Decolonizing Our Solidarity

Projet accompagnement solidarité Colombie - PASC

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We would like to thank everyone who offered critical feedback, corrections, or otherwise contributed to this text.

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About the "Decolonizing Our Solidarity" project

Together, the peoples of all the continents are struggling mightily to oppose the domination of capital, hidden behind illusory promises of economic progress and political stability. Complete decolonization for oppressed peoples remains for us, the social movements of the world, a challenge of the greatest importance. […] Yet each day we see new movements rise, struggling to reverse the ravages of colonialism and to achieve well-being and dignity for all. […]

– Declaration of the Social Movements Assembly WSF 2011, February 10th, Dakar (Senegal)

Workshops by and for People Involved in International Solidarity

One of the goals of this project was to organize discussions between people involved in international solidarity work, with the hope of better understanding the power relations in which such interventions are embedded. Our aim was to critique practices of international solidarity from an anti-colonial, feminist perspective and to ground them in social struggles.

Networking with women's associations from the South allows us to hear feminist analyses; these are indispensable because they are based on activist motivations, indispensable if we want to move towards change. The gaze of Southern partners on our practices allows a critical distance enabling NGOs and organizations from the North to engage in self-reflection.[1] **- Lilián Abracinskas**, *women's health activist, Uruguay.[F.T.]*[2]

Inspired by the challenges faced by members of PASC in their accompaniment work in Colombia and by the research of Gada Mahrouse of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute, Concordia University, on the topics of privilege, transnational activism, humanitarianism, and political tourism, this project is a collaborative effort intended to develop steps towards "decolonizing" solidarity.

Through the workshops and the publication of this manual, we hope to participate in building a "counter-discourse", one that offers alternative views on international solidarity. To this end, we share our own experiences, as well as our sources of inspiration, which are expressed in the practices and ideals of feminists of colour across the world.

Within the overall goal of encouraging critical reflection, we take a three-step approach to the idea of decolonizing solidarity. First, we introduce the concept of "privilege" by articulating a feminist and decolonial analysis of power relations. Here, we suggest that "North/South" solidarity relations are spaces in which racialized privileges clearly exist, and, at the same time, can offer channels and opportunities for strategically using these privileges for social justice work.[3] Second, we contextualize current practices of international solidarity through a brief account of the different historical influences on our actions. In this part, we explore the origins of our practices and the legacies of preceding interventions. In the third part, the concept of privilege, along with a decolonial feminist analysis of power relations, is applied to consider the position of Canadians engaged in international solidarity work. Through this critical reflection, we hope to contribute to a dialogue on decolonization practices between activists from the global North and the activists from global South.

Critical Views to Encourage Discussion

This "Decolonizing Our Solidarity" manual is intended as tool for study and debate. We hope it will contribute to enriching the discussions and practices of international solidarity.

We make no claim to objectivity, and we openly acknowledge our feminist and decolonial interests and goals. The critique we offer of international solidarity practices emerges from a systemic analysis that focuses on dominant trends and brackets exceptions to the rule. While recognizing the positive elements of this work, we take this critical approach to stimulate a profound rethinking of international solidarity movements. We at PASC – *as activists in a Colombia solidarity project* – are certainly not exempt from these critiques. The text is thus interspersed with examples drawn from PASC members' experiences. Under the heading "Paths of Direct Solidarity," we reflect on our own setbacks, internal debates, tensions, successes, dilemmas, and processes. However, it must be noted that the interpretation of these incidents has not always been a matter of consensus within the group and that the accounts described in this manual are just some perspectives on the diverse experiences of members within our collective.

Introduction

The overall framework of analysis and the key concepts used in this project are introduced in this chapter.

Chapter 1. Challenges of Solidarity: Facing our privileges

The first chapter delves into the concepts that were used to develop a feminist, decolonial analysis of power relations and to understand the inherent challenges that arise in North/South solidarity contexts. We begin by presenting the concepts of oppression, social categories, and privilege. We then discuss ways to recognize our privileges and to apply this recognition to our practices.

Chapter 2. The Origins of International Humanitarian Interventions

In Chapter 2, we provide a history of what is now known as international solidarity by distinguishing between three influences: 1) Christian charity and the humanitarian movement; 2) internationalism as political solidarity; and 3) development aid. We then examine the work of international cooperation organizations in more detail. Finally, we examine the notion of "global citizenship" as a contemporary expression of international solidarity. By excavating the different ideological influences on these various interventions, we invite people working in the area of international solidarity to consider the historical conditions that have shaped and underlie their actions.

Josh MacPhee, "Grow Tall", Justseeds

Chapter 3. Canadians in International Solidarity

The final chapter tackles the solidarity relationship and attempts to define the specific privileges of Canadians involved in these interventions. Examining the reflections of activists and former interns and development workers, we look at the different tensions and contradictions which cut across international solidarity work. This is meant to open up additional spaces for debate so that these challenges might be confronted collectively rather than at the individual level, which can lead to disengagement.

Appendix

A case study is provided as an entry point for discussion of some of the points raised in the manual:

NGOs at the Heart of the Turmoil: The Case of Haiti

With a history of more than 500 years of colonialism, with neocolonial economic policies still in place, along with repeated natural catastrophes, and the largest ratio of NGOs per inhabitant in the world – Haiti is a compelling case study for examination. The role that NGOs have played in Haiti has been subject to serious questioning. We present some of the contentious debates here. Knowing that the topic of Haiti provokes profound disagreements in international solidarity, development and cooperation circles in Quebec, the goal here is to encourage meaningful reflection on these debates while being transparent about our own political views.

A Collective Work-in-Progress Tool: Open to input

This document is a first attempt to express our ideas; it is a process of reflection which is far from complete, and which can benefit from external feedback. We strongly encourage others active in international solidarity to reprint and circulate it freely. Please don't hesitate to contact Project Accompaniment Solidarity Colombia (PASC) with your comments. We invite critiques and alternative interpretations of these issues.

Carnival against capitalism – No to the FTAA
Anti-capitalist convergence (by Rocky), 2001

The Authors

Projet Accompagnement Solidarité Colombie (PASC) is a Quebec-based collective. It formed after the large-scale mobilizations against the 2001 Free Trade Agreement of the Americas in Quebec. PASC shares information about the political and social situation in Colombia and denounces Canadian interests and involvement in the conflict in Colombia. PASC sees international accompaniment as a way of transferring our Canadian privileges to movements and communities in resistance.

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Introduction
An Anti-Colonial, Feminist Approach

The "Decolonizing Our Solidarity" project emerges out of the anti-colonial feminist movement developed by Women of Colour, Critical Race, and Third World Feminists, among others.[5] The analysis of power relations used in this chapter is based on an approach in which systems of oppression are understood as dependent and inseparable from one another. This analytical framework has inspired debates that have divided and united different feminist movements over the past decades.[6]

Neoliberal globalization maintains and transforms the three systems of domination and exploitation [...]: capitalist, colonial, racist and patriarchal.[4] **Jules Falquet**, *French sociologist [F.T]*

Feminist Debates: Towards an anti-oppression approach

While most radical feminists in this era[8] emphasized the common experience of women as an oppressed "sexual class" to unify women against patriarchal oppression, Afro-American feminists highlighted the fact that their experiences of oppression are also mediated by social class and race and hence differ from those of white, middle-class feminists. Similarly, by denouncing heterosexism, lesbian feminism exposed hegemonic power relations within the category of "woman."

Starting in the 80s, an approach [emerged] that was critical of the hegemony of a certain Western, white feminism, which had not adequately come to terms with the rather bitter tensions in feminist debates and struggles around questions of class, race and nation. This move to decolonize feminism was inspired by migrant and minority activists and theorists and particularly activists and theorists from the global South.[7] **Christine Verschuur**, *Professor, Switzerland [F.T.]*

The different streams of post-colonial and transnational feminisms, especially those developed by indigenous, Arab, Asian, Latina, African, or Chicana[9] feminists, continued in the same direction, highlighting experiences of oppression as women belonging to colonized societies (or societies subject to imperialism). Importantly, they variously illustrated that the paradigm of Western feminism did not apply to their experiences and exposed the exclusions of mainstream feminist practices. Similarly, immigrant and undocumented women have attempted to express their own lived experience of sexism and the discrimination they are subjected to vis-à-vis categories and processes of citizenship. Thanks to these important contributions, the feminist movement and its many theoretical currents have evolved towards an anti-oppression analysis based on an understanding of interlocking systems of power rather than focusing on a single, primarily gender-based oppression.

Favianna Rodriguez, "Xicana Power : Viva la Xicana ! "

Third World & Women of Colour Feminisms: Towards decolonization

Immigrant, critical race, Indigenous, Black, transnational and/or Third World feminists have offered important analyses of the implications of past or current colonial policies for women (imperialism, wars, apartheid, ethnocentrism, immigration policies, international division of labour, neoliberal policies, and so on). By studying the racist structures of power in societies, they seek to understand how these structures function at a global level.

Many Third World and women of colour feminists have offered critiques of development and international aid. Some have argued that the feminization of poverty is not the product of an inadequate integration of women into (capitalist) development policies, but of specific modes of exploitation initiated by colonization through which women bear the brunt (see for example, Sen and Grown, 1997; Visvanathan et al, 1997; Mohanty, 2003, Grewal 1998). These feminists are particularly sensitive to the "aid" discourse and the dynamics of victimizing women from the South, i.e. people from the Global South are represented as in need of saving by white, western do-gooders.

Engaged Approach, Explicit Positions

Solidarity between us, feminists of the North and South, must be built through concrete acts of resistance to the hegemonic policies of the North. Neoliberal policies are certainly the prolongation and extension of, substitutes for, previous colonialist and imperialist policies. […] most acts of resistance to global processes […] build new forms of social solidarity." [10] **Silvia Chejter**, *professor and feminist activist, Argentina [F.T.]*

To adopt a decolonizing feminist approach is also to declare our position as social and political actors. Feminist theory rejects the pretence of objectivity and universality. It takes as a given that an author is situated in her discourses and actions. That is, she is not a "neutral and objective" observer. There is an emphasis, therefore on situating oneself and one's position in social relations. Put differently, we adopt the premise that the production of knowledge cannot be abstracted from the lived experience of the intellectual; and we therefore approach this project with a commitment to self-critical reflection.

Naming the Actors

> *Mobilization is measured, generally for men, in terms of participation in political parties and bodies, government programmes, electoral promises targeting access to a citizenship defined by constitutions, laws and other development goals reasserted in terms of growth. The approach is more complex when it comes to women because of the patriarchal and masculine nature of the state and politics. The new meaning assigned to them by colonial political practices and the attempts at social modernization have not completely eliminated the marginalization of women …* [11] - Fatou Sow, feminist intellectual, Senegal

> *… women are also actors in their own lives, ceaselessly struggling against and/or negotiating with the dominant order, and thus winning some spaces of power. Facing different forms of oppression, they develop their own strategies of resistance. It is precisely in the marginal spaces created by their exclusion that they will find tools of resistance. The 'places' into which they are driven (informal economy vs. dominant sphere of capitalism; popular feminine sociability vs. dominant masculine public space, etc.) are in fact spaces in which unique tools and strategies of empowerment can emerge.*[12] - Meriem Rodary, doctoral candidate, franco-Moroccan

As Fatou Sow stresses in the quote above, women are generally absent from formal places of power; however, as Meriem Rodary notes, they are active in community initiatives that help to build popular power. In Canada, according to a study carried out between 2007 and 2009 [13], women make up 76% of staff in non-profit organizations. [14] In addition, they represent more than half of volunteers and donors. [15] We will use the feminine when referring to people who work in the area of international solidarity organizations to reflect this reality.

A multitude of terms exist to name and distinguish among these actors including, "humanitarian", "development worker", "intern", "cooperant"[16] and "activist". In general terms, "humanitarians" tend to be defined by their interventions in emergency situations, "development workers", "interns," and "cooperants" are often associated to NGOs and contribute to economic development, while activists usually identify with solidarity movements, particular actions, or social struggles. Although these differences have important political and historical meanings, the labels do not correspond to fixed or exclusive categories. Moreover, the same individual can claim several of these titles. While recognizing the important distinctions between them, we have consciously decided to use several of these terms (sometimes interchangeably) to capture the fluidity between them.

What to call the organizations that facilitate these projects is also a matter of debate. For instance, the term NGO does not have a single definition and the mandates of NGOs extend far beyond the field of international solidarity or development programmes. While this term encompasses all non-governmental organizations, we use it narrowly here to refer to organizations which consist, for the most part, of qualified and salaried staff whose members are not the people chiefly affected by the problems they address nor the main beneficiaries of their programmes. For example, Quebec's "international cooperation organizations" (ICOs) fit this definition of an NGO. Social organizations, in contrast, mobilize around issues directly affecting the lives of their members.

It is important, moreover, to highlight the fact that many NGOs consider themselves to be part of social movements. This is particularly true of those in the global South; in the North, positions on this question diverge.

Ricardo Levins Morales, " Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful not to be neutral." – Paulo Freire

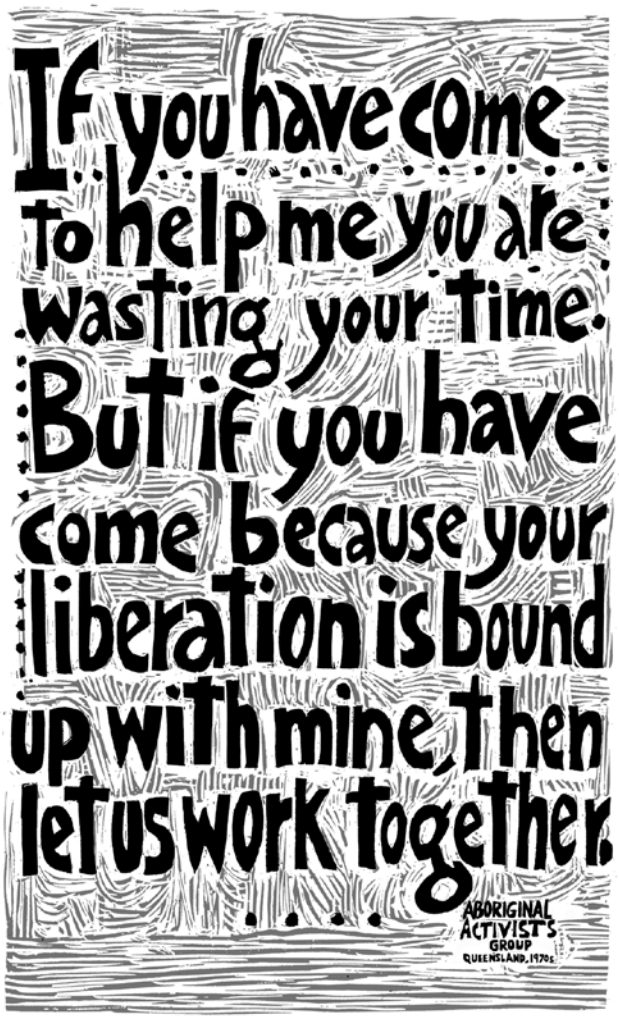
Naming Global North/South Relations

Although the terms are geographically false, we have chosen to use "Global North/South" to name the historical relationship between nations; former metropoles and colonies.

We understand the North/South relationship to be an imaginary cleavage between relatively rich and poorer countries, variously referred to as "under-developed" or "developing". The expression does not refer to a geographical boundary but to the inequalities between wealthy countries and communities of privilege on the one hand, and non-Western countries and communities, marginalized economically, politically, and culturally, on the other.

Our use of the North/South binary is to historically situate the geopolitical dynamics we are considering. It is meant to capture socio-economic and historical conditions rather than a country's "development" status. For instance, geographically and economically speaking, Canada is a country in the North but not homogeneously so insofar as it contains many "Souths" such as Nunavut. Considered economically under-developed, this territory is coveted for its natural resources and populated by colonized indigenous people.

North/South relations, in our conceptualization, are structured by the current global capitalist system — a system originally constructed by colonial wars and currently consolidating under an imperialist form of control by Northern companies, states, and international institutions.



Ricardo Levins Morales, " Liberation "

Notes

1. Abracinskas and al., Genre et mondialisation, les femmes analysent et résistent …

2. Throughout this text, unless otherwise indicated, the authors offer free translations of the direct quotes from French to English.

3. As discussed in the introduction, we use the "North/South" binary as a short-hand way to capture the vast asymmetries of power between rich, "developed" countries and poorer countries, variously referred to as under-developed, or developing.

4. Falquet, "Hommes en armes et femmes 'de service' …", p. 18

5. The term "women of colour" is used by some non-white feminists to expose the racialization they are subject to as well as to create a feeling of solidarity to empower non-white women in the West. Some of these feminists living in the North identify instead as Third World Feminists to highlight their membership in a colonized group (Mohanty, 2003; Razack, Smith, & Thobani, 2010).

6. This approach is commonly referred to as an "intersectional" or "interlocking" analytic. For more on this see: Toupin, Les courants de pensée féministe; Razack, Looking White People in the Eye.

7. Verschuur, "Genre, postcolonialisme et diversité des mouvements de femmes", p. 4.

8. Refers to the second wave of the feminist movement (starting in the 60s) after the first wave mobilized at the beginning of the century for the right to vote.

9. The term "Chicana" refers to women of Mexican descent living in the United States.

10. Chejter, "Lo local y lo global en las prácticas de las ONGs feministas en América Latina", p. 296.

11. Sow, "Politiques néolibérales et alternatives féministes…"

12. Rodary, "De l'exclusion à la résistance: femmes, travail et classe …"

13. HR Council for the Non-profit Sector. 2009. Labour Force Study, conducted from January 2007 to June 2009. [Online]: http://hrcouncil.ca/labour/statistics.cfm (Consulted 10 February 2014.)

14. It is also noteworthy that this study about Canadian non-profit organizations found that, "men are much more numerous in higher management positions" while women are more numerous in subordinate positions.

15. Statistics Canada. 2009. Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating. [Online]. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/120504/dq120504e-fra.htm (Consulted 10 February 2014.) See also: Statistics Canada. 2003. Cornerstones of Community: Highlights from the National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations. [Online] http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/61-533-x/61-533-x2004001-eng.pdf (Consulted 12 February 2014.)

16. Used mainly in francophone contexts.

Chapter 1
Challenges of Solidarity: Facing up to our privileges

International solidarity initiatives generally emerge from a sense of the injustice of Global North/South inequalities. Activists who engage in this field of social action want to see a new distribution of power among the different regions of the world. International solidarity networks including activists from both North and South are often presented as an alternative form of relationship, based on the principle of equality. However, because North/South relations have emerged from a history of domination, good intentions are not sufficient to overcome inequalities. **The question is, how can this fundamentally unequal relationship be transformed?**

This question – a central one for many international solidarity movements – forces us to take a critical look at our practices; it invites us to observe how, despite ourselves, we reproduce the relations of oppression we wish to abolish. Our approach is to first identify these power relations in order to then plan how to overcome them within relationships of solidarity.

We recognize that we do not study these issues from the outside, but rather that we act within them, contributing to the reproduction and reinvention of social relations. For this reason, we will begin by situating ourselves within the inequalities we seek to identify, taking stock of our own social positions. We will identify the privileges conferred on us and withheld from people with whom we wish to build relationships of solidarity.

1.1 What is Oppression ?

Defining Some Terms for Understanding Unequal Power Relations [17]

> **Social Category.** We define social categories as historically specific constructs. An individual can refer to these to identify as a member of a social group. The categories can be used to apply labels to individuals and are often based on physical traits and socialization processes.

