration and security and anti-racism strategies.

Acting Locally

The Pan-Asian Network is growing and would like to extend its members to grassroots organizations, artists, individuals, scholars in regional consultations across Canada. So far, Vancouver completed their consultation in April - Halifax, Calgary, Montreal and Toronto consultations will be completed by mid-September. These consultations are aimed at furthering the network to include not only members from major cities, but a broad representation of Asian-Canadians outside metropolitan areas. In doing so, a space may be created for developing and implementing strategies to address key issues of the Asian-Canadian experience. The National conference established several areas of concern to discuss and strategize effective advocacy work in each region at the local level.

Invitation to Participate

Ontario Regional Consultation, Saturday September 14th, 2002, 9am-5pm
Harbourfront Community Centre, Toronto, Ontario
Registration Fee: \$5/person, \$10/organization. Please make cheque payable to “The Council of Agencies Servicing South Asians”
Please complete and return to Sheila Rao at panasianto@yahoo.com or through mail or fax at:

CCNC Toronto Chapter, 302 Spadina Avenue, Suite 507, Toronto, Ontario M5T 2E7, Phone: (416) 596-0833 Fax: (416) 596-7248
CASSA, 2 Carlton Street, Suite 1004, Toronto, Ontario M5B 1J3, .Phone (416) 979-8611 Fax: (416) 979-9853

SUBSIDY APPLICATION

The Pan-Asian Network has limited funds for those unable to attend due to financial constraints. Though we cannot guarantee complete funding, we will do our best to accommodate all interested participants. Contact us for more info at panasian@yahoo.com

Two Anti Racist Conferences

Ruckus!

is a for youth by youth initiative of the Youth Action Network for young people of colour. Anyone and everyone is welcomed to participate in a one day gathering of young people from across Ontario coming together to advocate and agitate for change. Workshops will be held by young activists of colour from across Ontario, tackling issues such as: ***Challenging the Media**, ***What is ‘Multiculturalism’?**, ***Organizing Around Race**”...and more!

September 21, 2002 9:30-5:30, Room 1069, Sidney Smith Hall, University of Toronto

Admission is free! Food provided! Transportation stipend for anyone coming outside of the TO area (within Ontario)

For more info: 416-368-2277,
general@youthactionnetwork.org, or just show up!

**redefining Green
anti-racist environmental
justice conference**

Septemeber 25th - 29th, 2002
Toronto, 25 Cecil St, Steelworkers Hall
FREE EVENT, www.yorku.ca/arec

presented by: anti-racist environmental coalition (AREC)
Through a series of panels and workshops on **PUBLIC TRANSIT, HEALTH CARE, FOOD AND LABOUR** this conference will bring together a variety of voices from the First Nations, immigrant, anti-racist, labour, environmental movements and communities to discuss strategies and create action plans on how we can face the challenges of creating a grassroots anti-racist environmental agenda.

For more information contact: arec@yorku.ca or (416) 536-1991



Then and Now Coalition Presents

The causes of the attack against our brothers and sisters in New York are multi- fold but one thing has become clear as a result of the tragedy of 9/11: Militarization, war and terrorism breed only more militarization, more war, and more terrorism.

Wednesday, September 11 7: 00 - 10: 00 pm
Global 9/11 Links from Chile to Palestine, Venezuela and Afghanistan. (Sandford Fleming Building, 10 Kings College Rd.)

Speakers:

Nahla Abdo (Carleton University),
Marta Harnecker, (Director of MEPLA, Memoria Popular Latinoamericana.)

Featured speaker:

Viviana Díaz, President of the Relatives of the Disappeared in Chile.

The Organizers:

The people of this coalition represent divergent backgrounds, countries, cultures and religions and are brought together by the common understanding that the events of September 11th, 2001 are inextricably linked to the history of the last century. Above all, to remember that the people of the USA, and it allies, were not first victims of war and terrorism.

