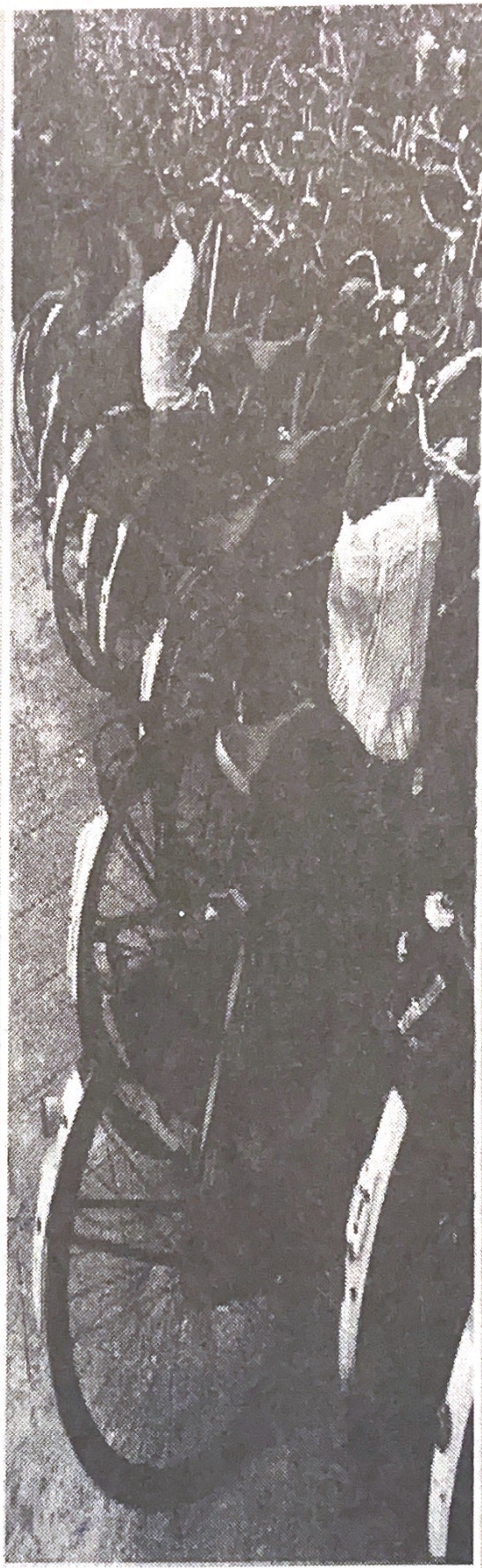


unherd



opirg



value added

"A cynic," according to a character in Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*, "is someone who knows the price of every thing and the value of nothing."

These are cynical times we're living in. Nothing does more for investor confidence in a company than a round of downsizing (read: throwing employees out of work). Stock markets rise with national unemployment rates and fall whenever an increase in average wages is announced. The less being paid out in wages and benefits, the current wisdom goes, the better things are for the corporate climate. It's a sick kind of logic that will increase the worth of your portfolio, but god help you if you happen to be among the downsized or those getting by on less than the average standard of living.

The Market rules these days. There's no way to justify anything that can't pay its own way in the world. Coach House Press, one of Canada's oldest and most highly respected literary publishers, closed its doors after a recent spate of government cuts. The response of those in power was a shrug. If it can't hold its own in the Market, they announced, it hasn't got a right to exist anyway. Which brings to mind Mike Harris' comment that social science programs such as history are producing graduates who have no chance of making "meaningful" (i.e. financial) contributions to society.

More and more, that kind of reductionist thinking is being applied by governments or every stripe to health care, schools and universities, social security programs, public broadcasting, the arts. We only have to look south of the border to see where we're headed.

20 million people in the United States have no health insurance. Another 40 million don't have sufficient coverage to get them through an extended or catastrophic illness. But oh well, that's the logic of the Market: survival of the richest. The "wealth gap" in the US is astronomical and expanding. After experimenting with unsuccessful "workfare" programs, most States have terminated welfare altogether. The millions of unemployed and underemployed Americans, presumably, could find work if they really wanted to and have been left to the care of the Market. My advice to them would be to keep their heads down. The "invisible hand" can carry a pretty nasty wallop.

Much of what has distinguished Canada's social fabric from that of the United States in the last 50 years was based on Wilde's distinction between price and value. As a community, we decided we couldn't afford to have a privatized health care system that left whole sectors of society without coverage. A university education was too valuable to be available only to those who could afford it. The hundreds of thousands of children growing up in poor families were too precious a resource to lose to poverty.

We seem to have changed our minds about all that. We aren't citizens of a democracy anymore, we're simply consumers in the global marketplace. You get what you pay for, nothing more.

"A sentimentalist," to quote the same Oscar Wilde play, "is someone who knows the value of everything, and the price of nothing." Neo-cons would say I'm just a bleeding heart. Maybe they're right, maybe all that matters is the bottom line.

Those who end up at the bottom, I'm sure, think differently.

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Michael Crummey
spends his free time
reading priceless poetry

editorial

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poking the
12 BEAST

Smelly Behemoths!
Existential activism!
community currencies!

Amer Ather wields the sharp stick.

back cover: adbusters

EVERY HOUSEHOLD IN ONTARIO RECEIVED IT. A SLICK LITTLE PIECE OF PROPAGANDA FROM THE HARRIS TORIES THAT PRESENTS A NUMBER OF CAREFULLY SPUN "FACTS", SUBTLE FEAR-MONGERING, AND OVERTHRIGHT MISREPRESENTATION OF REALITY. AND IF THE LYING ISN'T INFURIATING ENOUGH, THIS ORWELLIAN PIECE OF DOUBLE-SPEAK PRETENDS TO ASK YOU HONESTLY, AS IF WHAT YOU THINK MATTERS TO THEM.