> **Oppression**. The action of subjugation through power or authority by some over others. In the social sciences, oppression refers to power that a hegemonic social group holds and exercises in relation to other social groups. The dominant group oppresses members of weaker groups in order to preserve its own privileges (whether economic, social, or political). Oppression is thus the way that the power and privileges of a dominant group are maintained. Power is exercised through force or physical, psychological, social, economic, institutional, or systemic threats.[18]

Everywhere, there are those who are too poor to live in dignity and others with excessive wealth. There are some women who walk in fear at night and some men who feel secure at all times. There are Black youth subject to racial profiling by the police force and white youth who are oblivious to it. There are dominant cultures celebrating their language and values and others, who are often Indigenous or immigrant, relegated to folklore. There are couples for whom public expression of their affection for each other is acceptable, while other couples must shy away from hateful stares. This list is unfortunately not exhaustive; it could be expanded to include numerous other forms of exclusion such as religion, citizenship-based language codes, and ability.

Whether we call it injustice, inequality, exclusion, or discrimination, such social realities reflect power relations between members of different social categories. These differences in power relations are what create the conditions that lead to oppression.

These relations are not fixed. Rather, they evolve and shift through human history. Ideas about racial difference that were taken for granted in the past are now condemned as arbitrary social divisions based on oppressive relationships. Slave societies, for example, which saw slaves as inferior beings who are born to be dominated, have been denounced. In turn, the categories of master and slave have been exposed as power-laden social constructs. Thus ended the idea that slavery is a natural order, as it was once believed to be.

Social Class

One is not born a woman, but becomes one. **Simone de Beauvoir**, *The Second Sex*

Similarly, the Marxist-inspired class struggle exposed proletarian and bourgeois social classes; the social divisions reflected one class possessing the means of production while the other sells its labour. Economic inequalities have not been eliminated in the new neoliberal order; on the contrary, they are widening within and between societies. Rather, social classes and the various terms used to describe them - poor, middle class, economic elite, etc. - are now generally defined according to profession, education, qualifications, income, and possessions.

Sexual Class and Heterosexism

The radical feminist movement exposed the social construction of femininity and masculinity. While sex is believed to be a biological fact, the cultural norms associated with it (social practices such as the division of labour, personality traits, etc.) are now widely understood to be gendered understandings which vary throughout history and from one society to another. Feminine and masculine are social categories.

Gay and lesbian struggles have developed an analysis of heteronormativity, a system in which heterosexuality is rendered a universal social norm and homosexuality is seen as exceptional and/or deviant.

Race

The Black civil rights movement in the United States brought to light the inequalities between whites and Blacks, thus condemning the ideology of racism and its implications. This movement deconstructed the idea that race is a fact of nature and revealed the process of racialization of non-whites as an oppressed social category.

Colonialism and Eurocentrism

Anti-colonial movements did not only condemn the relations between colonial and imperialist countries and colonized peoples and countries, they also denounced the social relations these societies established between whites and Indigenous peoples or Blacks (as descendants of slaves) and other categories inherited from the colonial past. Apart from relations of subordination, struggles for self-determination – for example, those of Indigenous peoples – have also exposed Western hegemony over other systems of belief and social organization.

Ableism

Organizations that work with differently abled people and their allies have struggled against discrimination based on physical and mental ability. The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that disability is not constituted by a person's limitations or biomedical condition, but by the discrimination they face as a disabled person. [20] The court cites a "process of producing the disability", which refers to "the different barriers or facilitators encountered throughout life which [would be able to] put her in a position of full social participation or, on the contrary, of disability," rather than the person's so-called disabilities. " [21]

> Apartheid is an Afrikaaner word meaning apartness; to separate, push aside, keep to oneself. It can be summarized as the institutionalization of a regime of systemic racial discrimination. More precisely, it is "a political system in which racism is regulated through legislation by the laws of Parliament. "[19]

> The concepts of ethnicity and race are based on a myth of collective ancestry associating the ethnicized or racialized individual with certain 'natural' characteristics shared with a group considered to be homogenous by virtue of their birthplace, religion, language, etc. The process of racialization is generally the work of the hegemonic group, defining social categories for different, minority "Others" (see Anthias & Yuval-Davis 1993).

> Ableism. Discrimination based on physical, mental, or emotional ability. Within the dominant paradigm, "disability" is seen as a problem faced by individual people. In resistance to this, the disability rights movement has created a new model of viewing disability, one that places emphasis on how the world treats disabled people: disability, not defined by bodies, but rather by the material and social conditions of ableism. [22]

Race, Ethnicity, Culture?

Although the term "race" is no longer accepted in politically correct speech, the process of racialization of individuals and the racist structures in our societies have not disappeared. It is now usual to substitute new, social categories such as ethnicity or culture. For instance instead of saying "black" we speak of "cultural communities", "ethnic groups", "ethnocultural minorities", etc. However, categorizing people by various "cultural" terms risks implying immutability, biologically hereditary, and static characteristics and traits. In fact, cultures emerge from historical processes within specific social and political conditions. Cultural and ethnic categories and processes of racialization are far from neutral: they are constructions that assign difference to minorities to serve the interests of the dominant groups.

"While traditional feminists reject the stereotypes in which men and women are imprisoned, they do not demand an end to the categories as such. For some, this is a matter of an identity attachment to a group with a long history of oppression and common experiences. […] Personally, I feel both challenged and concerned. Challenged because, in the end, I am active in order to overcome senseless categories. […] Sometimes, I think that a binary analysis is a dead end street. But concerned because, in their enthusiasm, some groups who fight against privilege and for sexual minorities […] are diluting the continuing reality of systemic discrimination against women everywhere in the world." [23]
Alexa Conradi, *Fédération des femmes du Québec [F.T.]*

> **Intersectionality**.
Intersectionality is the idea that power relations among different social categories intersect and combine to determine the social position of an individual and her experience of oppression.

Social Categories: To Reclaim or to transgress?

Social movements have historically used different strategies to denounce and abolish power relations. Some have consciously reappropriated terms associated with their oppression in a process of identity affirmation and empowerment. "Black is beautiful", "Gay Pride", and the concept of "Negritude" are some of the better known examples of this strategy. Others have adopted a strategy of refusing to be categorized. Queer movements, for example, transgress binary categories of man/woman and heterosexual/homosexual to emphasize the multitude and fragmentation of sexual and gender identities.

Exposing the arbitrariness of social categories and the power relations that underpin them, these different social forces demand a new distribution of rights and privileges among social groups.

The Intersectionality of Oppression

No one can define themselves according to a single social category: through self-identification or labels imposed on them by society, individuals are always positioned at the intersection of many categories.

Cases in point: A poor woman with a physical disability may not be able to explain her experience of oppression with sole reference to the category "woman" because other power relations are at play in determining her place in society. Furthermore, the same disability may not, for example, have the same impact on the life of a wealthy woman. Similarly, a homosexual man cannot be identified solely as a member of the dominant gender category of "man" because he may be subject to a process of exclusion in terms of heterosexism.

The concept of intersectionality was made popular by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw. She conducted studies of anti-discrimination laws in the United States, showing that these laws tended to favour white women and Black men. The specific situation of Black women had not been taken into account. Crenshaw used a metaphor from geometry (a geographical point of intersection) to describe the impact of overlapping relations of oppression and the intersectional experiences of Black women. [24]

1.2 Hegemony of Normalcy

While the Canadian constitution guarantees the same rights to all with Canadian citizenship, the idea of a universal norm - a "normal human," a group presented as the majority – remains omnipresent in the public consciousness where not everyone is represented equally. As Lise Nöel, a Quebec historian, writes, "As the oppressor embodies the fullness of existence, so the identity of the dominated is often defined by a natural deficit or fault." [25] Construction of the normal centres on men, whites, adults, Christians, heterosexuals, healthy people, English and/or French speaking people, and those in possession of an income far exceeding basic needs. This model Canadian becomes the norm, constituting the majority, even though in reality he represents no more than a thin layer of society. The social categories to which he belongs – male, white, middle-class or bourgeois, heterosexual - guarantee him a hegemonic position in social relations, allowing him to enjoy privileges denied to others. In fact, those who do not belong to these dominant categories are identified as Other, minorities, marginal, and sometimes abnormal. This universal norm is also at work on the global level, where the white, heterosexual man writes history and enjoys a hegemonic position, despite his minority status.

> **Hegemony.** Antonio Gramsci uses cultural hegemony to refer to a process by which a group or social class imposes its rules on others by identifying its own interests as common sense. The dominant class legitimates and perpetuates its power over other social groups in this way.

Colour Blindness

> The oppressor has no apparent existence. [26] - Lise Noël, *L'intolérance*.

Members of hegemonic social groups frequently fail to grasp the dynamics of exclusion affecting people who do not belong to the same social categories. This helps make their privileges invisible, to sanctify them as part of the "normal" order of things. For example, a lesbian woman who has faced exclusion, who has had to "come out" on numerous occasions and explain her sexual orientation to her acquaintances, will more readily identify with her sexual orientation than a heterosexual woman who has never had to publicly explain and defend her sexual intimate choices. Similarly, it is difficult for anyone with dark skin living in North America to forget that they belong to a racialized group; people with white skin, on the other hand, generally don't identify with the colour of their skin or question their "race."

Solidarity organization with the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Faustino Pérez, 1977

Indigenous Women in Canada: Multiple Oppression

In 1977, Sandra Lovelace filed a complaint at the United Nations Human Rights Committee. She alleged discrimination under the Indian Act, which stripped Indigenous women of their status when they married non-Indigenous men. Men in the same situation did not lose their Indian status or associated rights. In 1981, the Committee ruled that this Canadian legislation indeed violated the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. However, the Committee based its ruling exclusively on minority rights to culture, language, and religion of individuals. Despite Lovelace's submissions, the Committee did not consider discrimination based on the sex of the plaintiff. The Lovelace case exposed a process of multiple levels of discrimination in Canada.

Twenty years later, Canadian judge Claire L'Heureux-Dubé recognized the double oppression experienced by Indigenous women:

> "Indigenous women, who are doubly disadvantaged by virtue of their sex and their race, are among those particularly affected by legislative measures [...], by means of their history and their situation in Canadian and indigenous societies." (Corbeil ruling, 1999, on the rights of Indigenous people to vote off reserve).

> In the same way that members of a dominant linguistic group think that they don't have an accent when they speak, whites think they don't have race. [27] - Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters.*

1.3 Challenging our Privileges

Recognizing our Privileges

Oppression and privilege are two sides of the same coin; one can't exist without the other. In addition to noticing oppression, recognizing the advantages conferred on the privileged by this oppression is equally necessary.

Possessing certain privileges by virtue of whiteness, masculinity, heterosexuality, citizenship, etc. means that society grants these individuals greater freedoms and room to manoeuver than it does others. Members of hegemonic social groups enjoy preferential treatment that affords them privileged access to power and resources.

In her analysis of privilege, Peggy McKintosh[29] argued that it works like an invisible tool-box that individuals cart around (like a knapsack) with them throughout their lives, consciously or unconsciously, to use in different situations. Building on this, we propose the metaphor of privileges as keys that allow access and shortcuts to zones of power. In this equation, the more that an individual can access various zones of power, the more their rights are respected.

Those equipped with many keys have easier access to zones of power where they enjoy better conditions (for example, access to education, housing, work with dignity). Privileged people frequently attribute their social success solely to their personal abilities. Those who are disadvantaged by the distribution of privileges, on the other hand, tend to point to the impact of power relations on their lives (for example, discrimination in the workplace, poverty, and war). The most important privilege then is the ability to ignore one's privilege and instead use personality traits or the concept of free will to explain one's living conditions.

> We very rarely learn to explore the privileges which accompany our origins and social memberships. We are all born within a social, cultural and historical context that marks and situates us within relations of oppression and domination, without our being fully conscious of it or exercising our will. […] While we don't choose this placement, our conditions in life depend on it. Each of our identities comes with its own baggage of privileges and advantages, or oppression and disadvantages, which have an impact on our life and development.[30] *Pancanadian Young Feminist Gathering* (2008).

Recognizing and challenging privileges is a difficult process, individually or collectively. A surprising number of stratagems allow us to deny the fact that, although we embrace solidarity, we are not equal. We wish to be equal.

> **Whiteness or the Critical Whiteness Approach.** Being white, from this perspective, is not a colour but a mark of privilege. As a result of European expansion, colonialism, slavery, and Western imperialism, numerous privileges are attached to white skin. People who adopt this analysis seek to render visible one's affiliation with the dominant white majority, unmasking the construction of white normalcy to reveal the privileges it grants whites and the oppression it engenders for non-whites.

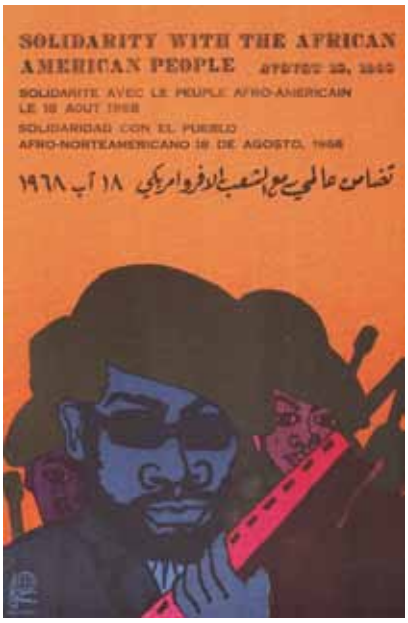
> **Privilege** The experience of freedoms, rights, benefits, advantages, access, and/or opportunities afforded some people because of their group membership or social context. Generally privilege is unrecognized and taken for granted, even while the same freedoms, rights, and advantages are refused to marginalized, disadvantaged, and less valued groups.[28]

An Unflattering Mirror

The awareness of occupying a privileged position within oppressive relationships can negatively affect a solidarity activist's self-image.

Individuals at the top of the social pyramid face a considerable challenge: the uneasy recognition that in spite of the best intentions, and varying relative degrees of privilege, they cannot identify with the oppressions they stand against. A white, lesbian, middle-class woman, for example, may be tempted to focus solely on her own experience of oppression, while forgetting that she has privileges denied to others. Writing about the context of Quebec, for example, Chantal Maillé suggests that the main obstacle that white Quebeckers face in recognizing their privileges is the fact that they live "in a culture which has long seen itself as a colonized minority rather than defining itself in reference to belonging to white, western, imperialist culture."[31]

Because recognition of our privileges shows us in an unflattering light, we develop a variety of strategies to keep our "good helper" identities intact and help us to find comfort about our unequal status in solidarity struggles.



Solidarity organization with the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Lázaro Abreu, 1968

Defence Mechanisms

A common strategy consists of relativizing the privilege of wealth by idealizing the way of life of the poor. For example, interviews with former Québec sans frontières (Quebec without borders) interns in a study on privilege, activism, and political tourism[32] illustrated this defence mechanism and how it comes into play as interns grow conscious of their privilege. Similarly, Westerners who take part in political/solidarity tours consistently articulate a discourse of equation and reversal whereby they position themselves as the ones who are lacking.

> Really, they are the ones who are truly privileged, they are far happier, so removed from the superficial consumerism of our society. (Gada Mahrouse, 2011)

The majority of PASC members are white heterosexual women with university degrees. While PASC was born out of an encounter between Colombian refugees and activists from Québec, and a few non-Canadians remain in the group, we are not representative of the most oppressed classes and we benefit from privileges deriving from our status. Despite these structuring social identities, we need to put forward our identity as one of sharing political interests with the oppressed, interests which feed our political action.

Conference on discriminatory profiling in public space. La Ligue des droits et libertés, Réseau d'aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal, UQAM.

As a rule and relative to the local population, those going to learn or to help possess immeasurable economic power. Yet, as these quotes illustrate, there is a tendency to downplay their privileges by highlighting the non-economic spiritual and emotional wealth of the Other. Thus, by idealizing what are presented as virtues that go along with poverty, we can liberate ourselves from feelings of guilt.

These quotes also illustrate that in coming into contact with other cultures, those of us who travel to work in various solidarity projects awaken to the problems of our so-called developed societies: consumerism and superficiality, individualism and relative poverty, and more. And in fact, that our western way of life is based on injustices.

Another common reaction is to "feel bad" or to be "ashamed of oneself." However, guilt generally impedes critical thinking about our privileges. It makes us feel that we have "expiated our sins" by lamenting our status; moreover, it focuses entirely on the individual rather than the historical dynamics between social groups.

Finally, it is important to note that the acknowledgement of privilege can engender a certain complacency in the person who proclaims concern about systems of oppression. For example, a white person who calls himself anti-racist is applauded as someone with good values; he gains the respect of his peers, even if his words aren't put into action. Being conscious of one's privileges can in this way reinforce power imbalances, by lauding those who express this consciousness. As Barbara Heron[34] put it, when the privileged make such confessions, they experience comfort that reconciles them to their position and can lead to inaction.

While consciousness of privilege is certainly a first step in a personal process of reflection, it should not be focused on the privileged. Stepping back from an approach centred on the privileged self (our personal guilt or pride), allows us to focus on the problem to be addressed: what do we do to change things?

Privileges are not about what an individual says or does; rather, they define the scope of possibility for things to be said or done. While many privileges conferred at birth are outside our control, we are able to choose the way in which we use them. This perspective lends itself to an attitude of responsibility rather than guilt. In our formulation, guilt is tied to individual feelings, personal needs and the past; responsibility is oriented towards action and the future.

From Guilt to Responsibility

Solidarity with oppressed social groups is, in some ways, an act of dissent against the dominant discourses and conditions: in principle, the individual acting in solidarity rejects the social distribution of privileges, even while they benefit from it. A man aware of privileges derived from the unequal relations between the sexes can call himself "pro-feminist" or "feminist," yet that declaration does not change the fact that he is privileged through patriarchy. In the same way, a white woman can identify herself as anti-racist, or a Canadian citizen can oppose Canada's military intervention in Afghanistan and defend anti-imperialist ideals.

The understanding of privilege that we are promoting recognizes that certain rights and privileges should be fairly distributed (such as the feeling of security or access to education). That is, while some privileges necessarily involve a relation of oppression (for example, over-representation of one's sex or racialized identity in the media). Others can be viewed as positive advantages or as tools for solidarity action. This is the basis of the responsibility we have as holders of privilege. To

move from awareness of privilege into action, we can identify positive advantages and consider how to use them for social change. This moves us from reaction to a proactive approach.

Taking such responsibility also demands a capacity to accept criticism from others and to understand the sense of resentment and injustice they may feel towards us. Indeed, expressions of hostility can arise when, for example, white tourists visit a poor neighbourhood of Johannesburg whose local residents may openly mock them and tell them to go away. Such expressions are often misunderstood as an example of reverse racism, whereas, a historicized understanding of this type of encounter should reveal that these expressions of hostility are warranted and to be expected given the crass dynamics of spectacle/voyeur that such slum tours reproduce. In the same way, it is not surprising that overseas development workers or solidarity volunteers are sometimes met with distrust and scepticism from the local population. Those with privileges must understand and accept that they may not be warmly welcomed given the circuit of white people coming to "help" their communities and the legacies of colonialism in which these encounters are embedded.

Responsibility is about the need to be accountable. We have inherited powers and privileges historically derived from the suffering of others: so, what do we do about it? If we become aware of the privileges we have as Canadians which have resulted from Canada's colonial policies, as one example, we can assume responsibility for Canada's international interventions and consider how to use these advantages (the possibility of foreign travel, access to international media and power) to challenge these policies and promote a fair re-distribution of privilege. (We develop this argument further in Chapter 3: Canadians in International Solidarity.)

In sum, taking responsibility means adopting a critical attitude toward Canadian foreign interventions. We thus pose several questions in the next chapter: What are the goals of international aid programmes? Does the work of the various Canadian organizations in international development or solidarity coincide with Canadian foreign policy, or do these groups attempt to create a counter-power to Canadian imperialism?

Anonymous, "ADAPT", Justseeds. Adapt is an American organization, created by and for people with physical handicaps, which has existed for more than 20 years.