The 9/11s Then and Now Coalition is: Al- Awda Palestine Right to Return Coalition Toronto, Canada Colombia Solidarity Campaign, Canadian Arab Federation (CAF) Toronto Chapter, Centre for Social Justice, Chilean-Canadian Association Salvador Allende, Coalition Against War and Racism, Colombia Action Committee, Committee for the Defense of Iraqi Women's Rights, Committee for Lifting the Economic Sanctions on Iraq (CLES), Communist Party of Canada, CUPE - Toronto District Council, Development Education Centre (DEC), International Socialists, International Support Group, Latin American Solidarity Organization, Network Opposed to U. S. Intervention in the Philippines (Philippine Network for Justice and Peace - Philippine Women Centre- Ontario — Philippine Solidarity Group — Philipino Canadian Youth Alliance,) Organization of People's Fedayan of Iran - Majority [in Canada], Science for Peace, Socialist Action, Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (Toronto), Toronto Peace Action Coalition, Toronto Mobilisation for Global Justice, TPICAN (Iranian Canadian Org.), Women Working With Immigrant Women, Workers Communist Party of Iraq / WCPI - Canada



CMCLA Action Alert

CMCLA is calling on all Canadian Muslims to report any incidents of harassment experienced at Canadian Immigration or Customs locations nationwide. In addition, any Muslim traveller facing harassment on board airplanes are asked to contact CMCLA or CAIR-Can immediately at (416)289-9666 or 1-866 - 524- 0004.

see <http://cmcla.org> for more information

CUPE 3903: In Solidarity with Transsexuals

With September fast approaching, now is the time to get your department or caucus to order buttons from CUPE 3903 that will give you and others in your department a unique way to express solidarity — on various political levels — with transsexual and transgender people in our workplace and beyond (see CUPE's primer on transphobia at the end of this message).

Wearing one of these buttons is also a great way to say that you support CUPE 3903's bargaining demand to improve the Transsexual Transition Fund we won for our soon expiring contract.

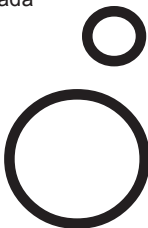
This is what the (sharply designed!) buttons say:

“Save Public Health Care: Fund Sex Reassignment Surgerie”,
“Self-Organize! Change your Sex and your Workplace”,
“Transsexuals for the Abolition of Capitalist Drudgery”, “Trans Solidarity! Decriminalize Sex Work Now!”

Please order your buttons in bulk (please indicate how many of each you want, or if you want a mix). The cost is \$2.00 per button. All proceeds will go toward supporting organizations and/or furthering initiatives in solidarity with transgender, transsexual, intersexed and genderqueer people.

To order buttons, contact Neil Braganza (Chief Steward Unit 1) at braganza@yorku.ca

Visit: <http://www.tgnetarizona.org/gender101.htm>



continued from page 4....

to the supreme Court. There, Canada will have to provide documentation to prove that they have authority over Indian people. That documentation does not exist. Then Indian people in Canada will finally win our freedom back.”

“Finally on Jan. 8th they arrested me and the next day took me to their borer to deport me. When I told the customs officials that I wasn’t an American citizen they refused to admit me and I am now still in Regina waiting for my next trial date.”

“I consider myself to be “Pre-Canadian.” Why should we have to consider ourselves Canadian or American? What is Canada? A group of people migrated here from Europe. They bickered amongst themselves until one side won-out. We had nothing to do with these immigrants.

“It was their lust for our land and their disrespect for our people that led them to attempt to get rid of us. At first they tried outright warfare, but they couldn’t kill us all. Plus, a few of their own people began to question the righteousness of their campaign. So, they had to reevaluate their strategy. This is where the residential schools come in. They hit us fast and hard with that, knowing that in time they would also have to abandon that type of attack too. They softened us up with that abusive institution, and summarily severed the connection we had with our families and nations. Then they told us that our respective nations no longer existed. That was the knock out punch. We were/are still here, but they have successfully blinded most of us to that fact. And when one of us tries to tell the others, Canada does everything it can to silence that one.”