ARE WE on the RIGHT TRACK?

UNHERD TAKES A CLOSER LOOK AT THE HARRIS, GOVERNMENT'S TRACK RECORD THAN THEY'D LIKE

Take a moment to read about our vision for the future - and then share your thoughts with us.

We need your input.

% of Ontario voters who did NOT vote for the "Common Sense Revolution". 54

% of Toronto voters who voted AGAINST the MEGA-CITY. 70+

% of Ontarians who supported the teacher's strike AGAINST Bill 160. 60

Bill 7 makes it legal to replace striking workers with SCAB labour

The Wage Protection Program is scheduled for termination

The minimum wage is frozen

ONTARIO
"Open for Business"

"We have never felt so positive about putting our money back in the province of Ontario." Brian Johnston, Monarch Construction

◆ Between September 1995 and March 1998, 341,000 net new private sector jobs were created

◆ The unemployment rate dropped from 8.8 percent in March 1997 to 7.4 percent in March 1998

◆ The provincial income tax rate has been cut by 22.4 per cent so far

◆ A family of four, with both parents working and earning \$60,000, has 1,030.00 more of its own money to spend - which means more retail sales, more housing starts and, therefore, more jobs.

◆ 30 tax cuts will continue to ease the tax burden on both small business and individuals.

A THIRD OF EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS INSPECTORS HAVE OR WILL BE CUT. THE WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY AGENCY IS DISBANDED. \$8.2 MILLION HAS BEEN CUT FROM THE WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY BUDGET

A FAMILY OF FOUR WITH ONE CHILD AT QUEEN'S PAYS AN ADDITIONAL \$700 IN YEARLY TUITION OVER TUITION RATES FOR 1995/96

AS A RESULT OF PROVINCIAL DOWNLOADING, MUNICIPAL PROPERTY TAXES WILL INCREASE DRAMATICALLY ACROSS ONTARIO

46% OF CANADIAN FAMILIES MAKE LESS THAN \$35,000 PER YEAR. A 34% TAX CUT WILL PROVIDE AN EXTRA \$38.50 PER MONTH

"Common Sense Revolution" JOB PROMISE: 725,000 JOBS

ESTIMATED REAL RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN CANADA (COUNTING DISCOURAGED WORKERS AND UNDEREMPLOYED): 20%

THE OVERALL TAX BURDEN IN CANADA IS BELOW THE AVERAGE OF OECD COUNTRIES

BEFORE WELFARE THERE WERE LONG WAITING LISTS FOR EVERY VOLUNTARY TRAINING OR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AVAILABLE TO SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS

MANY YOUTH UNDER THE AGE OF 18 ARE NO LONGER ELIGIBLE FOR WELFARE

THERE ARE MORE FOOD BANKS IN CANADA THAN MCDONALD'S RESTAURANTS

HOMELESSNESS IN URBAN CENTRES IN ONTARIO HAS SKYROCKETED SINCE 1995

RECENT EXPERIMENTS WITH WORKFARE PROGRAMS IN THE US HAVE BEEN DISMAL FAILURES. MORE EXPENSIVE THAN "WELFARE", THE PROGRAMS HAVE FAILED TO PROVIDE MEANINGFUL TRAINING OR OPPORTUNITIES TO THE VAST MAJORITY OF PARTICIPANTS.

◆ More than 240,000 people have already participated in one or more mandatory activities

◆ There are now in excess of 250,000 fewer people on welfare than in June 1995

◆ We will increase the number of community service placements

IN 1995, % OF UNATTACHED SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS WHO WORKED FULL OR PART-TIME JOBS: 70
100,000 SINGLE PARENTS ALSO HAD JOBS THAT PAID SO LITTLE THEY WERE FORCED TO SUPPLEMENT THEIR INCOME THROUGH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE.

THE ONTARIO TRAINING AND ADJUSTMENT BOARD HAD ITS 1995-96 TRAINING BUDGET CUT BY \$20 MILLION. OTAB ITSELF WAS THEN DISBANDED. \$45 MILLION IN JOB LINK TRAINING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WAS CUT FROM THE SOCIAL SERVICE MINISTRY'S BUDGET

AVERAGE LENGTH OF TIME RECIPIENTS SPEND ON WELFARE ROLLS: 3 YEARS

OF PERMANENT JOBS SECURED BY WELFARE RECIPIENTS THROUGH "COMMUNITY SERVICE PLACEMENTS" IN THE BROCKVILLE WORKFARE PILOT PROJECT AS OF MARCH 1998: 3

THE MOST EXHAUSTIVE STUDY OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE IN ONTARIO'S HISTORY FOUND THAT THERE WAS "OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS WOULD BE WILLING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ANY OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED TO THEM TO HELP ACHIEVE SELF-RELIANCE, WITHOUT BEING COMPELLED TO DO SO." (TRANSITIONS, THE REPORT OF THE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE, MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES, 1988)

Capping class sizes, a BACK-TO-BASICS approach

Excellence in education that will help all our children reach their full potential

ONTARIO

"Only excellence will ensure that all students...are able to realize their full potential, acquire a life-long love of learning, remain active participants in their communities and achieve whatever goals they set." Ontario Government Throne Speech, April 23, 1998

\$1 BILLION CUT FROM SECONDARY SCHOOLS

OF TIMES THE WORDS "STUDENT" AND "ACHIEVEMENT" APPEAR IN THE 200 PAGES OF "THE EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT (BILL 160)": 1