Golden hair, golden curls, no! I don't have gold! Just pounds of guilt. Guilt of privilege; a refusal of its comfort. But needing and benefiting from it all the same ... Do you know what it is, that wealth I come from? The invasion of objects we can't do without to feed our existence? Have you felt the poverty of human contact? The relations – so distant? The isolation? Don't you realize that I am here to learn how to escape this way of life that you envy, covet, copy, admire so much?

- Extracts from the play, *Rugissement de terre sur conscience en lutte*, Accompaniers' booklet, PASC 2008 [33]

Roger Peet, "Face It ", Justseeds.

Notes

17. The definitions provided in this section are informed by the sources listed at the end of this booklet.

18. The Expert Panel on Accountability Mechanisms for Gender Equality. 2005. Final Report: Equality for Women: Beyond the illusion. Status of Women Canada. [Online]: http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/SW21-134-2006E.pdf (Consulted 17 February 2014.)

19. Interesting to note that the South African system of "apartheid" was based on Canadian residential school systems. See Radio Canada International. Canada and South Africa share a dark past. [Online]: http://www.rcinet.ca/english/archives/column/the-linkafrica/TruthandReconciliationCanadaSouthAfricaResidentialSchoolsAbuses/ (Consulted 10 February 2014) See also Davis, Apartheid Israel, p. 37.

20. Judgements of the Supreme Court of Canada Mercier case (2000). Quebec (Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse) v. Montreal (City); Quebec (Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse) v. Boisbriand (City), [2000] 1 R.C.S. 665. [Online] http://scc.lexum.org/en/2000/2000scc27/2000scc27.html (Consulted 21 January 2014.)

21. International Network on the Disability Creation Process. [Online]: http://www.ripph.qc.ca/?rub2=2&rub=6&lang=en (Consulted 6 March 2014).

22. See Clare.

23. Conradi, "Transsexualisme et transgenre : une menace..."

24. Crenshaw, Race, reform and retrenchment...

25. Noël, L'Intolérance, p. 23.

26. Idem. p. 17.

27. Frankenberg, White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness.

28. Canadian Race Relations Foundation. Glossary and Terms. [Online] http://www.crr.ca/en/library-aclearinghouse/glossary-a-terms-en-gb-1 (Consulted18 December 2013).

29. See for example her first essay, "White privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack".

30. Bastien et al., "La dimension des privilèges dans les luttes contre l'oppression".

31. Maillé, "Réception de la théorie postcoloniale dans le féminisme québécois", p. 106.

32. Mahrouse, La convergence troublante du privilège, du militantisme et du tourisme politique.

33. Original in French, for details, see www.pasc.ca.

34. Heron, "Self-reflection in critical social work practice... ", p. 344.

Chapter 2
The Roots of International Action

> Colonialism and imperialism have not paid their score when they withdrew their flags and police forces from our territories. […] For in a very concrete way Europe has stuffed herself inordinately with the gold and raw materials of the colonial countries: Latin America, China and Africa. […] Europe is literally the creation of the Third World. The wealth which smothers her is that which was stolen from the underdeveloped peoples. […] So when we hear the head of a European state declare, with his hand on his heart, that they must come to the aid of the poor undeveloped peoples, we do not tremble with gratitude.[…] Nor will we acquiesce in the help for underdeveloped countries being a program of 'sisters of charity'. This help should be the ratification of a double realization: the realization by the colonized peoples that it is their due, and the realization by the capitalist powers that in fact they must pay.[35]
>
> - Frantz Fanon

As Frantz Fanon – the figurehead of the anti-colonial movement – pointed out, the countries in a position to "give" are the very ones that profited from centuries of pillaging those now forced to beg or accept "aid." From this point of view, public development aid can only be understood in relationship to the colonial system in which it arose; it meets the political and economic interests of donors. But what about other forms of aid and solidarity? Do they escape unequal North–South power relations? To better reflect on this question, as well as to better understand our own practices, we will begin by examining the roots of international solidarity. What is the history of our interventions? What is the global context in which our actions are situated? What values guide our actions?

We distinguish three broad influences on the practices of international solidarity organizations today: 1) Christian charity and humanitarianism; 2) internationalism; and, 3) development aid. In this chapter, we provide an overview of these three areas of practice and summarize some of the critiques leveled against each. We then outline the specific field of international cooperation as it is now understood.

From the advent of the Christian religion, charity has constituted a high theological virtue consisting of the love of God and one's neighbour in the sight of God. It compensates for the impact of inequality, calling for compassion towards the poor, the dispossessed, the wounded in spirit and body, who are nevertheless invited to bear their wrongs, since redemption only comes with eternal life.[36] **- Véronique Magniny**, *French legal expert [F.T.]*

2.1 From Charity to Humanitarian Action

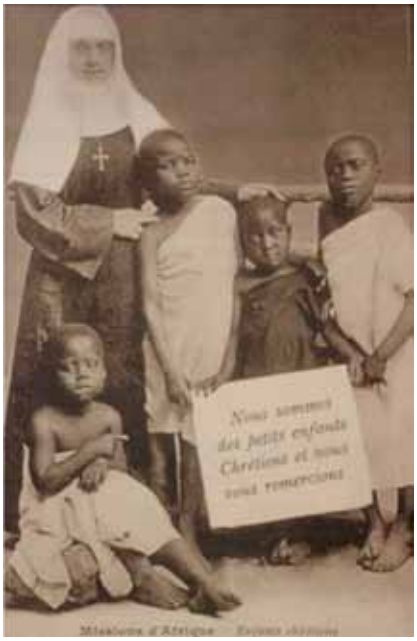
Religious Foundations of Charity

Practices of charity are numerous and diverse; many different approaches and perspectives on charity therefore exist. However, the main criticisms of charity as a practice argue that as a type of social work, it helps to support the status quo by easing the symptoms of inequality without challenging underlying power relations. From this perspective, charity not only protects the inequalities between those giving and receiving charity, but also eases the conscience of the givers.

Others maintain, however, that because it is impossible to overturn the social order in the short-term, charity can be an expression of solidarity in the face of systemic poverty. For example, collecting donations to build a school in occupied Palestinian territory can be seen as an act of solidarity based on a political position rather than as support for the status quo (in this instance, Israeli occupation).

Colonization and Civilizing Missions

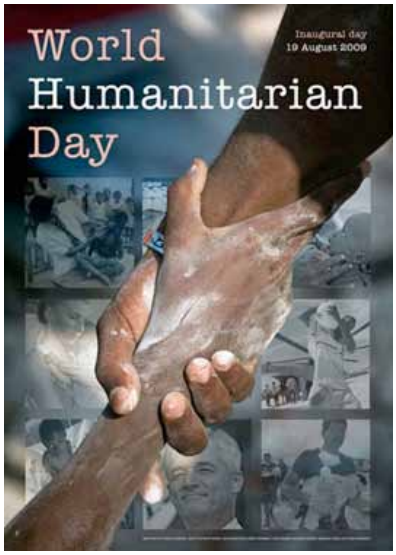
> As soon as the colonized begins to tug on his chains, to worry the colonist, he is handed over to the great thinkers who, in the halls of culture, demonstrate the uniqueness, the wealth of Western values.[37] - Frantz Fanon, 1961



African missions, "We are little Christian children and we thank you."

The charitable practices of Europe have historically been deeply interwoven with the figures of the conquering soldier and the missionary – to such an extent that it is difficult to disassociate the roles of church and state. Driven by imperialist economic interests, whether the conquest of territories, exploitation of natural resources, or accessing cheap labour, the expansion of Europe in the thirteenth-century was "conceived of as a movement of Christian expansion."[38] The crusades against the enemies of Christ (Muslims, Jews, or pagans) were inseparable from the commercial interests of the kingdom (such as gold, territorial control, the slave trade) organizing them. European economic expansion, appropriating the resources of colonized countries and reducing their populations to slavery,[39] resulted in widespread genocide and ecocide[40] across the entire planet. The colonial enterprise was nevertheless construed as a charitable mission, in which the West brought the benefits of civilization to what were believed to be backward and "barbaric" peoples.

Colonial ideology is founded on the West's claim to moral superiority, which conferred a duty to enlighten the "poor natives." This ideology was fed by the humanist philosophy of the enlightenment that relied on reason to achieve "the progress of civilization." For many enlightenment thinkers, reason was attributed to the white, European man, and the non-European "Others" were relegated to the state of nature. Importantly, although white European women were also not seen to possess reason during the Enlightenment, those from the upper classes came to represent morality, were charged with educating the uncivilized masses, and were thus made hallmarks of purity, fidelity to the crown, and progress.



Canadian Coalition of Pacifist Groups, 1985

From Missionaries to Humanitarian Organizations

Charity and evangelism together led to overseas missions and the creation of aid organizations to respond to natural disasters, wars, and famines. For example, at the beginning of the twentieth-century, Quebec parishes recruited around 4000 missionaries per year to serve in their overseas missions.[41] With the secularization of Western societies, charity is no longer the exclusive domain of Christianity, but it remains central to contemporary humanist values. Today's charitable works are carried out both by religious and secular humanitarian organizations.

Neutrality of Humanitarian Action

One of the most important and longstanding humanitarian organizations is the Red Cross. It invited states to sign a convention protecting those wounded in war and achieved its goal in 1864 when the first Geneva Convention was signed, which provided the organization international legal standing and the status of neutral third party.

Humanitarianism flourished between the two world wars. Many large NGOs, still active today, were founded at this time, including the International Rescue Committee (IRC), CARE[43], and the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM). Particularly active during the Cold War, these humanitarian organizations were viewed by some on the left as the vanguard of the Western Bloc, dedicated to upholding the West's claim to moral superiority even as the ideological dominance of the West was threatened by communist ideas promulgated by the Eastern Bloc. Positioning themselves as neutral and without vested interests, humanitarians could rally public support more effectively than from a political position.

Rony Brauman, former president of Médecins sans frontières, wrote,

> When a news report shows a meeting of diplomats in a big hotel, the conflict and its potential solutions seem very abstract. When, on the contrary, in the following way you see children dying of hunger, the wounded in agony, a nurse spoon-feeding an emaciated infant, a surgeon operating... etc., you have both the source of anguish and its resolution, the remedy, because the suffering is immediately met by relief of that suffering. You have a formula that clearly wins out over the political simply through strength of image.[44] - Rony Brauman, President, Médecins sans frontières, 1982 – 1994

Canadian Coalition of Pacifist Groups, 1985

The principle of neutrality, which forms the basis for humanitarian intervention by the Red Cross and many other organizations, was bitterly debated in the aftermath of the Second World War. The Red Cross visited the death camps in Germany at a time when the international community claimed to be unaware of their existence. However, the organization decided not to speak out about the horrors of the genocide in order to preserve its neutrality.[45] A second generation of humanitarian organizations, which emerged at the end of the 1960s in the context of the war in Biafra (Nigeria), distanced themselves from this neutral position. While the new cross-border movement, including the French NGO Médecins sans frontières (Doctors Without Borders), was still intent on rescuing victims, it also sought to denounce war and get public support for its position.[46]

The Red Cross and Colonial Ideology

The humanism of the founding fathers of the Red Cross did not distance itself in any way from the colonial ideology of its times. Its first president, Gustave Maynier, believed that the compassion that inspired the work of the Red Cross was a mark of civilized nations whereas "compassion is unknown among [...] savage tribes, who practice cannibalism [...]. Their very language, it is said, has no words to convey this idea, it is so foreign to them." He added, "[savage peoples] yield unreservedly to their brutal instincts." In his book, *L'Afrique explorée et civilisée*, Maynier launched a call for help for the "black race," concluding, "The white race must make them benefit from the means that modern civilization possesses to better their lot."[42]

Case in Point: Non-neutral actors in Columbia

When Colombia is mentioned in the mass media, the focus is on violence, drug trafficking, and terrorism. The word "war" is often entirely absent. The Colombian state attempts to present itself to the public as neutral: a state forced to deal with illegal armed actors from both the right (paramilitaries) and the left (guerrillas), as well as with corrupt government officials internally. However, the history of paramilitarism in Colombia leads to the conclusion that the Columbian government has, on the contrary, systematically deployed a strategy of integrating irregular units into the national armed forces. The role of these units is to carry out dirty work that international treaties prohibit the state from conducting openly.[47]

From the perspective of the Colombian state's counter-revolutionary strategy, anyone who opposes state policies or demands respect for rights is considered a threat to national security. For example, in 1987, the Columbian counter-revolutionary manual stated that, "two main groups can be distinguished among insurrectionary forces: the insurgent civilian population and the armed group."[48] This doctrine of national security – which led the United States to arm civilians in Latin America against the supposed communist threat (later labeled a terrorist threat), and which now leads Canada to hold secret hearings in the twenty-first century – resulted in the politically-motivated deaths of thousands of people in Colombia.

PASC began our work in Colombia with this approach: first, since 2003, by accompanying communities in resistance in Choco, and then expanding to work with other social organizations and in solidarity with political prisoners. Our choice of organizations and communities to support is grounded in our political analysis of the Colombian conflict and does not come from a need to help victims. PASC's approach to the issue of neutrality can be summarized as follows: we work in political solidarity with victims who have chosen to organize themselves in a process of resistance.

> Direct solidarity means establishing horizontal relationships - not perceiving our work as a relationship of aid but as political support for civil resistance processes and for social struggles waged by people of the South. The goal is to move beyond Band-Aid interventions and build solidarity which addresses the deep causes of poverty and oppression. This requires adopting a political stance: defending rights involves condemning the interests underlying the violations. In PASC's work, it is essential to make the links between forced displacement and counter-land-reforms, to identify the private interests profiting from and sponsoring the violence, to denounce the complicity of our governments – in short, to target war-profiteers. - Extract from *Direct Solidarity through accompaniment of communities in civil resistance*. - PASC, 2007

Many Levels of Compassion

In a global order operating on the basis of a structurally unjust economic, political and cultural system, which accords little value to the lives of two-thirds of humanity, humanitarian interventions relying on force to end human rights violations or to save the lives of the victims of disaster necessarily raise many questions. All the more so because these operations are by those who, in one way or another, contribute to maintaining an international order of exclusion, despite the legal arguments mobilized to justify such interventions.[49]
- Bernard Duterme, *French sociologist*

The idea that a "humanitarian" emergency justifies foreign intervention gains force through discourses of compassion: i.e., "we have to do something!" Furthermore, the role of the media in mobilizing so-called public opinion is considerable. Media outlets function as a mechanism for discriminating among victims of war and natural disasters, who are not all represented in the same way. Some victims appear to be more worthy of international assistance than others. The humanitarian response is neither unconditional nor universal. It is based on criteria which correspond to both the imperialist interests of nation-states and to the social construction of suffering [see section entitled "Images of Suffering"]. Moreover, humanitarian operations are led and controlled by people from countries whose states uphold a system which can, in many ways, be indirectly responsible for or complicit in the factors that lead to the crises.

What Right of Intervention for Humanitarian Action?

Is there such a thing as a "right to intervene"? The concept of civil society humanitarian intervention, widely promulgated by Médecins sans frontières, claims that external intervention is legitimated "not by law but morality, that of extreme emergency which prioritizes saving victims over protecting sovereignty."[50]

In Quebec, this concept became popular during the 1980s when international development and solidarity organizations mobilized public opinion around the famines ravaging parts of Africa. In 1984, in the name of the humanitarian urgency and frustrated by the inaction of the international community, some NGOs such as Development and Peace[51] and Oxfam Québec decided to send humanitarian aid convoys to refugee camps in northern Ethiopia without the consent of the Ethiopian government, which at the time opposed all foreign intervention. In this case, humanitarian intervention was a political act that involved disobeying government officials. As discussed in the previous chapter, there is little doubt that privilege minimized the potential risks for Northern NGOs to challenge the sovereignty of a Southern state, while the inverse is almost unthinkable. One can also make a parallel between this type of humanitarian intervention and acts of civil disobedience, which, appealing to the urgency and seriousness of a situation, deliberately violate the law to achieve a goal. This perspective leads some to suggest that humanitarian intervention by non-governmental forces transcends the power of states and helps build a counter-power.

Twenty thousand tons of bombs were dropped during 78 days of bombardment in Serbia. Ten per cent of the combat and bombing missions were carried out by Canadian planes. Canada's direct involvement in the war against Yugoslavia was diverse and varied but we know that it contributed to at least a dozen major actions. One major contribution was diplomatic: diplomatic support, aid, promotion, public relations in favour of the war.[54] **- Extract from Myths for Profits: Canada's Role in the Industry of War and Peace**

Parallel to the without-borders movement, the concept of humanitarian intervention was debated in the United Nations, and the principle of "free access to victims" was adopted by the UN in 1988. This principle legitimated the recourse of states and multinational institutions to force in situations of emergency.[52] It was evoked to justify military–humanitarian operations in the 1990s in Iraqi Kurdistan, Somalia, ex-Yugoslavia, and Kosovo. It then evolved into the doctrine of "responsibility to protect," which established a normative framework to determine "when it is appropriate for states to take coercive measures – especially military – against another state in order to protect populations at risk."[53]

In this way, the invasion of Afghanistan by the United States in 2001 was backed (eventually) by the United Nations, and the subsequent occupation of Afghanistan by foreign military troops, including Canadian, is viewed as a humanitarian mission to stabilize and rebuild.

On 18 March 2011, the Canadian government announced that six fighter jets were on their way to Libya. On 19 March 2011, a humanitarian bombing was organized by the international coalition created on the initiative of France. The United States took the lead on 20 March 2011; two days later, it negotiated the role that NATO would play for the duration of the operation.

> The US and NATO are supporting an armed insurrection in Eastern Libya, with a view to justifying a 'humanitarian intervention.' This is not a non-violent protest movement as in Egypt and Tunisia. [...] US and NATO military advisers and special forces are already on the ground. The operation was planned to coincide with the protest movement in neighbouring Arab countries. Public opinion was led to believe that the protest movement had spread spontaneously from Tunisia and Egypt to Libya. [...] In Yugoslavia, US–NATO forces triggered a civil war. The objective was to create political and ethnic divisions, which eventually led to the breakup of an entire country. This objective was achieved through the covert funding and training of armed paramilitary armies, first in Bosnia (Bosnian Muslim Army, 1991–95) and subsequently in Kosovo (Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), 1998–1999). In both Kosovo and Bosnia, media disinformation (including outright lies and fabrications) were used to support US–EU claims that the Belgrade government had committed atrocities, thereby justifying a military intervention on humanitarian grounds.[55] - Michel Chossudovsky, Canadian economist

I can tell you that America could not succeed in its objectives of shaping a freer, more prosperous and more secure world without you. [...] As I speak, just as surely as our diplomats and military, American NGOs are out there serving and sacrificing on the front lines of freedom. [...] I am serious about making sure we have the best relationship with the NGOs who are such a force multiplier for us, such an important part of our combat team. [...] Because, you see, it's a partnership, a partnership for those of us in government and those of you represented here this morning out of government, NGOs, non-profits and profits. But all committed to the same, singular purpose to help humankind.[56]
- **Colin Powell**, *former US Secretary of State*

NGOs and Military Forces: Same battle?

Showing the ways in which NGOs are mobilized by various forms of imperial power to participate in their war efforts and the interwoven roles of the military and humanitarian efforts, Eric Marclay, a Canadian researcher, wrote that "the battlefield of the twenty-first century is no longer restricted to soldiers and an improved civil–military cooperation plays an essential role."[57] In Afghanistan, CIDA participates, for example, in the "civil–military cooperation" (CIMIC) and in this way funds private businesses and Canadian NGOs to carry out "reconstruction" projects integral to the counter-insurrectionary strategy of the occupation forces.