“Native species such as Buffalo Grass grow on both sides of that imaginary border, it even grows right on top of it! Deer walk around what you call the North Dakota/Saskatchewan border, eating on one side of it and defecating on the other, without ever seeing any sort of a line. If there is a fence, an obstruction to their natural movement, they simply jump over it. We Indian people are also part of the indigenous flora and fauna of the Western Hemisphere. As long as we are not bringing harm to anyone, we have the right to move about anywhere we please.”

“the overwhelming majority of “newsworthy” Indigenous stories go unreported by the media. The only plausible reason is that this is a tool of oppression. ... To them I was the family man and science teacher, who also just happened to be an outspoken Lakota nationalist. They feared going too far with my story though, due to imminent threat of governmental backlash. When colonial government representatives clearly perjured themselves, the media refused to expose it. They have also lied to the press. The press is aware of this, but their journalistic integrity pales in the face of their prejudice and fear. Beyond that, consider how it would have been if I were a blue collar labourer or a drunk. Would I have made the news at all? I doubt it. Indigenous people from one coast to the other have gone through similar experiences for a hundred years, but how many others have you heard of?”

Stop the Deportations! Support Canada’s non-status Algerians!

In Montreal a campaign has been launched — on the initiative of the Comité d’action des sans-statut (representing non-status Algerians in Canada) — in support of the more than 1000 Algerians who face deportation as a result of changes to Canadian immigration policy. WHY: On April 5th, Denis Coderre, the Minister of Immigration Canada lifted the moratorium on the deportations of Algerians. The moratorium protected Algerians who were not recognized as refugees by Canada, permitting them to remain on Canadian soil due to the extreme violence in Algeria that has taken the lives of 150,000 people, and where more than 8,000 others have disappeared. Minister Coderre’s decision aims to defend and promote the economic interests of a political and economic elite who want open borders for business. In the same week that the Algerian moratorium was lifted, Prime Minister Chretien was visiting Algeria and shortly after, the Canadian company, SNC Lavalin, obtained a contract with Algeria for the amount of \$141 million dollars.

WE MUST ACT NOW! Once individuals receive their deportation notice, they have 30 days before it comes into effect. Many Algerian families in Canada face imminent deportation to a country where demonstrators are assassinated and the authorities torture with impunity. Some people facing deportation have been in Canada for up to 8 years, working and paying taxes. They are documented, but have no status. Their rights are restricted: no right to health insurance; a minimum \$150 expense for the annual work permit renewal; no right to study with a work permit; no right for children to family benefits, even when born in Canada; no right to loans or scholarships; and the list goes on.

A recent demonstration in downtown Montreal involved up to 750 participants, and over 25 local groups endorsed the protest. As part of the ongoing campaign, the Comité d’action des sans-statut and their supporters are asking for groups from Montreal, Quebec, Canada and beyond, to endorse the main demands of the stop the deportations campaign. Those demands are:

1) An immediate end to deportations.

2) The regularization of all Algerians who are without status so as to provide refuge from the possible risks of deportation: death, torture and persecution.

3) The re-instatement of the moratorium on removals to Algeria. This step will allow the future protection of individuals who succeed in fleeing the violence and persecution that is rampant in Algeria.

If your group endorses the above demands, please contact clac@tao.ca or phone 514-409-2049.

The following is a quote from Nandita Sharma of Vancouver's OPEN THE BORDERS

(a Vancouver based organization that calls for a socially just response to the crisis in international migration. <<http://www.opentheborders.org>>). This is an excerpt from her statement at a discussion period on Afghan refugees at an Anti-war conference. The conference was held in May and challenged war, racism, imperialism and genocide locally and around the world.

Here, Sharma challenges the notion that refugee camps are safe and that Canadians and the Canadian government should disallow people from entering the country because they are supposedly safe in a camp somewhere on American territory in Cuba or in a camp in Australia, for example.