OF APPEARANCES OF "CURRICULUM", "LEARNING", "TESTING", "SPECIAL NEEDS", "SKILLS": 0

STANDARDIZED TESTING AND STANDARDIZED REPORT CARDS WERE INTRODUCED WITH TEACHER SUPPORT BEFORE BILL 160 WAS INTRODUCED

More work for WELFARE

Better opportunities, new skills, less welfare dependency



ONTARIO

\$400 MILLION CUT FROM COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

THE COST OF A UNIVERSITY EDUCATION ROSE BY 60% IN THE FIRST 2 YEARS OF HARRIS' MANDATE

COUNTRIES WHICH DO NOT CHARGE TUITION FEES: AUSTRIA, CZECH REPUBLIC, DENMARK, FINLAND, FRANCE, GERMANY, GREECE, HUNGARY, ICELAND, IRELAND, MEXICO, NORWAY, PORTUGAL, SWEDEN, THE NETHERLANDS, TURKEY, THE UNITED KINGDOM, BRAZIL, COSTA RICA

"Safety in our community is more than the absence of injury. We need to look at the culture of fear - It is simply unacceptable."

Priscilla DeVilliers, President of CAVEAT (Canadians Against Violence Everywhere Advocating its Termination)

Steps to **PROTECT** communities and crime victims

More safety on our streets, less violence in our schools

EVERY STUDY OF THE PAST DECADE REVEALS THAT VIOLENT CRIME RATES IN CANADA ARE DECREASING STEADILY. THE HARRIS GOVERNMENT, LIKE ALL RIGHT WING PARTIES HELPS CREATE AND MAINTAIN THE PREVAILING "CULTURE OF FEAR" BY PROMISING MORE POLICE AND MORE PRISONS TO DEAL WITH THE MYTHICAL "INCREASING INCIDENCE OF VIOLENT CRIME" (COMMON SENSE REVOLUTION, P. 8)

◆ We will do everything necessary to support law enforcement officers who protect our lives and safety at the risk of their own

◆ There will be greater protection for victims of domestic violence and increased safety on urban streets and in our schools

ONTARIO

LEGAL AID HAS BEEN CUT BY \$130 MILLION

EMERGENCY SHELTERS FOR ABUSED WOMEN HAVE BEEN CUT BY 7.5%

MONEY FOR COUNSELLING SERVICES FOR PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC ASSAULT TERMINATED

FUNDING FOR THE ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF INTERVAL AND TRANSITION HOUSES WAS TERMINATED ON THE FIRST DAY OF WIFE ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH, 1995

"Not one cent out of health care."

Better emergency SERVICES, more long-term care and beds

Mike Harris on the election trail, 1995

Meeting the needs of a changing and aging population

OF KINGSTON RESIDENTS WHO SIGNED A PETITION AGAINST THE CLOSURE OF HOTEL DIEU HOUSE, 70,000

ONTARIO

ONTARIO'S HEALTH BUDGET WAS CUT BY \$1.5 BILLION IN THE NOVEMBER 1995 BUDGET.

UNDER HARRIS PLAN, UP TO 38 HOSPITALS WILL BE CLOSED

THE "NEIGHBOURS" HOME CARE AND HOME SUPPORT AGENCIES FOR SENIORS AND THE DISABLED ABOLISHED

BILL 26 DEREGULATES DRUG PRICES AND INTRODUCES USER FEES FOR SENIORS

THE HOME OXYGEN PROGRAM WAS CUT BY \$10 MILLION

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS LOST \$2 MILLION

Source: Statistics Canada, Ontario Social Safety Network, Low Income Needs Coalition, Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, Canadian Federation of Students, "The Commonsense Revolution", Centre for Policy Alternatives, Ontario Federation of Labour, Association of Ontario Health Centres, Queen's University Faculty Association

Our American Cousins

According to a report on the internet, these are some of the "actual comments" left on comment cards provided at the access points to wilderness areas by the US Forest Service:

"A small deer came into my camp and stole my bag of pickles. Is there a way I can get reimbursed? Please call."

"Escalators would help on steep uphill sections."

"Instead of a permit system or regulations, the Forest Service needs to reduce worldwide population growth to limit the number of visitors to wilderness."

"Too many bugs and leeches and spiders and spider webs. Please spray the wilderness to rid the area of these pests."

"There are too many rocks in the mountains."

"The coyotes made too much noise last night and kept me awake. Please eradicate these annoying animals."

"A McDonald's would be nice at the trailhead."

A spokesperson for the Ontario government refuses to comment on rumours that several of the above "comment cards" were written by Premier Mike Harris during recent vacations in the United States.

Reprinted from The New Scientist No 2147

Day of Action Ralls Through Kingston

The recent Day of Action in Kingston was attended by over 10,000 (organizers' claim), 5,000 (police estimate) or hundreds (local media dismissing).

During "non-sanctioned" bank protests early in the day, three people were arrested after a skirmish with a bank employee. A police officer had already warned protesters he would "make something up" and have them arrested if they returned to the bank he was "serving and protecting."

Sri Lanka, formerly known as Ceylon, is an island of paradise at the tip of the Indian sub-continent with a population of 18 million. The Sinhala majority - constituting about 74% of the total population - in addition to being the majority, also believe that they are the sole rightful inhabitants of the island and the protectors of Buddhism. Sinhala governments have not only adopted various discriminatory policies in language, education, employment and land, but also unleashed state sponsored violence against the Tamils-20% of the total population-whose history on this island dates back more than 2000 years. The first island-wide anti-Tamil riots erupted in 1956 in response to a peaceful non-violent demonstration against the infamous "Sinhala Only" bill. There have been numerous racially motivated riots against Tamils with the blessing of Sinhala dominated governments from time to time, and the riot of 1983 was the worst of its kind, plunging the country into a full fledged civil war. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) is the most popular and powerful militant group fighting against the Sinhala dominated governments and forces for an independent Tamil homeland in the North-East part of the country, known as Tamil Eelam, where Tamils have lived predominantly for centuries.