> CIMIC projects often entail undertaking or funding small scale projects as a means of winning over the confidence of the community, as such, these projects can look very similar to aid or reconstruction work. While CIMIC activities can be beneficial in the short term (if implemented well), for example, by providing small scale infrastructure projects, they are still nevertheless part of counter-insurgency or military strategy, be it non-kinetic. CIMIC Officers visiting local communities are accompanied by military teams consisting of a commanding officer and up to fifteen soldiers who function as force protection. Not only is the visible armed military presence of CIMIC teams obvious, but CIMIC officers themselves are military personnel and legally defined as combatants.[58] - Eric Marclay, Observatoire sur les missions de paix et operations humanitaires (Chaire Raoul Dandurand).

The Victory of the Arab revolution is a necessary condition for the liberation of the Mediterannean from imperialist influences. Lebanon Arab Socialist Union

In Afghanistan, two members of Action contre la faim (ACF) were kidnapped, three International Rescue Committee (IRC) volunteers killed [in 2008], as well as their driver. In Sri Lanka, 16 members of ACF were killed in 2006. Since 2005, a number of volunteers with Médecins sans frontières (MSF) have been captured in Daghestan and the DRC. These phenomena can be observed in conflict zones where NGOs work alongside the military or blue berets. In these places, humanitarianism offers increasingly less of a safe-passage; in Palestine, Eritrea, Yemen, Sri Lanka and Darfour. Even less so in Iraq and Afghanistan.[60] **- Bernard Hours**, *French anthropologist*

For the security of their staff, to protect humanitarian aid convoys, and to assure access to victims, NGOs in conflict zones often work alongside foreign military forces, and their activities are generally restricted to zones controlled by foreign powers and their local allies. A former humanitarian worker in Afghanistan, Raphaël Gorgeu, noted that NGOs most often work in government-authorized zones: "We definitely met real needs, but only in accessible zones, meaning zones under government control. What about needs in non-governmental zones?"[59]

In the eyes of local populations, military and humanitarian roles are increasingly difficult to differentiate, and the "third party" status that humanitarian actors claim is no longer a guarantee of their security.

In the case of Afghanistan, Ramazan Bachardoust, a former government minister in charge of overseeing humanitarian organizations, believes that violence against NGOs is "inevitable." In 2004, he stated, "I fear the worst for non-governmental organizations in Afghanistan because Afghans are convinced that they have taken all the money destined for the people."[61]

Collusions between humanitarian action and imperialist military intervention have undermined NGO claims to neutrality and, perhaps even more so, universality. To the combatants, humanitarian workers are generally associated – because of their economic status, nationality, and religion – with the Western states occupying their countries.

> The heart of the problem is the lack of political legitimacy of intervention. It assumes a global civil society that does not exist, giving a universal mandate (such as rights) to the interveners whose nationality, resources and ideology are magically neutralized or vanished. They deny the territoriality of human existence, the insertion of people into a political and geographic fabric; that is, among other forms, the sovereign state.[62] - Bernard Hours, French anthropologist

2.2 Internationalism or Solidarity between Peoples

Apart from these military–humanitarian concerns, contemporary international solidarity initiatives abroad are also influenced by certain internationalist currents, which have shaped social movements throughout the world since the nineteenth-century. Internationalism rejects the policies deployed by Northern states to manage the threat that global inequalities represent to the security of wealthy countries [see section entitled "Development Aid and Political Control"*].* It condemns the causes of inequality, rallying social movements in North and South, which share a desire for social change. Initially formulated as a Marxist doctrine of an international union of people across state borders, internationalism today is expressed as political solidarity in global resistance to capitalist globalization.

The International Proletariat

In his inaugural address to the First International (International Workers' Association, London, 1864), Marx declared, "Past experience has shown how disregard of that bond of brotherhood which ought to exist between the workmen of different countries, and incite them to stand firmly by each other in all their struggles for emancipation, will be chastised by the common discomfiture of their incoherent efforts."[63]

This quote summarizes internationalist thinking, developed as a revolutionary process to be carried forward by a global union of proletarians and aiming to establish Communism through the abolition of states and borders. Because the capitalist system naturally tends towards globalization, it cannot be abolished at the national level; thus, the proletarian struggle must play out globally. To Marx and those of the First International (1864–1876), nation-states and borders were the creation of the bourgeoisie. The communist doctrine, based on the community of interests among oppressed peoples, opposes war between (bourgeois) states and nationalisms. This position "against bourgeois wars" was later central to the debates which divided the Second (1889–1914) and Third (1919–1943) Internationals. Some factions refused to participate in the "imperialist wars," while others advocated enrolling in national armies to fight against fascist states and defend the USSR. The internationalist ideas remained alive, however, coming to the fore with the International Brigades, which supported the anti-fascist militias fighting the Francoists during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1938).[64] This internationalist spirit of solidarity mobilized about 59 000 volunteers from 53 different countries.[65] It included 1300 Canadian volunteers, who formed the Mackenzie-Papineau Batallion to join the International Brigades in Spain.[66]

Consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and the international unity of the proletariat! Chinese propaganda poster, 1956

Internationalism and Anti-Imperialism

Anti-imperialist brigades were mobilized during the colonial wars in the 1960s and 1970s (Indochina, Algeria, and others) and to fight the dictatorships in Portugal (Salazar), Greece (the Colonels), and Chile (Pinochet). Numerous brigades were also organized to support national liberation movements and revolutionary projects in the 1980s in Central America, especially in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala.[73] In Quebec, this internationalism took shape in the Centre international de solidarité ouvrière (International Worker Solidarity Centre, CISO),[74] created in 1975 to foster ties between social movements in Quebec and national liberation struggles taking place around the world.

The May 1968 movement made itself felt and the internationalist movement disassociated itself from the authoritarian Marxist decrees which had hitherto shaped its action (international solidarity projects during the Cold War were, to a large extent, shaped by Russian policies).

Anti-imperialist internationalism is still visible today in the form of international accompaniment projects in conflict zones. These new brigades are anti-militarist and openly condemn foreign interests involved in fomenting armed conflict.

The Accompaniment and Solidarity Project with Colombia (PASC) uses a strategy of international accompaniment as a means of protecting local activists and exercising international pressure:

Camilo Torres, Colombian guerilla priest
Alfredo Rostgaard, "Christ guerilla" 1969

Liberation Theology: Internationalism of the Peoples Church

Liberation theology burst onto the scene in the 1960s alongside Third-Worldism ideology and anti-colonial struggles in Africa. Developed in Latin America, this Christian philosophy brings together questions of faith and social change. Similar approaches were developed within Protestantism, for example in South Africa, where Pentecostalism was a force in the struggle against apartheid. Breaking with the fatalism of the church, which promised salvation to the poor in the hereafter and urged them to suffer as Christ did, the belief was that the "Peoples Church" should defend the interests of the poor and support their emancipation.[67]

I am a revolutionary Christian because love of one's neighbour is the essence of Christianity and it is only through revolution that we can obtain well-being for the majority. - Camillo Torres, Colombian priest and guerrilla

In Quebec, many priests and nuns joined this Peoples Church; they created links with national liberation movements in Latin America and developed a Christian activism for social justice. This new international solidarity with oppressed people struggling for their liberation was visible in the 1950s with the creation of Entraide Missionaire (EMI),[68] a group supported by religious communities and involved in education on international issues. Catholic worker and student organizations also emerged, such as Jeunesse ouvrière catholique (Catholic Youth Worker), the Mouvement d'étudiants chrétiens du Québec (Quebec Christian Student Movement), and the Réseau des prêtres et religieux en milieu ouvrier (Network of Priests and Nuns in Working Class Contexts). At the end of the 1960s, the progressive wing of the church gained ground; in 1967 the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace was launched, and in 1972 the Réseau des politisés chrétiens (Network of Politicized Christians) was established. In the 1970s, leftist Christians in Quebec came together in new international solidarity formations such as the Comité chrétien pour les droits humains en Amérique latine (Christian Committee for Human Rights in Latin America, now CDHAL),[69] and the Comité Québec–Puebla.[70]

The Peoples Church was very active in Latin American struggles against dictatorship. It remains alive in many social movements in the region today. The Landless Workers Movement in Brazil and the Intercongregational Commission for Justice and Peace in Colombia are two examples of these collectives.[71] In Quebec, EMI, Development and Peace, and CDHAL are still active in international solidarity. More than forty Christian organizations working for social justice in Quebec are members of the Réseau oecuménique justice et paix (Ecumenical Network for Justice and Peace, ROJeP).[72]

> International accompaniment is one of our most important activities. Accompaniment consists of establishing an on the ground presence alongside social activists and communities at risk. Coupled with coordinated political pressure, the presence of foreign observers in Colombia can be a strong deterrent for perpetrators of political violence. In this way, accompaniment helps create space for social activists to carry out their work, while increasing their legitimacy in the eyes of local authorities. Accompaniment also facilitates dialogue between social movements in the North and South, building solidarity between the two. [75]

Before PASC, beginning in 1992, Project Accompaniment Quebec-Guatemala (PAQG)[76] adopted the same strategy.

The International Solidarity Movement (ISM) also organizes brigades to create an international presence in occupied Palestinian territories:

> In line with international law and various UN resolutions, we recognize the Palestinian right to resist Israeli violence and occupation by all legitimate, armed means. However, we believe that non-violence can be a powerful weapon to fight oppression and we are committed to the principles of non-violent resistance.[77]

The Iraq Solidarity Project (ISP) was formed in Montreal in 2002 in response to the threat of military invasion of Iraq by the United States and its allies. The ISP carried out several missions in 2003 and 2004 to "monitor occupation forces and reconstruction projects in Iraq and provide international accompaniment to Iraqis under occupation."[78] The ISP ended its activities in 2004 for security reasons.

Finally, Peace Brigades International (PBI),[79] founded in 1981 in Canada, is another example of these new "brigades." PBI adopts a horizontal structure with consensus decision-making. Activists from diverse countries come together on the basis of principles of non-violence, non-intervention, and non-partisanship to carry out international accompaniment projects at the request of organizations facing political repression.

It is important to highlight the fact that these projects are generally the initiative of Western activists and usually deploy from North to South. For example, in their study of PBI, Mahoney and Eguren question the claim to equality within PBI; for instance, only citizens of certain countries have recourse to diplomatic pressure, which assures their security on the ground and allows them to safely engage in acts of civil disobedience.[80] The same critique can be applied to all international accompaniment initiatives.

El Salvador – no to US intervention. Unified Committee in Solidarity with El Salvador (by Jean-Paul Faniel), 1981

The End of Ideology?

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and military interventions, camouflaged as humanitarian, in Somalia and the Balkans, internationalism underwent a revival, which was reflected in debates dividing the "NGO community." According to Marxist thinker Daniel Bensaïd, these tensions were expressed as "certain sectors distancing themselves from military intervention and the recuperation of humanitarianism by the state; as well as a tension between NGOs inclined to institutionalism and an attitude of 'moral supremacy' and others more sensitive to social critique."[84] Many anti-imperialist activists and intellectuals view the multiplication of NGOs in international cooperation as a new strategy of intervention. The aim is to supplant post-colonial states through the administration of aid and to facilitate the control of human and natural resources in the so-called Third World.

The International of Resistance

Third gathering of the Zapatista peoples and the peoples of the world, 2007

The idea of an International was revived in the 1990s. The movement was inspired largely by a call launched by the Zapatistas two years after their armed uprising in the mountains in southern Mexico. A gathering, referred to as "The First Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and against Neoliberalism" took place in Chiapas in 1996. It gave rise to an historic call for an "international of hope" to counter "the international of terror representing neoliberalism." [85] The nebulous term international was defined at the meeting as follows:

> a collective network of all our specific struggles and resistance. An intercontinental network of resistance against neo-liberalism, an intercontinental network for humanity. This intercontinental network will be the means by which different resistances will support each other.[86] - First Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and against Neoliberalism, 1996

The Zapatista uprising took place on 1 January 1994, the day the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) entered into force. Protests coordinated through this international resistance targeted economic agreements and summits of economic and political elites. The year 1999 witnessed the Battle of Seattle, the high point of the mass antiglobalization mobilizations, as well as the second Peoples' Global Action (PGA) conference, this time in Bangalore, India. This "movement

In its early stages, PASC restricted accompaniment to communities of Afro-descent in the Chocó province of Colombia. The first time a Black person approached PASC as a potential delegate, we were forced to acknowledge our whiteness. Up to then, all PASC accompaniers had white skin. We believed that it would be more dangerous for someone with black skin to do accompaniment. An important part of the protection strategy of accompaniment is visibility; armed forces must immediately realize that there is an international presence in the community. Much as members of PASC do not like it, the skin colour of a white accompanier, distinguishing her from the local population, provides this visibility. Since then, all PASC accompaniers take protective measures, such as wearing a white shirt identifying our organization, to make the presence of a Canadian more immediately obvious.

of movements" connected mass mobilizations around the world. In Canada, for example, we had the Summit of the Americas in Quebec in 2001, the WTO Mini-Ministerial in Montreal in 2003, and the G20 Summit in Toronto in 2010.

According to Pierre Rousset, what characterizes this new internationalism is mainly "the feeling of an immediate community of struggle in all parts of the word"[87]:

> Against privatization, the dismantling of public services, favours for the agro-industry, calling social rights into question [...] struggles are taking place in North, South, East and West, often with very similar slogans. This has never been the case to such an extent in the past. [...] It is no longer just about being in solidarity with "the other", but about working together in the same resistance against the same policies. [...] Neoliberal globalization not only brings different parts of the world together, it also brings together diverse fields of struggle (social, ecological, cultural).[88] - Pierre Rousset, International Institute for Research and Education (Amsterdam)

Many movements and global organizations identify with this International Resistance. La Via Campesina,[89] for example, is a coalition of peasant organizations from 69 different countries, while the World March of Women organizes actions on all continents that "aim at political, economic and social change [and which] are defined around the globalization of solidarities."[90] Peoples' Global Action (PGA),[91] describing itself as a "structure for horizontal coordination in support of struggles against capitalism, imperialism and all systems of oppression," and the Hemispheric Social Alliance,[92] which formed to oppose the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), are two other examples of this new internationalism.

The mission of the World Social Forum (WSF)[93] is to provide a meeting place for this international resistance. Self-proclaimed as a "process to create another world" and not simply an event, the WSF is said to be plural, diversified, non-confessional, non-governmental, and non-partisan. The WSF does serve as a space of convergence to "struggle against the system" on an anti-imperialist basis, yet it can't be denied that those with financial means are very much in the majority in this space. Do the most marginalized – those without whom creating "another world" remains an illusion –

Let's march against the occupation (of Afghanistan).
Coalition de Québec pour la paix (Quebec coalition for peace), Coalition Guerre à la guerre (Coalition war on war), 2007

"Bring the war home! Target war-profiteers!"

> A powerful private arms industry is prospering at the expense of taxpayers in all countries. In Quebec, for example, big companies like Bombardier, CAE, SNC-Lavalin, Bell Helicopter, Oerlikon, etc., have already begun to benefit from very lucrative contracts ($849 million to Bell Helicopter and up to $750 million to Oerlikon) with Canada's increased military budget.[81] - Fédération des femmes du Québec

Some groups believe the best way of countering the war effort is to "bring it home," symbolically at least, by confronting Canadian businesses that continue to profit from war and politicians who send the soldiers. Guerre à la guerre, for example, aimed to "denounce Canadian intervention in Afghanistan and the imperialist goals of western powers involved in this conflict."[82] This network used a variety of pressure tactics such as actions against recruitment in schools, a letter to families of Valcartier soldiers urging the soldiers not to deploy, and a protest in June 2007 as the Valcartier troops were leaving. Another group, Block the Empire Montreal, confronted war profiteers by disrupting conferences organized by these companies, think tanks, and politicians. The group also promoted an anti-colonial analysis of war by, for example, organizing anti-imperialist contingents in anti-war marches.[83]

Logo of the World March of Women

have real possibilities of access and participation? The WSF is characterized by an overrepresentation of white people and the "privileged resistance." It is obviously easier for a Quebec NGO or even an individual Canadian activist to find the money to attend these forums than it is for a peasant organization with scant economic resources. The former also have greater access to international networks (via the internet, knowledge of English, etc.).

African feminists, moreover, point out the masculinist ethos of these anti-globalization spaces:

> During the African Social Forum [ASF] in 2003, women pushed for a resolution requiring a 50% representation of women in all processes and activities of the ASF. However, this rate is far from being realized and the ASF continues to be a space largely dominated by men, while mass mobilization by grassroots organizations in the delegates' countries of origin are undertaken by women.[94] - Amanda Alexander, researcher at University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

An NGO-ization of Social Movements?

Within the left, the debate around NGOs is fractious. While some view these new forms of organizations as a way to support social movements, through the transfer of resources and expertise, others denounce the process of NGO-ization of social movements as tending to replace confrontational social forces with a new political elite (composed of NGO "experts"), which "negotiates" on behalf of social movements without being able to advance fundamental demands for justice and social change. At the global level, the relationship between NGOs and social movements is even more troubled because a majority of large NGOs come from the North while social movements are most strongly rooted in the South. For example, an examination of NGOs with UN accreditation – that is, those allowed to participate in consultations organized by the different UN organs – shows that only 251 out of 1500 come from the global South, barely 16%.[95] This overrepresentation of Northern NGOs is a determinant factor in how demands are formulated at the international level. While these NGOs often present themselves as "voices for the voiceless" of the South, they cannot adopt the radical analyses developed by Southern social movements without endangering their own funding or their privileged access to decision-makers.