"I think we have this concept that these refugee camps are temporary solutions to a problem and soon everything will be fine and people will go back. I don't know where in the world any refugee camp has been established that has been a temporary response to any problem...I mean...the Palestinians have been living in refugee camps for 50 years. Afghans have been living in refugee camps for over 20 years. And it's interesting to me how aid agencies play into that, right. [Be]cause aid agencies are not challenging the legitimacy of what they're doing.

I'm with a group called OPEN THE BORDERS and a campaign that we tried...back in November or October was having Canada have at least a similar response to Afghans that they did to Kosovars. Canada accepted 5000 people from Kosovo. Over half of them had been accepted as refugees as refugees in Canada and have landed status now.



And what the Canadian government's response to Afghans were was to halt any process of any application whether as a refugee claim, or family reunification or application for landed status. And what we've heard is until the spring of 2003 — totally halted. And these were people that were in the middle of family reunification, had their applications halted. From the people that we've talked to in Vancouver at least. I mean we cannot say, "Oh well, they're in refugee camps, they must be taken care of. We need to say that there has to be at least, at the very minimum a similar response that Canada gave to the Kosovars."...we have this sense that Canadian refugee policy would even accept an Afghan as a refugee because they're starving, because they're fleeing war because they're facing a drought, whatever...and by definition, Canada would never accept anyone as a refugee because they're fleeing these conditions. The supreme court of Canada has ruled in the 1990's that anyone fleeing a situation where there are many others in the same situation, will never be accepted as a refugee. ...they will accept you as a refugee if the government is saying, "Well, I'm going to make YOU starve." But if everyone is starving, they're not going to accept you as a refugee because you're not considered one by law in Canada. And that's something we need to challenge."

Canada imposes many fees on immigrants and refugees...

Permanent Resident Application Processing Fees:

\$475 (principal applicant)

\$550 (family members 22 years or older or less than 22 if spouse/partner)

\$150 (family members under 22)

Right of Permanent Residence Fee:

\$975 (principal applicant and spouse/partner)

Permanent Resident Cards

(application processing fee, replacement or renewal): \$50

After-hours examination for entry into Canada outside of normal service hours

(payable at time of examination):

\$100 for first 4 hours of exam

\$30 for each additional hour

Repayment of removal expenses (i.e. fees charged after deportation!):

\$750 (to the USA, and St. Pierre and Miquelon)

\$1500 (to any other country)

At the **very minimum**, a family of four (including two parents and 2 kids) would need to pay \$3475 to become permanent residents of Canada. This is the entire gross monthly income for someone making a yearly salary of \$41,700, or making approx. \$24/hour at 35 hours per week. For someone making minimum wage (\$6.85/hour), this is nearly 4 months income. \$3475 is more than the annual income for many people in many 'third world' countries. Permanent Resident status is not permanent because it can be taken away by the government.

crops that eventually produce cocaine and opium for North America's flourishing drug trade and dependency.

The Putu Mayo tell me that the coca plant is actually a sacred medicine they have harvested since time immemorial. Of course traditionally it was never chemically altered to be abused in the form of cocaine. The Putu Mayo also recount the story of how they have been forced to grow the coca plant, not as a sacred medicine, but as a cash crop to be exported for the drug trade. According to the Putu Mayo, this is because their traditional lands have been expropriated (stolen) and contaminated to such an extent that they can no longer live self-sufficiently as they once did and now depend on on the money they make from growing and selling the crops.

The FARC formed in the 1960's as a response to the unequal wealth distribution and resulting poverty in the country. Unfortunately, like many insurgency movements that formed in Latin America during that era, the FARC is mestizo led and fails to acknowledge the autonomies, culture, and diversity among the Indigenous and Afro-Colombian population. This led to the rejection of the FARC by many Indigenous groups. The result is that Indigenous nations are not represented by the FARC or the Colombian government, and in a climate of violent insurgency and state repression, Indigenous communities are caught in the middle. While the government accuses Indigenous communities of growing the illicit coca plants to fund the FARC, the FARC accuses Indigenous communities of siding with the government and its paramilitaries because they refuse to use the FARC as a means for change.