Concern for Human Rights is rapidly becoming a universal language for a global ethic, like any other universal concept with its underlying abstractness, the language of Human Rights is in danger of becoming another ideal set apart on white papers, documented only on the shelves of officials. Sri removed from the masses that suffer pain and agony under the brutal machines of State oppression and military repression. Without personal commitment, involvement and adequate research in the concrete socio-historical context, the advocacy of Human Rights even by the United Nations will degenerate into a mere ideal devoid of human content.

Sri Lanka has an international reputation for violating almost every rubric of the Human Rights code of ethics. It was a British colony in 1945 when Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed by the United Nations. (At that time Sri Lanka was known as Ceylon. The Sinhalese, in making an original constitution, renamed it Sri Lanka in 1972). This UN article said that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights;" articles 3 and 5 further affirm that "no person has the right to life, liberty and security and no one shall be subjected to her research, with prolific citations from books and periodicals, is done in the ir-

relevance for these people, their equality and dignity as citizens of Sri Lanka were denied to them. Fifty years of independence for a state-aided crime of violence against women, forced repatriation, sexual subjugation of the women, and unabated arrest and disappearance of young men and children. At the end of the 1980s, a perpetual label of statelessness on their forehead.

As a result, Comaraswamy, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, is a glittering example of the poverty of reality that one finds in the Human Rights advocacy of the UN. This Commission's Special Rapporteur produces voluminous reports from her cosy office in the heart of London to her research, with prolific citations from books and periodicals, is done in the ir-

relevance for these people, their equality and dignity as citizens of Sri Lanka were denied to them. Fifty years of independence for a state-aided crime of violence against women, forced repatriation, sexual subjugation of the women, and unabated arrest and disappearance of young men and children. At the end of the 1980s, a perpetual label of statelessness on their forehead.

conditioned libraries in Colombo or the capitals of the world. It is questionable whether she has met or spoken to a single Tamil woman in the tea-estates of Sri Lanka where women are subjected to degrading treatment of the muscle, but the sanction and approval of the State. This international activist would have needed to see one of the six hundred mothers who are crying from one army camp to another in the north and east of Sri Lanka, with out-stretched arms and tear-filled eyes, hopelessly searching for their disappeared sons or daughters. Radhika Comaraswamy would have never looked into the eyes of those thousands of widows in Jaffna or Batticaloa where State terrorism continues to create a new class of poverty-stricken widows and orphans pushing them to the brink of suicide. Radhika, who wants both her living and reputation complying voluminous reports on violence against women, would never have met even one of the hundreds of Krishnathys and Komaraswaries, two women raped and killed by the army in the North and east of Sri Lanka, respectively. In Sri Lanka, State-inspired terrorism has made rape, harassment and ill-treatment of Tamil school children and women almost a daily phenomenon. But for Rapporteur Radhika, these are merely figures and numbers to be documented on white paper.

Let us return to the horror island, Sri Lanka. In 1956 another discriminatory inequality was thrust on the rest of the Tamil nation. The Sinhala language spoken by 70% of the population was made an official language and the Tamil language was reduced to second class status,

Agony in Lanka

Dr A J V Chandrakanthan



denying the equality and dignity it carried for over two millennia on the island of Ceylon. In 1972 and 1978 the Sinhala State unilaterally imposed constitutions that not only continued to deny the legitimate rights of the Tamil people and nation for equality, dignity, life and security, but also made Sri Lanka a Buddhist-Sinhala State by declaring Buddhism as the Religion of the State.

Realizing the draconian intentions of the government, the Tamils expressed their opposition through non-violent protests, but these were met with by the iron hands of the state. Military suppression of the legitimate demands of the Tamils became the order of the day. In July 1979 the Sinhala parliament enacted the notorious Prevention of Terrorism Act which was widely criticized by almost every organization across the world that supports and upholds the values of Human Rights. This law was made by the Sinhalese to apply against the Tamils. This law abrogated all legal and constitutional safeguards with regard to arrest, detention, protection against self-incrimination and retrospectivity. This law is in effect to date and thousands of Tamil youth and even children and elderly have been arrested, detained without proper judicial inquiries and eventually executed. Their bodies disposed of without any inquest under the cover of this brutal law. Even the massacre of Tamils held in custody in Sinhala prisons were perpetrated with the active connivance of state security personnel. Amnesty International has recorded such incidents in 1998.

In the history of the oppression of the Tamils by the Sinhala State, the worst historical episode began on the 17th of October, 1985 when a military contingent of 40,000 armed personnel with a massive display of military power by air, land and sea invaded the historic city of Jaffna. For the first time in their history, the Tamil population of a half million people fled the city to save their lives. The most basic human rights of these people for life, shelter, food and water was denied by the very state that proclaimed to the world they were fighting a war to liberate these people. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Today the government of Sri Lanka is waging an unjust war against these people not only by upgrading its military machine but by subtle forms of cruelties that directly affect children, the handicapped and the poor. Food and medicines, the most fundamental among human needs and therefore rights are denied to these people. The International Committee of the Red Cross, Save the Children Fund (SCF), Care International and other Humanitarian organizations have drawn the attention of the world to the numerous deaths caused by malaria, typhoid, tetanus, polio and other diseases which could have been prevented if the government had allowed the medicines to be taken into the war zone.

The sad and painful fact is that the so-called 'free world' knows the real situation. But it does nothing. Nothing to save the life of innocent children, helpless women and men. An advocate of Human Rights cannot speak or preach neutrality in a situation where the innocents are subjected to arbitrary arrest, torture and death or where the innocent are slowly killed by starvation, lack of medical care and negligence. In such situations one should stand with the victims. One should take the side of the victims. Otherwise human rights language will become an empty rhetoric like any other political promise. Devoid of any touch with reality human rights advocacy becomes shallow and empty.