We are ever aware of the risks of co-optation when participating in multilateral fora or in institutional reform initiatives. We enter such engagements only after much internal debate and clarification of our purpose in doing so. And we bring our engagements to an abrupt end, especially in institutional reform initiatives, if it becomes clear that these entail little possibility of achieving substantive policy change.[101] ***- Claire Slatter****, Coordinator, DAWN*

The Jubilee 2000 campaign offers an important illustration of the gap between campaigns led by NGOs in the North and the more radical analyses of activists in the global South. Launched by British churches and then taken up by different NGOs in the global North, the international campaign aimed to get a commitment from G8 leaders to cancel the debts of the poorest countries. In working toward this goal, the Jubilee 2000 coalition presented the issue of debt as a moral question and called on the compassion of creditors:

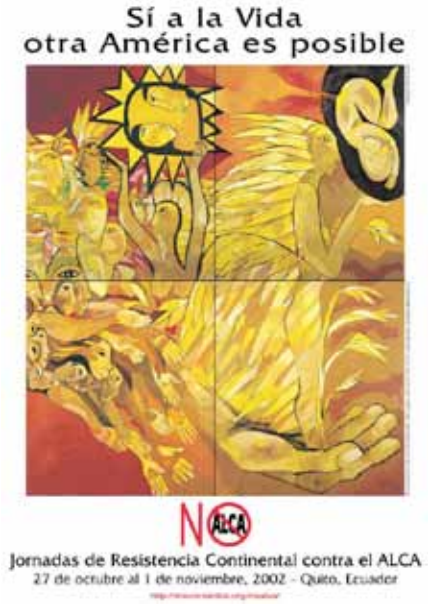
> Is it moral to make so much money from increasing interest rates charged on loans taken by countries that are in desperate economical need [...]? Should these foreign creditors not offer compassion by either bringing down the interest rates or cancelling the debt completely?[96]

The Southern organizations that formed Jubilee South were critical of this rhetoric. They noted that by sidelining the causes of Southern debt, it simultaneously

sanctioned the phenomena. The central question for these organizations was not a moral one; rather, they focused on the source of the illegitimate debt: how and why have some countries accumulated such high levels of unpayable debt?[97]

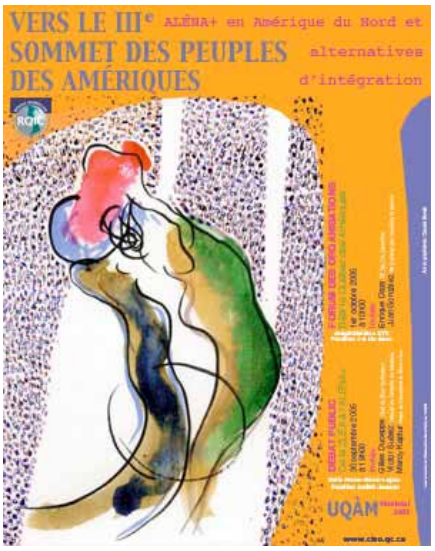
Jubilee South took the perspective that Southern countries were not indebted but in fact the creditors of the North's wealth. The tables were turned. It was not a matter of G8 countries cancelling illegitimate debt (imposed by financial institutions in their service) but of their paying their own debts to Southern countries. By uncovering the political positions underpinning the different campaigns on Southern debt, Jubilee South developed a serious critique of the campaigns led by Northern NGOs:

> Campaigns, as often initiated in rich countries by well-meaning persons, can fall prey to the politics of asking for too little. [...] [T]here are two considerations here: first the problem of debt and impoverishment cannot be seriously addressed, let alone sustainably resolved, outside the framework of principled politics. And second, history would also teach us that power concedes nothing on its own volition but is more often than not the product of putting heat on the street. It is the people that empower the negotiators and advocates, not the other way around. [...] And if [the] suffering, pain and sense of moral outrage is not taken to the street and the negotiation table, NGOs or campaigns, like governments in the South can become, consciously or not, co-agents of system reproduction celebrating "shifts" that have little impact on the ground.[98]



Yes to life. Another America is possible. Continental Campaign against the FTAA, 2002

The Jubilee South activists' reflections on the strategy touched on a second aspect of the process of NGO-ization, such as the tactics NGOs use to influence the program or agenda of decision-makers. Social movements make use of other pressure tactics – such as mass mobilization – to make themselves heard by political and economic elites. The goal is to create power over power-holders and force them to cede on some issues to maintain the social peace. NGOs, on the other hand, generally enter into dialogue with decision-makers, without the balance of power necessary for negotiation. While the strength of social movements is their capacity for mass mobilization, NGOs rely on their capacity to mobilize resources (budget, support of public figures, professional staff, etc.). NGOs, with the capacity to carry out large media campaigns (often conceived by advertising experts, lawyers, and consultants), can lobby public decision-makers in a sustained way. However, these NGOs are largely funded by the same public (and private) decision-makers whom they claim to influence. This poses a double-sided problem: on one side, lack of balance of power; on the other, demands tilted towards the political programme of decision-makers.



Towards the 3rd Summit of the Peoples of the Americas.
Réseau Québecois contre l'intégration continentale (Quebec network against continental integration), 2005

From this perspective, the process of NGO-ization of social movements shapes social demands. Only demands deemed admissible, or those that elites can meet without jeopardizing the system maintaining their positions of power, pass through this filter and enter into the public sphere for debate and decision. For example, the Parliament of Canada was able to debate the question of debt decreases for the poorest countries but would be unlikely to address the issue of Canadian debt to countries in which its businesses profit at the expense of the population and environment.[99]

Some intellectuals believe that the growing presence of NGOs in the public sphere is effectively co-opting the voices of grassroots social movements. Choudry and Kapoor view NGO-ization as being "the ways in which grassroots and movement

Against capitalist globalization, solidarity among peoples. Réseau no pasaran (No pasaran network), France

Recently many women's organizations involved in trade issues debated a proposal from one of our partners from the North. They sought our support in creating a committee on gender issues at the General Council of the WTO. […] I responded to this "sister" […], I said to her, "I refuse to sanction something that will give more legitimacy to the WTO." This is exactly how they did it with the World Bank structural adjustment programmes: put women into it, add the gender question and you will be politically correct, it will seem nice, etc. I refuse to do that, I am not interested in integrating the problem of women and gender issues into something fundamentally perverse.[103]
- Zo Randriamaro, *Réseau genre et réformes économiques en Afrique (GERA – Network on gender and economic reforms in Africa), Ghana*

voices are often overwritten or otherwise marginalized in the context of purportedly 'alternative' civil society networks and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)."[100]

Moreover, meetings between decision-makers and NGOs allow the government to ignore the demands of social movements and announce that they are "listening to civil society" and "consulting the public".

The Civil Society Policy Forums, organized jointly by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), speak volumes about this strategy. According to the civil society liaison unit of the World Bank and the IMF, the forum in Washington in October 2010 was a great success: more than "400 civil society representatives from more than 62 countries" participated in this "fundamental dialogue."[102] But who do these NGOs represent? Who are these actors from 62 countries who believe it is useful to engage in a "fundamental dialogue" with financial institutions to help them shape neo-liberal policies? Mass mobilizations in all parts of the world show that social movements are actually seeking to abolish these institutions, which serve the private interests of multinationals.

If the process of NGO-ization is a selective filter, then funding and lobbying are a trap. Social demands are deradicalized and reformist demands are prioritized, which helps reproduce the current system of power.

Some intellectuals and activists have also expressed concern about the practical process of co-optation of social leaders by NGOs. NGOs recruit a large part of their staff from grassroots organizations, often attracting "the best" or those who take on key roles because of their organizing and mobilizing skills or the analysis they have developed. Once in the NGO world, these activists moderate their discourse to bring it into line with positions taken by their new employer. Moreover, they often find themselves working in hierarchical structures far from practices developed by grassroots activists.

> The international development industry has now generally become a democratic mess often running counter to feminist ways of being and thinking. Canadian [NGOs] as a whole function as very gender specific spaces reflecting a hierarchical and technocratic organizational culture contrary to feminist goals of social transformation. We are talking about an organizational culture that privileges men in mentality, recruitment, work conditions, structures and procedures.[104] - Sarah Hendriks, Advisor on equality between the sexes and HIV/Aids, Plan Canada

Finally, this activist employment generally saps the energy of these former social movement activists, leading them to abandon grassroots organizing. Some activists in the South openly call the phenomenon a "brain-drain," which bleeds social movements to fatten a new "NGO elite."

For the most part, NGOs administer services – a role that the NGOs themselves say should be filled by the state. The presence of NGOs in social services accompanies neo-liberal policies privatizing services and minimizing the social role of the state. Trapped in the "management of poverty," NGOs provide relief as the state withdraws, offering local populations small-scale, temporary solutions. These projects can fragment mass mobilizations, which demand change at a national level and call on the government to take responsibility. The flood of development NGOs into Southern countries to manage, for example, a micro-credit project here or a school there, has thus been interpreted by critical intellectuals as a neo-

liberal offensive aimed at facilitating the acceptance of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) imposed by the IMF. From this perspective, the multiplication of development NGOs is part of a new world order dominated by the Washington Consensus.

NGO-ization of politics threatens to turn resistance into a well-mannered, reasonable, salaried, 9-to-5 job. With a few perks thrown in. Real resistance has real consequences. And no salary.[105]
- Arundhati Roy, *Indian activist and intellectual*

Volunteer activism or social engagement as a job?

This question is a recurrent subject of debate within PASC. Paid organizing for PASC raises concerns about concentration of information in the hands of employees, possibly leading to a professionalization and hierarchy in the collective and the disengagement of non-remunerated members, who would become simple volunteers. There is also concern about bureaucratization and the potential that fundraising to maintain paid positions would consume time that could otherwise be spent fulfilling the organization's mandate. The evolution of the project should remain tied to political objectives and not the availability of funding.

However, in order to live, unpaid PASC members must work as staff at community organizations or elsewhere and devote their "leisure time" to activism. This translates into a lack of time and energy for PASC, which is necessarily subordinated to the various life projects of its members. Paid positions would allow time to be freed up for fulfilling PASC's mandate and would provide a certain continuity.

In other words, would paid work make the project sustainable or distort its objectives?

Here, another question arises: should money for an activist job be considered financial support for activists, as, for instance, an amount to be divided among as many as possible or as a salary? The latter involves a minimal responsibility to create decent working conditions and avoid participating in the impoverishment of activists. This issue continues to be debated in community groups in Quebec. Some consider the wages terrible because they are far less than what civil servants earn; others believe that payroll consumes too much of operational budgets while the beneficiaries of the organizations often live below the poverty line.

2.3 Official Development Assistance (ODA) A Foreign Policy Tool for Rich States

> **Official development assistance (ODA),** legally established in Canada by the Official Development Assistance Accountability Act, is defined as follows: "The purpose of Canada's ODA is to support sustainable development in developing countries, in order to reduce poverty and to contribute to a more secure, equitable and prosperous world."[106]

Development aid takes many forms: bilateral (government to government), multilateral (for example, aid channeled through United Nations programmes or international financial institutions), and aid to support the initiatives of non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, and the Canadian private sector in "developing countries."

Fight Fear. Fight Distress. Fight Chaos. Canadian Armed Forces advertising, 2011

The origins of international aid programmes can be traced to the end of the Second World War, with the creation of, in 1944, the Bretton Woods international financial institutions (the World Bank and the IMF) and, in 1947, the Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Europe. The economic aid the United States offered Europe was aimed at opposing Communism and projecting the hegemony of the new superpower. In the Cold War, aid became a tool used by both superpowers to expand their areas of influence. The rivalry between the US and the USSR did not lead to direct armed confrontation but, from the end of the 1940s, played out through development programmes in the Third World.[107] Many African countries were achieving independence during this period, and the withdrawal of colonial states was accompanied by the growing presence of international organizations and aid programmes from the former metropoles. ODA was also a way of increasing economic power; it allowed access to natural resources for industry, such as oil, as well as the penetration of new consumer markets and investment in new industries in so-called emerging markets. The fusion of the ideas of national security (towards the communist enemy) and development, still important today, began to take shape.

Aid and Political Control

The first critiques of international aid denounced its instrumentalization for political ends. For example, the main beneficiaries of Canadian bilateral aid were selected according to three criteria, one of which was an evaluation of their alignment with Canadian foreign policy.[108] Mr. Severino, Executive Director of l'Agence Française de Développement and former high-level official at the World Bank, sees this as business as usual, arguing that international aid is primarily an instrument of political control by rich countries:

> For over 30 years, development aid has essentially been perceived by the political elite as an instrument to control the spread of Communism. […] Politics is not dead and development aid remains one of the few tools that the chancellors and presidential palaces of the world possess when international stability is threatened. It is not something to get angry about. Rather, the definition of aid needs to be nuanced; economic objectives have always only constituted part of its goals. Public funds are regularly used in developing countries to 'contain', 'stabilize' and even 'buy' situations, policies and populations.[109] - J.-M. Severino, Central Europe Director and then vice-president for Asia, World Bank (1996–2000)

From the containment of Communism to the War on Terror, security and development are inextricably linked.[110] In recent years, following the attacks of September 11 2001, states and international institutions began to re-emphasize the possible links between underdevelopment, poverty, and terrorism.

CIDA's[112] mandate in fact includes support for "international efforts to reduce threats to Canadian and international security,"[113] and its work is supposed to be integrated into the 3D framework of diplomacy, defence, and development.[114] While the harmonization of different aspects of Canadian foreign policy is not surprising, it wasn't until 1995 that ODA was formally written into Canada's foreign policy mission statement.[115] ODA was defined as having three objectives: 1)

increase Canadian prosperity, 2) contribute to a more secure world, and 3) promote Canada's values to the world.[116]

This 2005 foreign policy statement clearly identifies underdevelopment as a threat to Canadian prosperity and security:

> Failure to achieve significant political, economic, social and environmental progress in the developing world will have an impact on Canada in terms of both our long-term security and our prosperity. [118]

In this way, Canada's military occupation of Afghanistan became synonymous with development:

> All Canadians can be proud of our accomplishments in Afghanistan, such as ensuring young girls are able to receive an education in safety and security, said Minister Verner.[119] Our integrated approach of development, diplomacy and defence is helping the Afghan people stabilize their country, establish the rule of law, and ensure that Afghanistan never again becomes a haven for terrorists.[120] - CIDA press release, 2006

Reconstruction projects carried out by Canadian businesses or non-profits in Afghanistan are part of a strategy of political stabilization. At the same time, they operate within a (capitalist) vision of development aid, which aims to insert Afghanistan into the global economy:

> This is how Afghan agriculture is transformed from subsistence agriculture into an agro-exporter model inserted into the global economy. Driven by the private sector and NGOs financed by international or government agencies, these projects have led, for example, to the cultivation and production of cumin, saffron, apples, various essential oils, high-end flowers and fruit (rose-water is the best example). Husbandry is directed towards the production of cashmere for export.[121] - Gabriel L'Écuyer, Chaire Nycole Turmel, UQAM

Moreover, the simple fact that all so-called reconstruction aid is channeled through foreign companies and international NGOs undermines national development. Recognizing this, Ramazan Bachardoust, the Afghan minister in charge of overseeing humanitarian organizations, announced in December 2004 his intention of banning almost two thousand NGOs accused of dilapidating international aid funds: "These NGOs do not cooperate with the government or authorities in Afghanistan, they do not provide a report of the results of their work [...] they work for their own profit."[122]

Diplomacy, Defence, and Development

Development aid and diplomacy appear to be insufficient to guarantee the prosperity and security of Canada. While the country is not openly at war, the Canadian Armed Forces website tells us, "On any given day, more than 1,300 Canadian soldiers, sailors, airmen and airwomen are currently serving with task forces deployed on overseas operations."[117]

Development has to be the first line of defence for a collective security system that takes prevention seriously. Combating poverty will not only save millions of lives but also strengthen States' capacity to combat terrorism, organized crime and proliferation. Development makes everyone more secure.[111]

- High-level Panel Report on Threats, Challenges and Change, *United Nations, 2004*

Favianna Rodriguez, Women of Colour against War, 2001

His remarks sparked an outcry and the minister was forced to resign. He and his predecessor Hâdji Mohammad Mohaqqeq believed that, by entrusting the reconstruction of the country to NGOs rather than Afghan businesses, the international community had made a grave error. "Afghan businesses have no chance of obtaining a market. The game is rigged from the outset, with competition from humanitarian organizations which don't pay taxes and international businesses". [123]

NGOs are no strangers to criticisms about the political instrumentalization of ODA; they manage part of these funds,[124] and leaders often perceive them as the executive agents of their foreign policy. [See section entitled "International Cooperation Organizations"]

The Concept of "Development"

> We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. [...] Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas. [...] I believe that we should make available to peace-loving peoples the benefits of our store of technical knowledge in order to help them realize their aspirations for a better life. And, in cooperation with other nations, we should foster capital investment in areas needing development. [...] Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace.[125] - Inaugural address of Harry Truman, President of the United States, 20 January 1949

Beyond critiques of the political interests guiding ODA, the very idea of "development" deserves scrutiny. The concept of development made its appearance in Western imaginary in the mid-twentieth century, notably in US President Harry S. Truman's 1949 inaugural address. He used the word "underdevelopment," creating the image of a simple delay in a natural process of capitalist development. Northern countries then discovered world poverty, an essential trait attributed to the Third World, which was viewed as a monolithic bloc. The development discourse constructed in this era was to prove influential whereby economic development was presented as the sole solution to humanity's diverse ills.

Critiques of development are many. Some censure the binary thinking which divides the world into "developed" and "underdeveloped" as an echo of the colonial formations of the "civilized" and "savage."

Other critiques attack the idea that development is linear, imitating the history of capitalist countries, or the "evolution" of a so-called traditional society to a mass consumer society through a process of industrialization. Dependence theorists point out the inherent historical contradiction: the causes of "underdevelopment" (pillage of resources, unequal terms of trade, debt, etc.) can be attributed to the development of the capitalist powers. According to this view of the global economy, development could not exist without underdevelopment. Similarly, proponents of de-growth point out the ecological limits of infinite growth and reject the assumption that the entire global population can benefit from consumer society.

Policies imposed by wealthy nation-states and international institutions to "develop" economies attract the most virulent critiques. Many dissenting voices in the global South are raised against development aid policies that keep the

Underdevelopment began, then, on January 20, 1949. On that day, two billion people became underdeveloped. In a real sense, from that time on, they ceased being what they were, in all their diversity, and were transmogrified into an inverted mirror of other's reality: a mirror that belittles them and sends them off to the end of the queue, a mirror that defines their identity, which is really that of a heterogeneous and diverse majority, simply in terms of a homogenizing and narrow minority.[126]
- Gustavo Esteva, *Mexican intellectual*

The very term development aid re-institutes, under the auspices of solidarity, the hierarchical categories inherited from this [colonial] past. How could it have been otherwise once an opposition like "developed/ underdeveloped" was legitimized, even for the most laudable reasons? The economic criteria defining "least developed countries", like anthropological criteria underlying "primitive peoples" belong to the vocabulary of the dominant.[127]
- Rony Brauman, *former president of Médecins sans frontières*

economies of Southern countries dependent on international markets dominated by rich countries of the global North.

Sustainable Development and Neo-Liberalism

Better to condemn a tool used to dominate peoples and weaken struggles for freedom than to try to reform it, while those who control it are not reformed. A rejection of this form of aid is far more damaging to the funders than to the supposed beneficiaries.[128] **- Ghazi Hidouci,** *former Minister of Finance, Algeria (1989–1991)*

The debt crisis in the 1980s in Southern countries and the emergence of environmentalism on the international stage helped forge a new concept: sustainable development. In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development tabled the Brundtland Report, also known as *Our Common Future*. It formulated a new goal for development as "meeting the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future."[129] The report came out at the time that the Washington Consensus was forming. The 1989 Washington Consensus was the starting point for neo-liberal policies imposed through SAPs in the South and austerity plans in the North. To access loans managed by international financial institutions (such as the World Bank and the IMF), Southern countries are forced to accept a series of measures including the devaluation of national currency; export promotion (at the expense of crops for the domestic market); trade liberalization; removal of restrictions on foreign investments; and the privatization of state businesses, infrastructure, and social services.[130]

The concept of sustainable development prioritizes small-scale projects of so-called civil society actors (small and medium private businesses, cooperatives, non-governmental organizations, etc.) over large national projects directed by the state. It fits well with neo-liberal policies aimed at dismantling the social role of the state through the privatization of social programmes and the development of the private sector. Contrary to the belief that sustainable development constitutes an alternative to neo-liberalism, new international financial institutions policies adopt sustainable development goals to encourage local, private-run projects over national social security policies.

Fifteen years after the UN General Assembly adopted the famous Declaration on the Right to Development [1986] - the feeble result of thirty years of effort by newly decolonized countries to re-balance the world, end imperialism and promote another kind of development - doesn't the unreserved promotion of "international trade as the engine of development" in various key texts of the General Assembly of the United Nations [...] lead to the sad conclusion that the majority of governments of member states, as well as the apparatus of the organization itself, identify with the interests of multinationals, relegating all other considerations to second place?
Florian Rochat, *former director CETIM (Europe-Third World Centre)*

Some argue that this concept, despite the best intentions of international development NGOs, has been skillfully used to shore up the ideology of development that functions to integrate new ecological concerns and co-opting criticisms of the classic development model (i.e., depletion of resources, breakdown of projects in the long-term, bureaucratic burden of large scale-projects). Then executive director of Renault, Louis Schweitzer, admitted as much in the periodical *Enjeux Les Echos* in December 2004 when explaining that "sustainable development is neither a utopia nor a protest but the condition of survival in the market economy."

In its July 2004 special issue on "future professions," the French magazine *Capital* described a "sustainable development officer" in the following terms:

> Idealists need not apply! The sustainable development officer is not there to save the planet but to ensure that the company respects new standards of quality and the environment. And to avoid social conflict and arguments with consumers. [131] [For more on sustainable development, see section entitled "World Citizenship"].