International states (such as the USA) and corporations take advantage and agitate the situation by formulating and funding 'anti-drug' schemes such as 'Plan Colombia' which is a front to get access to what they really want: Colombia's energy resources. Sadly, as is the case with the Lubicon Cree in Quebec, the Putu Maya's traditional lands are the heartland of Colombia's rich resource base.

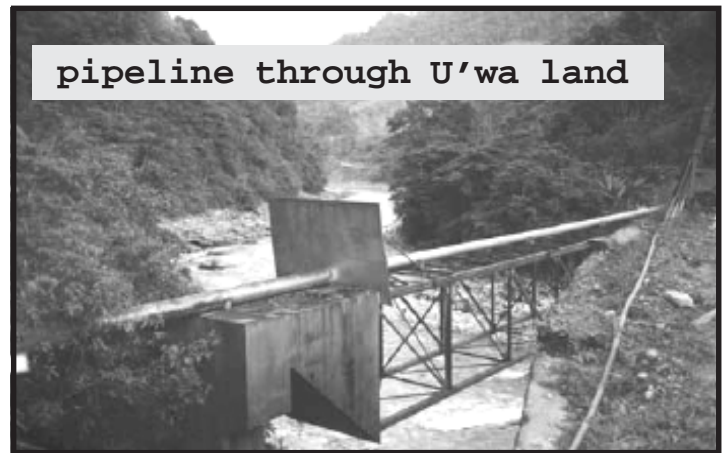
A delegation of Putu Mayo women tell me the final result of all the violence, poverty, and capitalist driven foreign interests is that their communities are being fumigated by air with deadly pesticides. This fumigation program is part of 'Plan Colombia'. When one reads between the lines and talks to the people directly affected by it, it is really a horrific plan to kill the land (and therefore the people) of the Putu Mayo Nation. The fumigations are justified as putting an end to the illicit drug trade, quashing the insurgency and ending violence in Colombia. However, this justification can be no further than the truth. Once the Indigenous people and their lands are dead, there will be no one to stop the corporations (many of which are Canadian) from reaping the final resources from the land.

The Putu Mayo women know exactly how they are going to face this problem. They refuse to abandon their land at all costs. Indigenous people the world over know, abandoning access to a land base also means extinction. As I heard the women speak, I felt like I was listening to their final plea for help. Perhaps in a year or two, Plan Colombia's fumigation program will be fully implemented and they will no longer be here to make this plea.

The Putu Mayo women said the next fumigation date in their area is August 19th. Usually just another summer day back in Toronto for me

As overwhelming as it is to hear about the reality of the Putu Mayo, I know I am not powerless to act. I am writing articles, There's a lot we can do change things in Colombia and in our own backyard. If you would like to contribute call OPIRG: 416.978.7770

Canadian Corporations linked to military deathsquads in Colombia: Enbridge Inc., TransCanada Pipelines, Alberta Energy Company, Corona Goldfields, Conquistador Mines, BMR Gold, Canadian Occidental, Alberta Energy, Talisman Energy, Mera Petroleums, Techo Petral, Quadra Resources, Petrolex Energy, Vanguard Oil, Millennium Energy, Greystar Resources, Sur American Gold...for more info check out: <http://tao.ca/~ccsc> and www.rightsaction.org



pipeline through U'wa land

Resources

Sistering
 Sistering is an organization that supports homeless and low-income women in the Toronto area. Our services are focused on that population and consist of practical needs such as hot meals, clothing, showers and laundry, as well as emotional support, skills workshops and health care professionals. For more info:
 Tel: 416-926-9762
 Fax: 416-926-1932
www.sistering.org



South Asian Youth for Awareness (SAYA)
 The South Asian Womens Centre offers a space for young South Asians to express themselves and share thoughts and concerns.
Contact (416) 537- 2277 for more information.