This is what the Tamils of Sri Lanka ask. What have the loud proclamations of the United Nations on Human Rights contributed toward the eradication of the brutality faced by us daily? Did not Amnesty International state that those eight Tamils shot and killed by the security forces and buried at Thambalagamm in Trinco on the very day of Sri Lanka's 50th anniversary of independence (Feb 4th 1998) were born to live and grow as human beings? Is the government of Sri Lanka treating those visiting their own in the Sinhala prisons as potential criminals? Visiting prisoners in the rest of the world is encouraged as an act of charity but in Sri Lanka it is a punishable crime.

Until the world confronts the stark reality in all its painful dimensions we will be pushing papers about Human Rights from one desk to another in the cosy buildings of the United Nations far removed from the world of suffering, agony and anguish. After attending the 50th anniversary celebrations of the UN in New York, where she successfully silenced the UN about Sri Lanka's record of endless Human Rights violations, Sri Lanka's President boasted, "No Head of State before me has done what I have done." And the Foreign Minister, who worked as a lawyer in Geneva in the 1960's defending the rights of Tamils, now sings the same chorus as the President while Human Rights violations of every shape and colour soil the island with human blood.

Dr A J V Chandrakanthan is a Professor of Theology at Concordia University in Montreal.

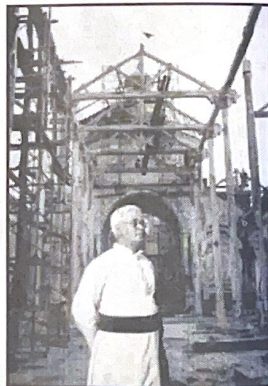


Krishanthi Kumaraswamy

Krishanthi Kumaraswamy, a teen-aged high school student, was stopped at an army check point and taken away by army personnel as she returned from school. When this news reached her widowed mother, she went to find her daughter at the nearby army camp with the help of a neighbour. None of the three ever returned home. Several days later, their dead bodies were discovered among bushes. An investigation revealed that the mother and daughter had been gang raped repeatedly before they were killed.



120 Tamil civilians taking refuge in a church (below) were killed when the building was bombed by government troops.



the earth centre
alternative library



OPIRG - CUSEN - STRIVE

adbusters

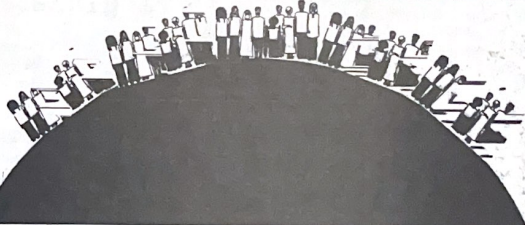
New Internationalist

Ward Churchill

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noam chomsky
Queers in Space

bell hooks



The Earth Centre is brought to you by:

Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG)
Canadian Unified Student Environment Network (CUSEN)
Students Taking Responsible Initiatives for a Viable Environment (STRIVE)

We really hate to say we told ya so,
but we **told ya so**

Remember the Free Trade debates that were carried on in Canada in the last 15 years or so? Remember the warnings from anti-free traders about loss of national sovereignty, about losing democratic freedoms to laissez-faire market bureaucrats? There were dire predictions about our national cultural heritage being swallowed whole by the American elephant, about our ability to create and uphold environmental legislation that infringed on foreign companies' right to make profits. At the time, pro-free traders dismissed those of us with concerns as "conspiracy theorists," or backwater lefties afraid of the "real" world.

Well, we hate to say we told ya so, but...

Recently Canada's parliament passed Bill C-29, or the Manganese-Based Fuel Additive Act. MMT is a fuel additive created and pushed by Virginia based Ethyl Corporation. It has already been banned in Europe and in California because of mounting evidence that MMT is harmful to children, older people, and those suffering from respiratory ailments. It also damages catalytic converters, increasing the amount of harmful substances emitted by vehicles. The US Environmental Protection Agency forbid MMT being marketed as a gasoline additive in the United States. As Leader of the Opposition, Jean Chretien referred to MMT as "an insidious neurotoxin." Five years later, his government introduced, and parliament approved, Bill C-29 which banned the transportation or importation of MMT.

In response, Ethyl Corp, which stands to lose a ton of cash as its markets for MMT dry up, sued the government for \$347 million through a process established in NAFTA Chapter 11. The case, if it went forward, wouldn't have gone before a Canadian court, but before an appointed panel of three members. The decision of the panel cannot be appealed and its procedures and arguments are conducted in private. Not exactly democracy in action (see box next page).

Acting on advice of lawyers who suspected the government could not win a decision before the NAFTA panel, the Chretien liberals killed Bill C-29, writing a letter of apology to Ethyl, and paying them nearly \$20 million. In light of this turnabout, it is instructive to remember that the State of California will not be sued by Ethyl for

Fine Print:
Former Tory cabinet minister John Crosbie, after sponsoring the original FTA before Parliament, admitted he hadn't read it all.

A government bill approved by the Parliament of Canada has been vetoed by Ethyl Corporation of Virginia.

"Some of our leading neurotoxic scientists, as well as studies and documents from medical schools and universities, in addition to other institutions, outline in detail the truly horrific effects that allowing the continued use of this neurotoxin could have on the Canadian people."
~then opposition leader Jean Chretien

The UnDemocratic Laissez-Faire-Market-Bureaucrat Dispute Resolution Panel.