In the past decade, national and multilateral agencies have been influenced by the Millennium Summit, which took place in the year 2000 at the United Nations headquarters in New York. It adopted eight millennial goals to achieve before 2015.[132] With these new goals, wealthy countries revised their development aid policies to become more "efficient" and "better targeted."[133] However, as previously

Henri Eveleigh, United Nations, 1947

seen, these millennial goals took second place to the security and prosperity priorities of Northern countries.

Companies financed by government international aid programmes see in development goals a tempting prospect for economic growth. Pierre Duhaime, then head of the Quebec engineering firm SNC-Lavalin and the main subcontractor for CIDA infrastructure projects in the global South, stated, "Infrastructure needs, especially in emerging countries, will be an incredible source of growth for many years to come."[136]

From the perspective of many from the global South, things look very different. Fifty years of so-called development policies have failed to stop the wealth gap from growing. Many voices cite the "bankruptcy of development" and call for new paradigms. Supachai Panitchpakdi, former secretary-general of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD),[137] paints a somber picture:

> Traditional models applied to least developed countries (LDCs) [growth driven by trade] don't seem to have worked very well [...] over the last 30–40 years, the number of LDCs has doubled [from 25 in 1971 to 49 today], clearly showing that the situation has deteriorated. Even the number of people living below the poverty line has doubled since the 1980s. [138]

In short, fifty years after Frantz Fanon's incisive pronouncements, we must admit that the mechanisms of domination in the post-colonial world have not waned in the new world order, but in fact, have become more sophisticated. Despite (or because of) a half-century of international aid policies for development, economic inequalities between North and South have increased, and poor countries are subject to the decrees of international financial institutions controlled by Western powers, which still colonize lands, peoples, cultures, and even ideas.

Development Aid: Sustainable for whom?

One of CIDA's interventions in Colombia consisted of pushing through changes that promoted "sustainable development " practices to mining legislation. The agency also pursued the explicit goal of encouraging foreign investment – specifically Canadian – in the country.

In collaboration with the Colombian Ministry of Mines and Energy, the Canadian Energy Research Institute (CERI) was mandated to help draft a new mining code. This international aid project was carried out with CIDA funding and donations from private sponsors such as BP Canada Energy, Cargill, Chevron Canada, Conoco, Dow Chemical Company, Mobil, Shell, Total Fina ELF, UNOCAL, etc.

After unsuccessful attempts between 1996 and 1998 to have the new mining code adopted, it was finally approved in 2001 as Law 685. CERI had hired Martinez-Cordoba and Associates law firm to work on the new legislation. At the time, this law firm represented more than half of the Canadian mining companies registered with the national registry of mining businesses.

The legislative changes to the mining code effectively banned artisanal mining on the grounds that it did not meet standards of sustainable development. Yet, paradoxically, the mining megaprojects of private companies did meet sustainable development standards as defined by the new legal framework. On the ground, this meant that mining families practicing small-scale exploitation for generations were pushed off their lands in favour of large-scale exploitation by foreign companies (including many Canadian companies).[135]

2.4 International Cooperation Organizations

There are about 160 000 NGOs in Canada, one of the highest ratios per resident in the global North. Of these, at least 500 are dedicated to international development.[139] NGOs represent 7% of the Canadian economy.[140] There was an astonishing growth of NGOs (including international development organizations) during the second half of the last century.

> International Cooperation Organizations

In Quebec, the term "cooperation" has largely replaced "development". According to the Quebec Ministry of International Relations, "International Cooperation Organizations" are non-profit organizations with headquarters in Quebec or whose Quebec office has control over the selection, management, and implementation of projects in less advantaged countries, and whose primary mission, as defined by their letters patent, is international solidarity and development.

Quebec's International Cooperation Programmes and Organizations

Louis Favreau, a Quebec sociologist and community organizer, notes that in the 1950s and 1960s, the first Quebec-based international solidarity groups were "mainly from a religious background, [they] offered services to local communities in the South, to help them. The philosophy of these organizations was inspired by the humanitarian concerns of their times. Their projects were conceptualized much as evangelizing missions."[141] These first NGOs working internationally were primarily focused on emergency humanitarian aid and material support.

The field of international cooperation expanded considerably in the 1960s and 1970s in Quebec. Dominique Caouette, the coordinator of the Réseau d'études des dynamiques transnationales et de l'action collective (REDTAC),[142] identified two explanatory factors: 1) stable and recurrent funding from the Canadian state, culminating in the creation of CIDA in 1968, and 2) the return from overseas of development workers, both secular and religious, who wanted to continue to be involved in international solidarity projects.[143]

Starting in the 1970s, NGOs underwent a process of secularization and their work diversified. They increasingly began to focus on the following:

1. development projects
2. cooperation projects with the aim of empowering people in the South
3. sending volunteers and workers to take part in these projects

As former president of l'Association québécoise des organismes de coopération international (the Quebec Coalition of International Cooperation Organizations, AQOCI), Guy Lafleur recalls, the term "international cooperation" refers historically to a certain political position. Lafleur explains that, in the mid-1980s, there was no question of associating with the government or with CIDA. One could denounce it, but there was no question of dialogue or collaboration, much less of proposing alternatives. The important thing was to use all energy available to support the most dynamic grassroots organizations in the South to the greatest extent possible, to train and to mobilize local solidarity.[144]

Despite the changes to the mission of NGOs, Favreau believes that the "logic of compassion," which reduces Southern populations to being the beneficiaries of emergency aid, is still present, for example, in "the American and Canadian humanitarian model of CARE, Save the Children, and World Vision."[145] Many of the largest international NGOs working in the humanitarian field (Oxfam, World Vision, Médecins sans frontières, the Red Cross, etc.) also have affiliates in Canada.

In addition to the organizations which make up AQOCI, which was founded in 1976, other diverse groupings in Quebec participate in this movement, including,

among others, trade union centrals (Confédération des syndicats nationaux and Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec), unions active in international solidarity (the USW, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Canadian Auto Workers, etc.), private foundations, the cooperative movement (Desjardins, for example), and corporatist organizations with international links (the Union of Agricultural Producers, for example).

NGOs that don't have ties to companies or private foundations are very dependent on government funding. AQOCI laments the following:

> Canadian NGOs remain fairly dependent on federal public funding. This restricts their scope of action and pushes them to adopt priorities (e.g. sexual equality) and methodologies (e.g. results-based management), which, for better or worse, are often unilaterally imposed by CIDA, an agency increasingly concerned about the "coherence" and "efficiency" of Canadian aid. NGOs that are too dependent on CIDA are at a near fatal risk of instrumentalization.[146]

From CIDA's perspective, NGOs have a mandate to help it carry out its mission. To receive funding from this government agency, organizations must line up with its managerial methods and political objectives. Caouette remarks,

> starting in the latter half of the 1990s, CIDA imposed increasingly restrictive methods on NGO reporting of results. According to Brian K. Murphy, this form of management is reductionist, imposing a linearity of action on NGOs and expressing a technocratic and mechanistic approach. [147]

In Canada, "CIDA funded NGOs prepared to carry out projects directly linked to the new policies and priorities set out in the foreign policy declaration."[155] This is certainly a paradoxical situation in that NGOs are supposed to simultaneously guarantee and criticize the state's foreign policy. Being for the most part dependent on the state for their survival, they have to be cautious with their political statements and, under threat of having their main source of revenue cut, publicly adopt a conciliatory attitude towards the government.[156]

Evening of Solidarity Quebec-Chile-Latin America, Comité Québec-Chili, 1979

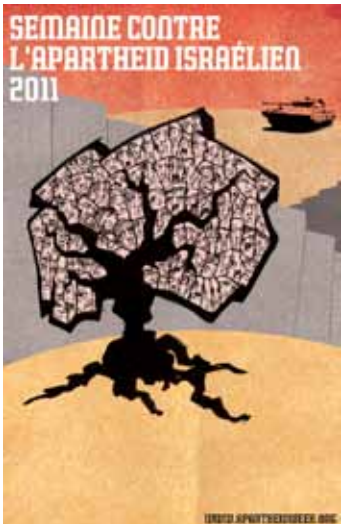
The Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO/SUCO)[157] provides a good illustration of the history of international development NGOs in Canada. CUSO was intended to be a national organization to coordinate Canadian university student international development projects. Initially, the organization had a Christian framework, in which volunteers were strictly "helpers." Beginning in the 1970s, following an examination into the causes of underdevelopment, the organization developed an ethic of solidarity, implemented through education and public awareness campaigns, and through the creation of alliances with popular movements in Canada. In 1981, political tensions within the organization led to a split, and the two entities – CUSO and SUCO – were formed. SUCO's political positions were deemed to be too militant and the organization suffered the consequences. Previously providing eighty per cent of SUCO's budget, CIDA cut all of its funding to the group in 1983.[158]

> When the CIDA funding cut happened, SUCO was – rightly or wrongly – still identified as an activist organization, politically engaged and oriented. CIDA's intention in cutting SUCO's funding and encouraging the transfer of volunteers to other organizations was clear: to ensure that volunteerism funded by the government

> conformed to CIDA's definition; that is, a formative international practice for Canadian youth, inclined to support Canadian public development aid. CIDA intervened in the affairs of an NGO [...] to proscribe a militant and critical approach. - Martin Desmeule, Quebec historian[159]

International Development Organizations and NGOs as Political Actors

While many NGOs adopt a neutral approach[161] it is important to remember that they are still political actors operating within the public sphere. Through public pressure, lobbying, mobilization, documentation, or otherwise, they aim to raise awareness or criticisms and thus influence public decision-making. But to what end? While their mandates fall under international development and solidarity, international organizations work on diverse issues such as human rights, environment, the fight against poverty, eradication of violence against women, access to information technologies, and food sovereignty. Despite some overlapping goals, the approaches taken by different organizations vary. For example, some organizations emphasize charity or advocate for humanitarian intervention, others focus on development, profess internationalism or anti-globalization, while others still combine several of these approaches.



Israeli Apartheid Week, 2011

Palestine: Cutting international support

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, is a Canadian NGO that was created in 2001 by a coalition of churches and religious organizations working for social justice and human rights.[148] The coalition's funding was cut by CIDA in 2009[149]:

> A more telling explanation of the cuts may come from comments made by Jason Kenney, Minister of Immigration and Citizenship, during an address to the Global Forum to Counter Anti-Semitism in Jerusalem on December 16 [2009]. In that address, Kenney said: "We have articulated and implemented a zero tolerance approach to anti-Semitism. [...] We have defunded organizations, most recently like KAIROS, who are taking a leadership role in the boycott." [...] In fact, KAIROS has not been involved with the international boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign that has gained traction in Canada and elsewhere in the West. [...] Many believe that the government mistakenly confused KAIROS (the Canadian NGO) with a document released by a group of Palestinian Christians entitled "The Kairos Palestine Document," which advocated the implementation of "a system of economic sanctions and boycott to be applied against Israel." [...] If KAIROS supports BDS or Palestinian rights, should this be an issue?[150] - Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East.

A political interpretation of the KAIROS[151] budget cuts leads us to question Canada's position on Israeli apartheid.[152] Moreover, it raises questions about the margin of action available to NGOs working in "politically sensitive" countries if they depend on government funding. In Quebec, at the request of CIDA, the organization Alternatives terminated a "15-year old partnership with the Teacher's Creativity Centre, an organization for education in Palestine, because it represented, 'a high risk of failure.'"[153]

In the last decade, the movement for decolonization in Palestine has grown as more and more organizations have publicly recognized the apartheid prevailing in Israel. The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign, launched in 2005 at the initiative of Palestinian organizations, has become a recognized international movement over the last seven years. Israeli Apartheid Week takes place each March in more than forty cities, including Montreal. [154]

Funding: An endless debate

When AQOCI formed in 1976 to coordinate the work of international cooperation organizations in Quebec, member organizations were demanding government funding for public development aid and independent management of these funds. This proactive strategy would have given NGOs access to public funding according to priorities and criteria they set themselves (through the AQOCI coalition) rather than according to the Canadian foreign policy agenda. Similarly, in the 1980s, the Coalition des organismes communautaires du Québec (Coalition of Community Organizations in Quebec) demanded that the Quebec state respect the independence of the community movement and provide adequate funding. These two institutional networks had the same perspective on public funding: collective actors working for the public good should not have to beg for state funding – they had a right to it. Two somewhat divergent political perspectives underpin this position.

To liberals, this approach is a democratic one. From this viewpoint, the state should fund groups that are critical of governmental policy, as well as political opposition, to ensure that a plurality of opinions finds public expression.

Social democrats, on the other hand, are more concerned with the welfare state as redistributor of wealth. They generally hold the position that public funds from taxes should be redistributed both nationally and internationally to redress social inequalities produced by the current economic system. Because citizens' community groups (including international development organizations) represent or serve disadvantaged sectors of the population, they are believed to play a central role in fulfilling this mission of wealth redistribution.

Generally, both approaches advocate a strategy of cooperation with decision-makers and participation in policy development.

These two positions are countered by those who adopt a strategy of confrontation, and question the independence of social movements funded primarily by the state. Believing that power yields nothing without force, the "autonomous" approach calls on community organizations to create a counter-power to the state. Here the understanding is that state funding is the Achilles' heel of organizations who depend on it and therefore they must "bow" to higher powers to survive.[160]

While distrustful of the public funding trap, many organizations accept grants, believing that it is better to recuperate money from the state than allow it to be transferred to the wealthiest (through business tax credits, big business subsidization, neo-liberal policy implementation, etc.). Organizations who adopt this position generally set criteria for accepting government funding to limit its potential impact. For example, they may refuse all conditional funding or funding that requires government scrutiny of their activities. Others only accept core funding (for work that fulfills their overall mandate, as defined by members), but refuse project funding to avoid being influenced by government priorities.

Finally, some organizations make a political choice to refuse all government funding to shield themselves from co-optation and bureaucratization of social action. Because these same organizations generally also refuse funding from private business, their sources of funding become limited and fundraising – soliciting members and sympathizers – can consume a great deal of their energy. Critics of this position maintain that it can be just as harmful to the autonomy of social action to return to the days when good work was forced to depend on the charity of "honest, hard-working people."

In short, the issue of funding has, for years, proven a thorny debate contested by different visions of social action.

The Legitimacy of NGOs

Many have questioned the legitimacy of NGOs and their influence on policies. Unlike large corporatist bodies (such as unions, student associations, networks of community groups) or social movements, NGOs do not represent a sector of the population. This appears to be particularly true in the case of international development organizations, who generally cannot justify their public interventions or state funding either in terms of the numbers of members they represent or the specific needs of a sector of the Canadian public they are able to meet.

This debate is well-illustrated by the International Forum on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness[162] , where NGOs from both North and South participate alongside high-level officials from donor countries and international institutions. There, forum participants

> raised questions on issues of CSO [Civil Social Organizations] legitimacy, representativeness and inclusiveness. [...] Skeptics question CSOs' right to voice criticisms of public policy because they are not elected bodies, and thus not representative of society's interests. [...] Southern governments in turn may be skeptical of CSOs' autonomy, viewing them as strongly dependent on the resources and good will of donors and their Northern counterparts. [...] CSOs in turn argued [...] that their presence in the public domain rests upon their credibility [that] rests on their expertise, their experience in the field, the coherence of their analysis and values.[163]

Bringing together divergent perspectives, the final report from the forum concluded the following:

> Individual CSOs are not representative – they draw their legitimacy from the way they represent the interests and values of their constituencies and from their expertise and credibility. [...] A CSO's legitimacy does not derive from broad representativeness,

In Angola, people are forced to work for coffee
It's normal!
Everything has its place
Angola is our colony
Angolans harvest the coffee
Our soldiers maintain order
NATO supplies arms
The companies make profits
And America has its coffee
Have your coffee, don't worry about the rest

Developpement et paix, Oxfam, Federation des rallyes du tiers-monde, SUCO (by Roméo Bouchard, Jean Gladu), 1975

Aware that all sources of funding are fraught with contradictions, PASC works with a very minimal budget; on average, the funding is around $4000 per year. The funding comes from donations, self-financing, and grants from NGOs with larger budgets. Thus, although PASC refuses to collaborate with CIDA, it receives financial support from CIDA-funded NGOs.

PASC's funding guidelines require it to refuse all conditional funding. Since it does not apply for core funding as an international cooperation organization from the Quebec Ministry of International Relations, PASC claims to be independent. However, the project Decolonizing Our Solidarity was carried out with funding from the Quebec Ministry of Education, Leisure, and Sports. This project, through which this text was written, sparked debate within PASC; for instance, some members highlighted the fact that the project required a lot of time and, while the subject was undoubtedly interesting, we would not have given it such priority without funding. By refusing core funding, are we as PASC members allowing PASC's mandate – or at least its objectives and work plan – to be side-tracked into projects more likely to receive funding?

> therefore – of necessity it gives voice to a limited set of interests. It earns legitimacy and credibility from society, and from its own constituency, by the integrity and quality of its representation of constituents' interests and ideas in the public domain.[164]

SOS Lebanon Palestine
Carrefour international, 1981

Looking at this report, we suggest that NGOs construct their legitimacy in four ways: 1) legality, 2) public service, 3) moral superiority, and 4) expertise.

Legality

NGOs have greater access to decision-makers than social movements do by virtue of the fact that they generally respect the rules of the game established by the authorities and do not pose a direct threat to the latter. The majority of NGOs work through different programmes (e.g., funding, registration) and mechanisms (e.g., public hearings, legal recourses) established by the state to manage social discontent and maintain the current distribution of power.

Moreover, NGOs generally adopt government language in their discourse. "Fighting against poverty," "sustainable development," "human rights," "equity," and "social solidarity" are terms deployed by the various ministries to define their mandates and by members of Parliament presenting bills to the House. This phenomenon of linguistic convergence can be attributed, depending on one's perspective, either to the state's recuperation of vocabulary or NGOs' assimilation of state discourse. Reporting requirements for government funding also use specific terminology and discourse that the organization must utilize to continue and sustain their funding. Similarly, international treaties on human rights and economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights are often cited by NGOs as fundamental texts legitimating their actions.

Through Public Service

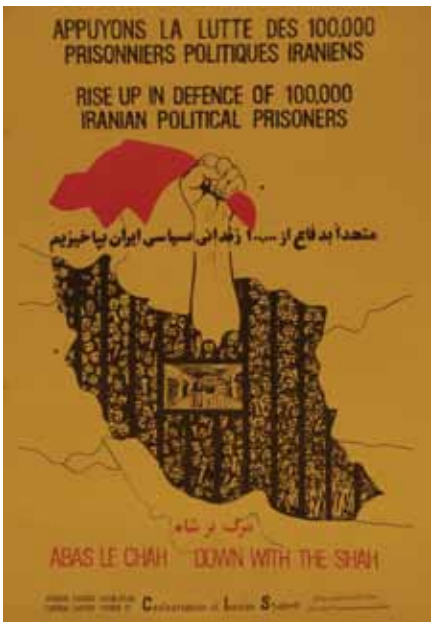
In liberal democratic nation-states, the government has duties towards its citizens. Many NGOs thus believe their role to be one of ensuring that the state fulfills these duties (such as respecting the Constitution or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms), as well as those held towards the international community (respecting conventions it has signed, for example). This approach is reflected in arguments made that

Over time, PASC has come to be recognized as a credible commentator in Canada on political and social news and human rights issues in Colombia. However, when appealing to the Minister of Foreign Affairs to intervene on behalf of accompaniment teams or partners in Colombia under threat, PASC systematically seeks the support of organizations (NGOs and unions) who have more political clout with public decision-makers. PASC thus uses a strategy of complementary action, benefitting from the strengths of different organizations in order to carry out international solidarity work. We have solid experience working on the ground and contacts with grassroots movements and, at the same time, we make alliances with long-established organizations with lobbying expertise.

Canadian ODA should be conditional on the recipient country's respect for human rights. Some NGOs have lobbied for the inclusion of human rights clauses in free trade agreements negotiated by Canada. NGOs have also tried to mobilize public opinion in support of a bill to define the responsibility of Canadian businesses investing overseas. For example, many international cooperation organizations have helped to promote Bill C-300, a parliamentary bill submitted in February 2009 and defeated in the House of Commons in October 2010, which would have made businesses accountable for their mining, oil, and gas practices in developing countries.[165] In addition to the general oversight role played by human rights NGOs, initiatives to help people in the South (humanitarian aid and development projects) suggest that NGOs also assume responsibility for filling the gaps in government policies.

CIDA appeals to this "public service" mandate when it calls on NGOs to act in ways that are complimentary with the government. As a spokesperson from AQOCI commented, "CIDA talks about 'partnership'. In practice, it tends to treat NGOs like 'implementing agencies', a difficult role for them to accept."[166] CIDA believes that NGOs have a mission to mobilize the Canadian public through concepts of citizenship and civicism. AQOCI remarks the following:

> Since 1999, CIDA has applied a strategy of public involvement to promote Canadian international cooperation. NGOs remain unavoidable partners because of their credibility with the public and their involvement in the democratic debate in Canada about international development and the elimination of poverty in the world. In theory, they can't openly criticize Canadian policies in the context of this strategy. However, they are free to raise public awareness about the causes of underdevelopment and poverty in the world and to promote world citizenship.[167]



Montreal Chapter of the Confederation of Iranian Students, 1977

Through Moral Superiority

The language NGOs use and their public awareness mandate confer on them the role of guardian and promoter of "good values." The discourse NGOs use is based on humanist and altruistic values, which call on people to set aside their egoistic interests and concern themselves with the progress of humanity. They adopt a highly moral position; for instance, NGOs represent civil society[168] aspirations toward a better world, a world of peace, equity, justice, and solidarity. This is clear

Shortly after it formed, PASC had a lively debate about registering the group as a non-profit organization in order to have a legal existence. Many members of the collective feared their activism would be bureaucratized if they accepted institutional parameters. PASC received its letters patent in 2004. The majority of its members had rallied around the argument that a state-recognized legal existence would give the group more sway with the Colombian and Canadian governments. Several years later, we recognize that our official status has served us, while admitting that part of our time is now absorbed by administrative obligations (annual statements, declaration of revenues, accounting, etc.).

from the conclusion of the États généraux québécois sur la coopération et la solidarité internationales (Quebec General Assembly of International Cooperation and Solidarity) which took place in 2006 :

> Civil society, also responsible for the world, wants to makes its specific contribution to building this other possible – and increasingly necessary – world. As members of this civil society, we bring our irreplaceable expertise, diversity and concern for the common good. Our strength comes from our commitment and capacity for mobilization as well as our will to work together and our experience in the field. Together, we want to make these riches count, because we are also responsible for the world.[169]

Through Expertise

The preceding quote also illustrates that NGOs claim a voice in the public arena by virtue of expertise in their field of action. To do so, they must show that their work is objective and rigorous (that is, that they are guided by the "common good" rather than particular interests). NGOs thereby present themselves as authorities on development and the fight against poverty; this expertise allows them to speak in the name of people in the South and say what is good for them.

Beyond the presence of professionals, such as NGO staff, it is worth noting the phenomenon of recent graduates, furnished with a foreign internship to complement their education, who are called to share their new skills with populations of the global South. As the Québec sans frontières program says in its promotional materials, foreign internships offer "a personal experience which can contribute to your professional position."[170] [See section entitled "Who is Helping Whom"]

What is recognized as technical cooperation is an important part of development aid. Implicit in the idea that beneficiary countries require technical support for development projects is the belief that the local population lacks the skills necessary to realize local development. Mbaya Kankwenda, a Congolese intellectual who worked for the UN Development Program (UNDP), argues the following:

> [Technical cooperation (TC)] does not take into account the need for an effective and efficient use of existing national human resources. These skills are thus lost, wasted or relegated to secondary roles in badly managed public institutions. Those who can, enter the private sector where their skills are put to use, or leave for other countries. Those who can't, remain unemployed, even while TC offers plush jobs to foreign experts and technicians. TC thus contributes to the depreciation of national capacity, even chasing it out, creating ever greater skill gaps and strengthening the need for its own presence, while helping solve unemployment problems in TC donor countries. To the point that in many countries, the real problem is not the absence or weakness of national capacity, but its use, motivation and upholding the value of this expertise for the country's development.[171]

Relations with Partners in the Global South

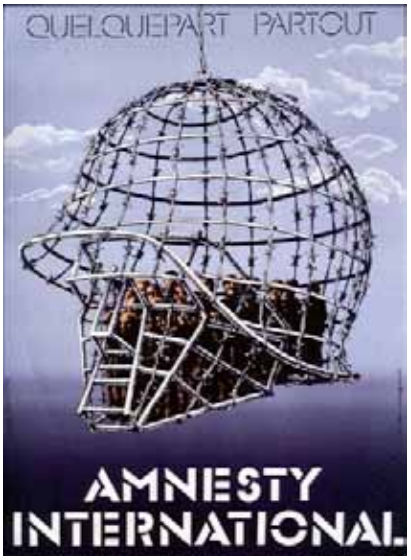
The NGO position as expert affects relationships with their partners in the global South, which they navigate in different ways. While some NGOs offer services or help disempowered communities, others support Southern initiatives and participate in their struggles for social justice.

Even when NGOs view their partners from the global South as equal allies, the very structure of North–South relations tends to subject Southern organizations to the agendas of Northern NGOs. It is important to ask where the money comes from. Those who have the money set the priorities and regulations.

In the field of international development, NGOs in the global North receive their money mainly from government agencies and international institutions dominated by Northern countries; in one instance, 83% of CIDA funding earmarked for Southern civil society organizations was transferred through Canadian NGOs.[174] These NGOs then used this funding to send workers and volunteers to countries in the global South or to fund southern NGOs, selected according to their partnership criteria. This structure renders local organizations in the global South more accountable to their funding sources (in the North) than to their members or beneficiaries (in the South). For this reason, it is common to see NGOs in the global South adopting the vocabulary of Northern government officials. While many Canadian NGOs wish to support grassroots projects, it is still the case that these projects, carried out by and for the peoples of the global South, are heavily dependent on funding from the North, and are thus influenced by the priorities of Northern states.

Funding is a crucial issue for organizations in precarious situations. Exposing the unjust mechanisms in the funding systems on which Southern organizations rely should not serve as a pretext for ignoring their initiatives and successes, as they struggle for autonomy on a daily basis. It is important to highlight the creativity of Southern NGOs. Far from passively accepting this hierarchical structure, they find ingenious ways of contravening the conditions imposed on funding. For example, social movements such as the Landless People's Movement in Brazil have created parallel NGOs to manage Northern funding.

Pressure from donors also results in what has been termed an "NGOization" of Southern social movements particularly when funds are generally only granted to legally constituted organizations. Mamadou Goïta, who has worked alongside peasant organizations and NGOs in Mali and Burkina Faso for thirty years, deplores



Somewhere Everywhere

Alain Le Quernec, Amnistie internationale, circa 1978.

Southern movements appeal to international human rights instruments as protection and to make their demands. PASC has thus become a human rights advocate hoping to expose the economic and political interests underlying human rights violations. We see demands to respect rights as a means of supporting social movement struggles and not as an end in itself.

Demanding that the Colombian state respect human rights may obfuscate the systematic character of human rights violations and contribute to the belief that these are just isolated cases, an abuse of power, or collateral damage. However, it is clear to us that these massive rights violations are symptomatic; they are part of a strategy used by the Colombian state. Our partners call it a policy of "state terrorism." It may seem contradictory to make use of state mechanisms while simultaneously denouncing the Colombian and Canadian states. However, PASC believes that advocating for human rights helps to expose the contradictions between the state's discourse, charters, and actions.

Cover page of the magazine l'*Etudiant* (the student), guide to careers in humanitarianism and solidarity, 2007

the following :

> There are no resources to support a peasant movement as a movement. All the resources are directed towards specific projects to meet goals established by donors. There are no funds to strengthen the movement itself.[175]

This tendency to impose a Western organizational model (NGO rather than movement, community, council of elders) can sometimes translate into an instrumentalization of Southern actors. Many NGOs who reconcile themselves with restrictive standards of funding are able to provide unconditional funding to organizations in the global South. However, the negative consequences of the funding system for Southern partners can rarely be avoided. To meet the funding criteria of their donors, and thus to obtain funding and guarantee their own survival, NGOs from the North must partner with local NGOs deemed "viable." By offering funding and support, they consolidate the position of some organizations, which thereby increase in importance, while others are marginalized through this process. This selection process thus helps to define actors on the local political scene. It is not uncommon, in fact, to see organizations created wholesale to meet the needs of Northern NGOs. With bitter irony, Georgette Bieble, Director of the NGO Cause Commune in Kinshasa, describes the "identification missions" of Northern NGOs "which come to 'multiply critiques and sow division' among Congolese NGOs seeking influence."[176]

Competition among local actors over Northern funding seems an inevitable source of division: whether over criteria for accepting foreign funding and priorities for using it, or as a result of the contest for Northern support between community initiatives.

Far from being an example of fair competition, the development field is bound up by monopolies with the most powerful Northern NGOs demanding a relationship of exclusivity with their Southern partners. Béatrice Pouligny, a researcher at the Centre d'études et de recherches internationales de France (Centre for International Studies and Research in France), deplores the following:

> Those who hold positions of power and privileged access to decision-makers or media often resist the arrival of new partners and protect their claim to represent everyone.[177]

Along with the organizational model imposed on Southern movements comes many Western practices presented as a singular model to adopt in order to benefit from international development. Language, concepts, projects, priorities, and more come from the "developed" world. In a study of international aid programmes targeting small farmers in Western Africa, Bernard Lecomte details the steps and obligations which small peasant organizations must undertake in order to access

The critique of legitimacy applies not only to NGOs, but as well to all groups who are politically active on the basis of their analysis and political goals. A collective like PASC is no more representative of a sector of the public than an NGO; it is a group of individuals who came together on the basis of shared political affinities and who organize to promote their perspective and demands, in this case an anti-imperialist mandate.

funding:[178]

- To be taken into consideration, their application must assume the codified form of a project (or programme) proposal.
- To be admissible for review, the proposal must include a description of the cost–deadline–goal trio for each planned activity.
- To convince decision-makers, all activities must be organized into a "strategic" table, the so- called "logical framework."
- To be accepted, this table must quantify desired results and specify measurement indicators.
- To be "fundable," each anticipated expense must be projected with precision in a detailed budget.
- To be validated, each expenditure must correspond to this projected budget.
- To be implemented, sub-contracted activity must be tendered.
- To be informed of the invitation to tender, all institutions (private, public, or social organization) must be formally recognized by the recipient state.
- To compete, the institution must self-finance the preparatory work for its bid and draft it according to codified forms.

The complex set of bureaucratic steps, very distant from the reality of "on-the-ground" organizing, generally cannot be undertaken by members of such organizations. The latter are thus forced to call in experts to draft their invitations to tender or modify their mission statement to include manager training and project management.

Development policy is continually evolving and will evolve again in the aftermath of the crises now taking place across the world in all sectors. These changes have not favoured social movements, much less indigenous women, since they have disrupted processes and endlessly impose new "ingredients" on us, which force us to come up with a new "menu." Because this menu is totally new, it often makes us sick instead of filling our stomachs. […] Women in general, and the feminist movement in particular, have been critical and self-critical. I think it is just as important for development to become self-critical.

- Flory Yax Tiu, *Mayan activist, Guatemala*

In 2005, when the communities of Jiguamiando entered into an important phase in the return to their lands, they asked PASC to invite a representative of the Canadian Embassy to join an official delegation. Community members then took advantage of the official's presence to request funding for a school as part of their ethno-education project.

PASC would not have suggested making such a request. We believe that Canadian state funding for this kind of project only serves to obscure the immense sums spent by the Canadian Embassy's Economic Development Service to facilitate Canadian investment in Colombia and exploit its human and natural resources.

We shared our perspective with the communities while at the same time agreeing to undertake the steps necessary to obtain the funding out of respect for the decision the communities had made.

During the Forum on Aid Effectiveness, participants agreed that unequal power relations between North and South CSOs were a significant barrier to the creation of real and sustainable partnerships. The inequalities were attributed primarily to imbalances in financial resources and in mutual accountability […]. Among the problems raised were the direct and changing roles of Northern CSOs in Southern countries, the impact that Northern CSOs' dependence on donor funding has on both the content and conditions of their relationships with their Southern counterparts, the repercussions of the growth of giant Northern "NGO families" on Southern CSOs and on the smallest Northern CSOs.
- Final Report of the Forum on Aid Effectiveness, p.27

The Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC) summarizes that,

> concurrent applications occasion such high costs that the smallest organizations and those with new ideas (both business and non-profit) are eliminated.[179]

To allow organizations from the global South to skillfully navigate the maze of international aid and development, NGOs from the global North offer their services for "capacity-building."[180] This bears the trappings of an empowerment approach but could scarcely be more deceptive; the goal is to adapt to a Northern power structure, not to develop the power of Southern organizations. As a rule, these "capacity-building" programmes encourage Southern organizations to adopt prescriptions and methodologies developed in the North (logical framework, results-based management, strategic plan) as business models.

2.5 Citizens of the World: Consumption and solidarity?

The final form of international solidarity that we will examine in this chapter is world citizenship. Antiglobalization is very often presented as citizen action. Citizens dreaming of a just world are invited to sign petitions through a click on the internet, to engage in solidarity tourism, and to consume responsibly.

World Citizenship and Fair Tourism

While international development trips are a particular form of overseas travel, they share features with the new alternatives of ethical tourism. Many social organizations, government agencies, and NGOs now offer trips to people from the North who are concerned that their travel in the global South be socially responsible. Variously called "fair," "responsible," or "alternative", the options for this kind of travel are multiplying, offering Westerners the possibility of combining tourism with political education, volunteering, activism, and lobbying. The American NGO Global Exchange provides an example. It offers "reality tours"[181] to mainly white, middle-class people from the United States who have concerns about social justice. Global Exchange calls on these tourists "with a political conscience," to travel as "citizen ambassadors." Its packages include a visit to local communities to see their living conditions, thus educating participants about global injustice. Global Exchange reality tours focus on social movements to raise the profile of resistance and show the resilience of the local populations of the places visited.

Ethical travel is also offered by the private sector. In 2009, the travel guide company Frommer's published a list of 500 places "where you can make a difference," a good example of the cross-over between for-profit and non-profit sectors. Responding to the growing demand for eco-tourism, this guide promised to inspire its readers with choices ranging from "caring for orphans in Delhi, to building schools in Madagascar." These 500 options offer tourists the best of two worlds: discovering the world in an "extraordinary way" while supposedly helping the communities visited.[182] Similarly, on the francophone side, the French publishers Petit futé, specializing in travel guides, published a guide called *Tourisme solidaire*.[183]

To some, these forms of tourism are laudable and hope-filled. Critics, on the other hand, charge that they offer no more than a way for Westerners to come to terms with their uneasiness with tourism by reconstituting it as ethical and moral.[184] Moreover, some researchers have suggested that these more responsible forms of tourism are no less invasive, despite their claims to the contrary.[185] We tend to agree with this last position and will now introduce a critique of the concept of world citizenship.

What is World Citizenship?

World citizenship is difficult to define. It comes from a consciousness of people's interdependence in the world, creating the idea of a kind of "global community." Citizens of the world share a feeling of belonging extending beyond the state or nation to embrace humanity as a whole. In doing so, they feel tied to the future of the planet and all human beings, and are motivated to ease global injustices by respecting the planet and human rights.

The practice of world citizenship usually refers to individual actions in daily life, involving minor changes to ways of living and consuming, such as buying fair trade and organic products, signing internet petitions, and being environmentally conscience.[186]

Limits of Citizen Action

Fair trade coffee illustrates the limitations of the citizen action model. Some fair trade projects support cooperative models of organizing work and help to raise the income of small producers substantially by eliminating links in the export chain. Fair trade shopping also educates consumers in the global North about the origins of the product and the reality of the producers.

On the other hand, the entire coffee and chocolate trade – fair trade included – involves seizing land from peasants for the cultivation of luxury goods for export. This damages subsistence farming and undermines the food sovereignty of local populations. The giant food multinationals are able to move into this new consumer market because fair trade does not fundamentally challenge their way of doing business, which is based on colonial trade relations. It even legitimizes it by providing an ethical seal of approval. Nestlé, Van Houtte, Starbucks, and Proctor & Gamble all whitewash their image in this way (even McDonald's has come out with its own fair trade coffee in Switzerland). To these multinationals, sustainable development means sustainable profits.

Some companies sought to recuperate citizen action in order to exploit the new "solidarity" market. Big coffee chains have their fair trade line, tourist agencies offer solidarity tourism packages, and pulp and paper companies sell recycled products. If the goal is to integrate such alternatives into market practice, these examples can be hailed as a victory. However, given that the capitalist economy is based on profit, sale, and consumption and not on meeting the needs of the people, it is important to ask whether the goals of those who supported such initiatives have not instead been subverted by such business practices.

Israeli boycott campaign image against the occupation of Palestine

Sustainable development is easy to define: if your great-grandfather, your grandfather, and your children remain faithful Nestlé customers, we have worked in a sustainable way.
- Peter Brabeck-Letmathe, *then general-director of Nestlé, in a statement at the 2003 Davos Forum*

Furthermore, advocating this kind of citizen action as a strategy for change makes social change a matter of individual responsibility. This approach papers over the larger question of state and corporate responsibility for social injustices and environmental damage. In the end, this type of citizen action requires no more than minor changes in lifestyle and new advertising images, all the while functioning within the framework of mass consumer societies. The concept of world citizenship erases the broader context; the term is then recuperated by power to depoliticize social involvement and displace collective action. Can we really believe that this type of citizen action has potential for real social change?

Marketing and Social Engagement

Citizen action also takes the form of individual financial donations. NGOs make public funding appeals and sometimes hire "social marketing" companies to organize subscription campaigns (often with teams of canvassers in big cities). ONG Conseil Canada Inc. is one such company; the organization offers "donor recruitment" services.[187] According to Michel Morin, coordinator of an HIV/AIDS prevention organization and a client of ONG Conseil, their methods are fraught with contradiction. The use of marketing methods to fund solidarity work raises many questions about the meaning of social engagement. The phenomenon of "fashionable causes" has also emerged, where mobilization is displaced by a transient public fad pursuing the issue of the day.

"Vote With Your Dollar": Buying as voting?

If buying can be considered a type of voting, it follows that the majority of the world's population, which has no buying power, is also deprived of voting rights in this version of world citizenship. How can world citizenship be viewed as a commitment to social justice when the exercise of citizenship is restricted to a privileged minority?

Since 2004, PASC has accompanied communities struggling against an African palm oil megaproject. The communities of Afro descent from the Jiguamiando and Curvarado Basins have been subject to 13 forced displacements since 1997: terror, aerial attacks by the Colombian army, and massacres by paramilitary troops (whose links to the military are well-documented). They uncovered the economic interests lurking behind the horror; for instance, more than 15 000 hectares of virgin forest have been replaced with African palm monocultures. This agro-business, subsidized by national and international sustainable development projects, was illegally established on lands collectively owned by these communities – a fact the Colombian courts have finally recognized. While the legal battle is officially won, the communities still have not obtained justice. The companies are now proposing that community members work in producer cooperatives alongside those who displaced them. The communities refuse to buy peace by leaving their lands or changing their way of life and declare themselves to be in an ongoing state of "civil resistance."