The three member panel appointed to deal with disputes and Chapter 11 litigation through NAFTA is supposed to "fairly" represent the interests of both nations involved in the dispute. Each country appoints one member to the panel, and the third is agreed upon by the two. Fair enough. Lets skip, for the moment, the fact that none of these appointees are accountable in any way to the citizens of the countries involved, and the fact that the panel operates in complete secrecy, and that its decisions cannot be appealed. At its root, this system is skewed in favour of ruling on

behalf of corporate interests. First of all, the country representing the "wronged" corporation invariably appoints someone they are sure will be sympathetic to the company's arguments. And it exerts enormous pressure to ensure that the agreed upon third party thinks similarly. If the two countries are unable to agree upon said third party, the responsibility for filling out the committee falls to the World Bank. Did you say "un-elected, unaccountable laissez faire market bureaucrats" boys and girls? Since the Second World War, the World Bank has been

the chief international force behind pressing governments to deregulate economies, open up markets to foreign "competition," and decrease "inefficient" social and environmental legislation and spending. If a country involved in a dispute under NAFTA sees the writing on the wall and refuses to participate or appoint anyone to the resolution panel, the World Bank does the job for them. There is little doubt that this skewed "dispute resolution" mechanism had much to do with the Chretien government's about face on Bill C-29.

banning MMT. Neither will countries in the European Union.

Whether MMT is as harmful as studies suggest it could be is not the real issue in this particular instance. What is at issue is the sovereign right of a country to protect its citizens from being used as guinea pigs until such a time as it is proven how dangerous MMT really is. *Innocent until proven guilty* is a fine idea in criminal cases, but when dealing with a potentially harmful chemical and the health of millions of people, *guilty until proven innocent* would be a much saner way to approach the issue. The onus should be upon Ethyl to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that MMT is not a neurotoxin. Instead, Canadians will be exposed, against the wishes of its government, to a substance that most scientific studies agree will be harmful to the environment and our health.

All of which should give us reason to pause when our government begins negotiating further "free trade" agreements like the Multi-Lateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). You may have heard some conspiracy theorists and backwater lefties warning about it in the last year or so. Under proposed wording for the MAI, private corporations would enjoy the right to sue any government of the 29 nations of the OECD for financial injury to their business caused by any law, past, present or future. Apologists state that such clauses exist only to protect companies from illegal or unjustifiable "protectionism". The MMT fiasco, however, shows us different.

The last round of MAI negotiations ended in disarray, thanks almost entirely to the overwhelming groundswell of popular protest in countries around the world. But the MAI will be back, in one form or another, because every major Multi-national in the world wants something like it in place. For our own good, we should all be watching for it.

"The Canadian government and Parliament, whether certain, uncertain, or indifferent, has the sovereign power to pass whatever laws it wishes. At least, that had been the case."
~former Tory insider Dalton Camp

A Mexican community recently forced a California company to shut down a toxic waste dump after an environmental impact assessment discovered it was sited over a sensitive underground alluvial stream. The corporation has brought a \$97 million Chapter 11 suit against the government of Mexico.

This article typeset in corporate mono. Think about it.



It wasn't easy being gay at an institution that either labelled you "mentally ill" or rendered you totally invisible.

The first few Friday nights of September 1976 found Harvey Brownstone hiding in the bushes. It was his second year at Queen's University, and he had returned from his summer determined to find a safe place to explore his sexuality. "Early that fall I must have made a decision," he recalls, "this is it, I just can't take it anymore!"

He saw an ad in the Queen's Journal publicizing the Queen's Homophile Association's weekly drop-ins and "so I had really, across the street from the QHIA on a few Friday nights to see what kind of people were going in there and they all looked quite normal." After at least two successive Fridays spent in the bushes, Harvey mustered up the courage to climb the front steps of the Grey House and attend his first QHIA meeting. At that meeting, Harvey openly declared his sexuality for the first time in his life, beginning a process that has led him to a deep seated acceptance and pride in his sexuality.

Before the Queen's Homophile Association (now the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Association) was established in the mid-seventies, there was no public acknowledgement of the presence of gays and lesbians at Queen's. While some people describe the university as an open environment and felt secure enough in that tolerance to walk the campus as openly gay men, others articulate a deep seated anxiety, the feeling of constantly negotiating hostile territory.

It wasn't that the environment on campus was explicitly anti-gay, rather the overwhelming presence of institutionalized heterosexuality erased the possibility of any "alternative lifestyles." Queen's University in the late 1960s and 1970s was a hotbed of heterosexuality. Claims Harvey, "It was the 70s, sex was a big deal, drinking and drugs were a big deal and I was unprepared for that. My heterosexuality hitting me in the face. I really was. I remember distinctly feeling so left out, so lonely and so isolated because everywhere

around me, I lived in residence, Brockington Hall, everywhere around me, the entire objective of the game was to have sex, was to have as much sex as you could get." Living in residence surrounded by other students compounded the pressure to engage in this fevered coupling and the intimacies of communal living provided little room for "secret lives."

Harvey's description of his life in residence reveals how systemic oppression, in this case in the form of compulsory heterosexuality, functions to alienate people who deviate from the norm. Theorist Mariana Valverde defines compulsory heterosexuality as "the ideology and social practice that pushes properly gendered women and men into couples and makes them believe this is a free choice. It must be emphasized that compulsory heterosexuality need not rely on

Marney McDiarmid revisits gay alumni and the Queen's campus of the early '70s.

extreme bigotry against homosexuality in order to achieve its goal of instituting the heterosexual couple as the sine qua non of personal success and social stability."

At Queen's, an extensive social framework was predicated on the notion of heterosexual coupling. A plethora of social occasions, semi-formals, dances, house parties and drinking at the bars, were organized with the main purpose of providing a possibility for sex. Heterosexual desire was a defining aspect of constructions of masculinity and femininity. Acquiring masculinity was dependent on losing "the big V" and subsequently "getting laid" as much as possible.

"I mean it was sort of every man's goal," claims Keith, "guys proving to each other they were guys. It worked by everybody having a girlfriend and sleeping together and spending a lot of time drinking." Femininity involved articulating heterosexual desire while negotiating the tenuous line between virgin and whore. Heterosexuality, therefore, played an important role in gender identity and sexuality. With the system around them institutionalizing their exclusivity, gay men and lesbians did not have to encounter explicitly anti-gay sentiments in order to feel that their sexuality was deviant, amoral, queer.

Conforming to heterosexist constructions of masculinity and femininity was

also a method of acquiring class status, a way to successfully prove the capacity to be a certain type of man or woman. Queen's has a long standing reputation for being an elitist university, steeped in a highbrow Anglo Saxon tradition that encourages extensive patrilineal lines of alumni. The distinguished looking limestone buildings, draped in ivy and settled in amongst graceful green

lawns, stand like wealthy white women wrapped in thick furs, the heavy scent of their perfume conveying status and power. Harvey alienated also by his Jewish faith,

Queen's as "a very conservative school. Everyone was white - these kids were WASP, white wasp, white wonder bread kids who were raised by upper middle class parents. I remember I was the only kid in my class who worked the summer. The rest of them were going to Europe, they were traveling, they were doing exciting, romantic, exotic things and they couldn't believe that I was working in a steel company over the summer to help pay for my school." Interestingly, many of the male narrators who were involved in the QHIA came from working class, working poor, and/or rural backgrounds. For many of them, their class background provided further basis for feelings of alienation. Claims Keith, "I was a kid from a rural highschool and I sensed most of the guys I lived with were city kids. There were some other kids with rural backgrounds but I could see how they were all viewed and treated and I didn't want to be treated that way. I think I over compensated wanting to be one of the guys. I didn't try to hide form my rural background, I just wanted to fit in... I guess it was feeling that I had to prove myself in that crowd. Playing the game of heterosexuality was a means of acquiring status and, therefore, for working class narrators, coming out could mean losing both heterosexual privilege and class status.

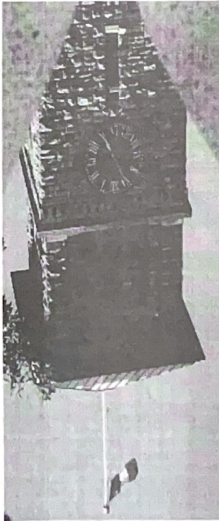
This sense of negotiating hostile territory often persisted even after narrators "came out" to friends and acquaintances without suffering negative consequences. Very few narrators encountered negative responses from individuals they told, and were often pleasantly surprised by their friend's openness. In some cases, however, the acceptance encountered by narrators was not based on a real understanding and recognition of sexual difference, but rested instead on ignorance about what being gay or lesbian meant and a sense of security in the continuing hegemony of heterosexuality. Recalls Maureen, "My best friend at university was a straight woman and I felt comfortable enough with her to tell her that I was a lesbian and we both sort of examined that and we both thought what an odd thing that was to be. Neither of us knew what that meant exactly. Once Maureen fell in love with and established a physical and emotional relationship with another woman, the

began telling women in her residence about her sexuality. Maureen's description of this process surprised me - I had assumed that a lesbian in a girls residence

Queers did not have to encounter explicitly anti-gay sentiments to feel their sexuality was deviant.

would be perceived as a wolf in sheep's clothing. When I voiced my surprise, Maureen responded:

"That's the naïveté, see when I lived in Chown hall men were only allowed downstairs... you could only have a man upstairs between two and four on a Sunday and there was a woman downstairs at the desk and a man who more or less enforced those rules, but there was no thought given to the fact that women could be involved with each other - it was this 'keep the men



away from the women's mentality. So actually, women's residence was a great place to meet other women, or girls as we were called then, right? It was pre-feminist. [we] went around you know um in disarray, half clothed and there was no suspicion that there would be lesbians around because surely a lesbian was a mentally ill person and you would be able to spot one a mile away, you would know such a person and there weren't any in Chown hall. We were Chownie brownies in those days. We had buttons "Chownie Brownies" and it was all incredibly innocent. The fact that we were lesbians... of course we snuck around at night to sleep together, you had this little narrow bed that squeaks and this little room. So I did not think, right? It was pre-feminist. We were alerted people to the fact that we might be sleeping together and we didn't, I mean we had sex but we always uptook back to our own room in the morning. But it wasn't a problem maybe because it was so hidden back then it was more of a novelty than a threat and we were women who were nobody took women very seriously in those days anyway so the fact that two girls might have a crush on each other may have been dismissed as unimportant or not something that would last."

Maureen's narrative reveals how the constructions of femininity and heterosexuality that bound women's sexuality to the desire of men and limited women's sexual agency to the virgin/whore dichotomy erased the potential for sex between women. Although this belief system was one aspect of the systemic oppression that created a feeling of alienation among lesbian narrators, Maureen and her lover were also able to use this ideology to create physical space for their desire, utilizing people's ignorance to sneak hot nights of sex while residence desks guarded their bodies from male intruders. The pervasive notion of the homosexual as mentally ill also worked to make Maureen's desire more benign. Maureen and her lover were nice, normal girls, the exact opposite of psychiatry's sexual deviants - even though they said they were lesbians, they didn't look or act like lesbians. Thus their connection to each other was deemed benign, and enabled them to carry on a public love affair that remained invisible to the heterosexual majority.

NOTES:

1. Mariana Valverde, *Sex, Power, and Pleasure* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1985), p. 83.
2. Harvey Brownstone, Toronto: May 15th, 1995.
3. Keith Sly Kingston and Maureen Fraser, Kingston: March 23rd, 1998.

Borking the Beast

A'Amer Ather has seen the future. Community currencies may or may not be a part of it.

Let's talk about protests. Let's talk about the people marching, slogan chanting, placard waving, window smashing, pepper spraying, egg-throwing, police arresting protests, we've seen under the banners of anti-Liberal, anti-Harris, anti-MAI demonstrations. These are the skirmishes of a larger campaign against the neo-con, blue-liberal, right-wing, greed driven, neo-liberal, Dickensian, version of an old, but new, Capitalism. The big, smelly behemoth with the 'C' tattooed across its forehead ignores all demands and makes no concessions. It stomps on tattered lines of resistance with self-righteous glee.

Despite the successes of twenty-first century movements in overturning repressive laws and certain forms of discrimination, the odds that activist movements in the nineties will successfully resist capitalism's new globalization are slim to nil. Yet, like Sisyphus behind his boulder, people and communities continue to organize and march.

Why? Perhaps the dramatic successes of the civil rights and feminist movements demonstrated that

large groups of people could effect positive change in the face of very hostile political agendas. South Africa's recent eradication of formal apartheid, as superficial as it might seem to some, is a similar testament to the force of humanity's unwavering hope and commitment in the face of significant odds. But why can't one challenge capitalism in the midst of rampant corporate rapaciousness and market totalitarianism?

The key difference between then and now lies in the essence of the struggle. On national television, in stark black and white, the civil rights movement showed white America the inhumanity of its political system.

Every day citizens, being decent folk, could only watch other human beings suffer great indignities at the hands of white law enforcement officers upholding unjust laws for so long.

Contemporary economic based political conflicts lack the basic raw material which made the civil rights movement so successful. Of course one can find instances of capitalism's inhumanity. Of course one can point to countless domestic and international human tragedy stories resulting from the economic poli-



cies of G7 nations. The key lies in the different justifications for different policies. Our general discomfort with explicit discrimination makes the foundation for clearly discriminatory laws less tenable over time. But the justifications for NAFTA, the MAI, deficit reduction, and any other manner of government austerity measures, on the surface, appear to come down to questions of math, efficiency and competitiveness. Despite the cynical exploitation of these notions for particular political agendas, they are not as obviously or noisily discriminatory as apartheid.

Contemporary activist movements will never shame the voting public with the inhumanity of its political system because most people are willing to believe the political system is merely responding to the dictates of the economy. And the economy of course is subject to its own immutable laws of supply and demand.

So, if one's economic-related activism cannot shame the majority into action, then one is left to tackle the capitalist beast head on. And we know how that tactic ends.

A growing number of communities are attempting to slice the beast by establishing community barter-exchange projects. Local Employment/Exchange and Trading Systems (LETS), Time Dollars and HOURS currencies are spreading through North America and the world offering a renewed vision of community enrichment, political engagement and economic independence.

The 'barter-exchange' label given to these contemporary community economic initiatives may create an inaccurate perception of the proverbial 'olden days' where one farmer traded two goats for another's cow. Modern 'barter-exchange' networks, like money based economies, use a system of currency units (the one in Kingston uses a paper currency known as the HOUR) where units are earned from one person and spent with another.

Community 'barter-exchange' systems aim to facilitate economic activity in areas suffering from recessions, government cutbacks or corporate downsizing.

By having communities create their own local currency, people challenge the monopoly that various coercive institutions have in granting access to a means of exchange. So, one does not have to be dependent

on a bank, a factory or some other employer to earn the cash to participate in an economy. One can sell goods or services directly to another participating member in exchange for the local currency.

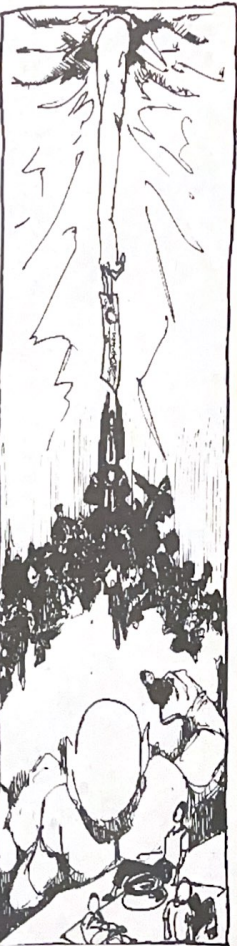
LET THE BEAST ROAM AND DAMN THE NOBLESSE OBLIGE

A little though the current movement of community exchange systems is a very much to

be desired (in terms of their size, activity and diversity), their strength lies in showing us an alternative model of political activism. We need to consider other models because, simply put, the beast will not stop for us. The long struggles to create a humane economy, with appropriate redistributive mechanisms and protective regulations, were casually dismissed by Western governments over a remarkably short time span. History shows that few positive changes remain unchallenged and the struggle to protect the 'just society' leaves many veteran activists demoralised, burned-out or cynical.

Community exchange systems promise people a very practical way of opting out of the traditional centre-margin paradigm without having to move to a commune. Exchanging goods and services without the interventions of governing institutions or private capital, using a community currency that is of the community and for the community, is the political equivalent of saying 'we don't want to be a part of your club. We'll start our own'.

Quite possibly, local economic systems, like so many development projects before it, will fizzle out. But the feelings of community spirit and political-economic independence that are engendered by such initiatives shouldn't be ignored. And, unlike more traditional political victories, once established, such feelings can never be swept aside by the blunt brush of a sweeping bill. It is time for a serious evaluation of the ways in which individuals, communities and community groups allocate their energies in overtly political activities. Let the beast roam and damn the noblesse oblige of progressive governments and enlightened voters. Let the smelly thing maraud through the landscape because, in its sloppy wake, there will be enough raw material for people to forge a new life.



OBSESSION



for men