Palm oil, the second most widely used oil in the world after soya, is extracted from the fruit of the African palm. It is used as vegetable oil in many popular products (including ecological cleaning products) and is used to produce agro-combustibles. With the global threat of an energy crisis, agro-combustibles – which we refuse to call "biofuels" or "biodiesel" – are presented as an ecological alternative to oil. However, this framework fails to take into account the human and ecological costs of agro-combustibles. PASC joined the Réseau québécois des groupes écologistes (Quebec Network of Ecological Groups) in order to raise this issue with other members of this network.

In Quebec, many believe that the movement for responsible consumption has helped forge a link between consumption and production. We know now, for example, about the potential links between biodegradable cleaners, artisanal soap, and biodiesel buses on the one hand, and forced displacement and environmental destruction in countries including but not limited to Colombia, Malaysia, and Indonesia, on the other.

Notes :

35. Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, p. 101-103.

36. Magniny, Les réfugiés de l'environnement, p. 139.

37. Fanon, The Damned of the Earth, p. 11.

38. Castelneau-L'Estoile, "Des sociétés coloniales catholiques en Amérique ibérique ... "

39. While all colonial practices aim at the subjugation and control of colonized peoples, the mechanisms of domination took different forms in different occupied territories. Where slavery was not used, other means were deployed, such as control of social or geographical mobility, identity cards, and rules of education aimed at assimilating "the natives."

40. By this we refer to a neologism constructed from the words "ecosystem" and "genocide."

41. Beaudet, Qui aide qui?..., p. 22.

42. Quoted in Destexhe, L'Humanitaire impossible..., p. 38.

43. Originally known as the Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe.

44. Brauman, "Les médias et l'humanitaire," p. 17.

45. Haug, Hans. 1996. "Neutrality as a Fundamental Principle of the Red Cross" International Review of the Red Cross, No. 315. [Online] http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/57jncv.htm (Consulted 14 April 2014).

46. For more on MSF, see Fassin.

47. See Projet accompagnement solidarité Colombie "Our Analysis of the Conflict" [Online] http://www.pasc.ca/en/content/our-analysis-conflict (Consulted 14 April 2014).

48. Quoted by Dufort, Philippe. 2008. La contre-insurrection en Colombie : vers une économie politique stratégique. Mémoire de maîtrise, Université du Québec à Montréal, p. 20.

49. Sánchez Rubio, "Interventions humanitaires : principes, concepts et réalités."

50. Bettati, "Théorie et réalité du droit d'ingérence humanitaire," p. 20.

51. Development and Peace website: www.devp.org. (Consulted 14 April 2014).

52. St-Pierre, "L'ingérence humanitaire: une brève histoire," in Conoir et Verna, L'action humanitaire du Canada.

53. Canada has a close connection to the "responsibility to protect" formulation. It was invented in 2002 by a panel of experts who came together upon Canada's invitation within the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS).

54. Miller, Myths for Profit...

55. Chossudovsky, "Insurrection and Military Intervention..."

56. Powell, Speech during the "National Foreign Policy Conference..."

57. Marclay, "Le virage vers les questions de sécurité..." in Audet et al., L'aide canadienne au développement.

58. Canadian Council for International Co-operation. Aid in the Crosshairs...

59. Gorgeu, Raphaël. "Principes humanitaires et aide à la reconstruction...," p. 126.

60. Hours, "Derrière les évidences humanitaires..."

61. Bassirat.net. "Afghanistan – Bilan des ONG..."

62. Hours, "Derrière les évidences humanitaires..."

63. Inaugural Address of the International Working Men's Association "The First International", October 21-27, 1864. First published as a pamphlet in Inaugural Address and Provisional Rules of the International Working Men's Association, along with the "General Rules". London. Online Version: Marx & Engels Internet Archive (marxists.org) 2000. [Online] http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1864/10/27.htm (Consulted 14 April 2014).

64. The "Francoist regime" refers to the dictatorship of Franco (1939 – 1977), who took control after the Spanish Civil War (1936 –1939).

65. Thomas, Guerre d'Espagne.

66. Hoar and Reynolds, The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion.

67. Berger "After the Third World?..."

68. Entraide Missionaire website: lentraidemissionnaire.org (Consulted 14 April 2014).

69. CDHAL website: cdhal.org (Consulted 14 April 2014).

70. For more about leftist organizations within Christian movements in Quebec, see Vaillancourt, "Les groupes sociopolitiques progressistes..."

71. The Commission is one of PASC's main partners in Colombia. See: justiciaypazcolombia.com (in Spanish).

72. RoJEP website: www.justicepaix.org (Consulted 14 April 2014).

73. "Des Brigades internationales aux sans-papiers..." Report on the Henri Curiel international meetings.

74. CISO website: www.ciso.qc.ca (Consulted 14 April 2014).

75. Projet Accompagnement Solidarité Colombie, "Our Strategies."

76. PAQG website: www.paqg.org (Consulted 14 April 2014).

77. ISM mission as described on its French website (our translation): www.ism-france.org (Consulted 14 April 2014).

78. Iraq Solidarity Project. (our translation) "Urgent: contribute to the Iraq Solidarity Project."

79. PBI website: www.peacebrigades.org (Consulted 14 April 2014).

80. Mahony and Eguren, Unarmed bodyguards...

81. Fédération des femmes du Québec, Femmes et guerres.

82. Guerre à la Guerre. "Qui sommes nous".

83. Block the Empire Montreal.

84. Bensaïd, "Mondialisation - Le point de vue internationaliste."

85. First Declaration of La Realidad for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism.

86. Ibid.

87. Rousset, "L'internationalisme et son renouveau à l'heure de la mondialisation."

88. Ibid.

89. Via Campesina website: www.viacampesina.org (Consulted 14 April 2014).

90. WMW website: www.worldmarchofwomen.org (Consulted 14 April 2014).

91. PGA website: http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/en/ (Consulted 14 April 2014).

92. HSA website: www.asc-hsa.org (Consulted 14 April 2014).

93. WSF website: http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/index.php?cd_language=2&id_menu= (Consulted 14 April 2014).

94. Alexander, quoted in Sow, "Politiques ...", p. 4.

95. United Nations. "We the Peoples…"

96. Jubilee 2000 Online. "Cancelling World Debt…"

97. Jubilee South. Bulletin de la Campagne…

98. Principles of Jubilee South document, quoted by Bendaña, "NGOs and social movements ..."

99. Canada presented itself overseas as an international leader in the effort to relieve or "forgive" the debt of the poorest countries, as this 2005 statement by then Minister of Finance Ralph Goodale indicates, "The Canadian proposal will provide low-income nations with the opportunity to invest in the future of their people, and not the debt obligations of their past," said Minister Goodale. "A permanent debt relief solution may finally be within our reach." See: Goodale, "Canada Proposes 100 Per Cent Debt Relief…"

100. Choudry and Kapoor, Learning from the Ground Up..., pp. 1-2.

101. Slatter, "Beyond the Theory-Practice-Activism..."

102. World Bank, Annual Meetings of the IMF-World Bank 2010…

103. Randriamaro, "Donner du sens au plaidoyer", in Les Femmes du Sud..., p. 44.

104. Martineau et al., Droits des femmes et égalité entre les sexes, p. 67.

105. Roy, quoted by Bendaña, "NGOs and social movements: a north/south divide?"

106. CIDA, Policy on Poverty Reduction.

107. During this period, the term "First World" referred to the industrialized countries of the West and "Second World" to the socialist countries of the Eastern Bloc. The term "Third World" designated "non-aligned" countries into which the two imperialist powers of the era (USSR and the US) tried to expand their areas of influence. Today the term "Fourth World" is used to designate Indigenous peoples, seen as the "marginalized of the marginalized."

108. Government of Canada. A Role of Pride and Influence in the World.

109. Severino, "Refonder l'aide au développement au XXIe siècle."

110. See Government of Canada. A Role of Pride and Influence in the World.

111. United Nations, High-level Panel Report on Threats, Challenges and Change…

112. Through Canada's Economic Action Plan 2013, the Government of Canada announced the amalgamation of CIDA and DFAIT in a new Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development.

113. Paul and Pistor, "Official Development Assistance Spending."

114. These objectives are found in Canada's international policy statement. See especially the first Canada's National Security Policy, 2004, as well as A Development Co-operation Lens on Terrorism Prevention, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2003.

115. Tomlinson, "L'agence canadienne de développement international... ", in Audet et al., L'aide canadienne...

116. Quebec's international policy has similar objectives: strengthening Quebec's capacity for action and influence, encouraging Quebec's growth and prosperity, contributing to the security of Quebec and the North American continent. See Ministère des relations internationales du Québec. 2006. Politique internationale du Québec : la force de l'action concertée. Gouvernement du Québec : Québec. [Online] https://www.mrifce.gouv.qc.ca/fr/Publications/Pol-inter-forceaction (Consulted 14 April 2014).

117. Canadian Defence Forces website. http://www.forces.ca/en/page/mission-74 (Consulted 17 February 2014).

118. Government of Canada, A Role of Pride and Influence in the World…

119. Josée Verner was Minister of International Co-operation into Prime Minister Stephen Harper's cabinet from 2006 to 2007.

120. CIDA, "Helping Afghans Rebuild Their Lives…"

121. L'Ecuyer "Afghanistan et business civilisation: une lecture critique."

122. Bassirat.net, "Afghanistan – Bilan des ONG... "

123. Ibid.

124. In Quebec, international cooperation organizations receive part of their ODA funding from the Ministère des relations internationales du Québec (Quebec Ministry of International Relations) and from Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) programmes.

125. Truman. Inaugural Address, quoted in Rist, Le développement...

126. Esteva, "Development", in Sachs, The Development dictionary..., p. 7.

127. Brauman, "Mission civilisatrice, ingérence humanitaire."

128. Hidouci, "L'aide au développement...", in Duchatel and Rochat, Efficace, neutre...

129. United Nations. 1987. Our Common Future. Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, p. 34. [Online] http://conspect.nl/pdf/Our_Common_Future-Brundtland_Report_1987.pdf (Consulted 14 April 2014).

130. ATTAC France. "A la fin des années 1970…" In 2002 - Semaine d'actions…

131. Capital. 2004, no 154 (july).

132. The specific goals were the following: reduce extreme poverty and hunger; provide primary education for all; promote sexual equality and self-determination for women; reduce infant mortality; improve maternal health; fight HIV/aids, malaria and other diseases; conserve the environment; and establish a global partnership for development.

133. In its action plan for aid effectiveness, the Canadian government announced in 2009 that it would focus 80% of its bilateral resources on 20 target countries.

134. Duchatel and Rochat, Efficace, neutre, désintéressée?..., p. 7.

135. Dumond, Colombie : l'invasion du secteur privé transnational.

136. Quoted by Théroux, "Une longueur d'avance pour le Québec."

137. Created in 1964, "The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) promotes the development friendly integration of developing countries into the world economy." http://unctad.org/en/pages/AboutUs.aspx (Consulted 14 April 2014).

138. UNCTAD, 2010 Report on the 49 least developed countries… quoted in "Cri d'alarme de la CNUCED…"

139. Lavergne and Wood, Cida, Civil Society and Development...

140. AQOCI, La coopération internationale canadienne depuis 1985, p. 29.

141. Favreau, "Coopération internationale de proximité…," p. 30.

142. Réseau d'études des dynamiques transnationales…

143. Caouette, "Les organisations non gouvernementales...", in Audet et al., L'aide canadienne..., pp. 114-115.

144. Lafleur, "L'évolution des organismes québécois de coopération internationale."

145. Favreau, "Coopération internationale de proximité…"

146. AQOCI, La coopération internationale canadienne depuis 1985, p. 30.

147. Caouette, "ONG canadiennes…", p. 14.

148. Kairos website: www.kairoscanada.org (Consulted 14 April 2014).

149. In 2008, 39% of its budget came from CIDA.

150. Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, The Defunding of KAIROS…

151. It seems that the decision to cut KAIROS' core funding came directly from the International Cooperation Minister, Bev Oda.

152. See for example: Davis, Apartheid Israel…; MacAllister, "Applicabilité du crime d'Apartheid à Israël"; Quigly, "Apartheid Outside Africa…"

153. Jacob, "Grossière ingérence…"

154. Israeli Apartheid Week. See: apartheidweek.org (Consulted 14 April 2014).

155. Idem., p. 11.

156. Caouette, "Les organisations non gouvernementales...", in Audet et al., L'aide canadienne..., p. 128.

157. SUCO website: www.suco.org (Consulted 14 April 2014).

158. Desmeules, "Histoire du volontariat international au Québec: Le cas du service…".

159. Idem. pp. 165-166.

160. Of course there are different positions within this approach.

161. By this we mean, for example, "Sustainable development must be undertaken with concern for equity […] and social solidarity […], changes in the modes of production and consumption must be carried out with a view to making them more viable and more socially and environmentally accountable" or again, "the fight against poverty is the most urgent issue for solidarity." These are extracts from the Loi sur le développement durable (Law of Sustainable Development, 2005) and Politique internationale du Québec (Quebec International Policy, 2006). If an organization's discourse is similar to its government's, that is what we mean by non-confrontational; it may be pursuing other objectives, such as public awareness.

162. This consultation took place in preparation for a high-level OECD forum on aid effectiveness held in Accra, Ghana in 2008. More than 200 participants, from 66 countries, came to Gatineau. They came from multilateral donor organizations, developing country governments, and NGOs from both global North and global South (CSOs, in the language used by the OECD).

163. Final report of the International Forum on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness.

164. Idem., p. 12.

165. See, for example: Mining Watch, "Urgent Action: Support legislation…"

166. AQOCI, La coopération internationale canadienne depuis 1985 (International Cooperation in Canada since 1985), p. 31.

167. Idem., p. 33.

168. The concept of "civil society" is generally used by NGOs to refer to social forces distinct from both state and capital. To the many who are disenchanted with state politics, this entity, without form or unity, represents a space in which a more equitable and alternative society can emerge.

169. AQOCI, Les États généraux de la coopération et de la solidarité internationales... (General Assembly on international cooperation and solidarity), pp. 21-22.

170. Ministère des Relations internationales du Québec…

171. Kankwenda, Marabouts ou marchands du développement en Afrique (Marabouts or merchants of African development)?, p. 226.

172. Yax Tiu, "Autonomie et droits des femmes autochtones…" (Autonomy and rights of Indigenous women), in Martineau et al., Droits des femmes et égalité...(Rights of women and equality), p. 55.

173. Final report from the International Forum on Civil Society and the Effectiveness of Aid, p. 27.

174. Lavergne and Wood, CIDA, Civil Society and Development...

175. Interview with Goïta, cited in Lecomte, "Impacts des appels d'offres..." (Impacts of invitations to tender), in Duchatel and Rochat, Efficace, neutre, désintéressée? (Effective, neutral, disinterested?), p. 48.

176. Galy, "À Kinshasa, aventuriers africains et professionnels occidentaux" (In Kinshasa, African adventurers and Western Professionals).

177. Pouligny, "Les réseaux antimondialisation dessinent-ils véritablement une société civile internationale" (Are antiglobalization networks really creating an international civil society).

178. Lecomte, "Impacts des appels d'offres sur les organisations paysannes…"(Impact of invitations to tender on peasant organizations), p. 47.

179. Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC), Strengthening Civil Society Partnerships, p. 5.

180. "Capacity-building" is the current catch phrase for attaining development objectives. It refers to assistance, provided by international institutions and NGOs to populations and organizations of the global South, to develop and strengthen certain skills and abilities in order to improve performance.

181. Global Exchange. http://www.globalexchange.org/tours/mission.html (Consulted 19 July 2010).

182. For more on this see Mahrouse, "Questioning efforts that seek to 'do-good.'"

183. Éditions Petit futé, http://boutique.petitfute.com/tourisme-s olidaire-2012-2013-numerique.htm l (Consulted 19 January 2014.)

184. Mahrouse, "Questioning efforts that seek to 'do-good'".

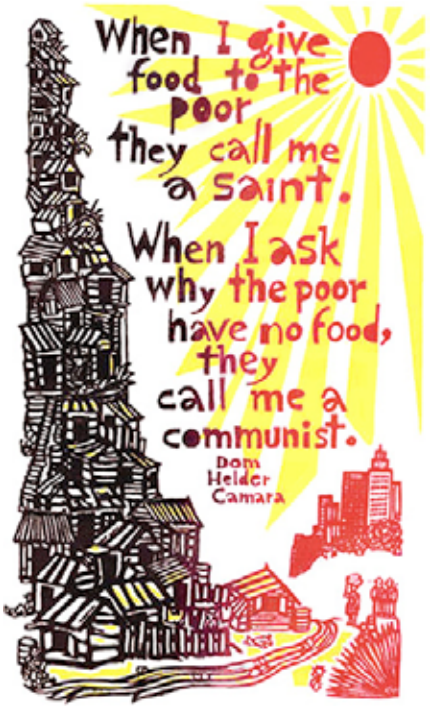
185. Lisle, "Joyless Cosmopolitans…"

186. On this topic, see the CIDA-funded Global Citizens Program: http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDICIDA.nsf/eng/FRA-325121615-M48 (Consulted 17 February 2014) .

187. ONG Conseil Canada . www.ongconseil.ca (Consulted 14 April 2014).

Chapter 3
Canadians in International Solidarity

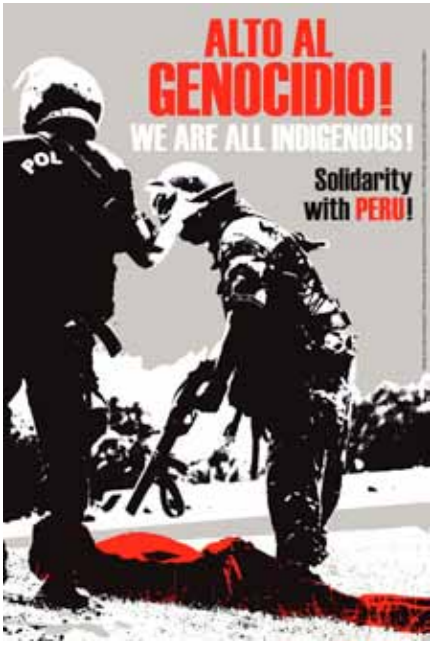
When we declare our solidarity with the peoples of the global South, when we demand human rights and development for (or with?) them, we do so from our schools, our comfort, our security. Before us, others expressed good intentions towards "foreign peoples"; their desire to bring them the benefits of civilization and modernity. Five hundred years ago, the West claimed to be spreading its values beyond its borders. The enterprise resulted in genocide and slavery for millions of people. The scars still divide the world today. As Westerners, mostly white, when we talk about "the South" or "under-developed countries," we are addressing this colonial history. And when our governments say they are spreading peace, rights and democracy, the same history continues, under the boots of our soldiers and through the money our companies invest. We build relationships with the vanquished peoples of this history and, because we see them as equals, refuse to believe in the inevitability of their poverty, the violence of their situation, their "backwardness": we blame a system whose power is founded on their abasement. However, we are snug in the heart of victory, enjoying the privileges of conquering people.



Ricardo Levins Morales, "Paradox"

The majority of Quebeckers involved in international solidarity movements belong to one or more of the "dominant social categories" discussed in Chapter 1 and enjoy the privileges associated with this status. We are often conflicted with the contradictions between our privileged position and our desire for equality. In this chapter, we will examine our position as activists from the global North working in international solidarity networks. We will first identify the privileges at work in the exercise of international solidarity, with a view towards understanding how these privileges can be transferred and unequal North/South relations eliminated. What follows should be understood as our tentative exploration of certain lines of thought, and not as an offering of facile answers or solutions.

3.1 Privileges Used to Mobilize International solidarity



Stop the genocide
We are all indigenous
Solidarity with Peru

Favianna Rodriguez

Those involved in international solidarity actions overseas that hold Canadian passports enjoy the privileges of being Canadian citizens. Canadian citizenship and association with the virtuous image of Canada as a humanitarian country (as it is often represented on the international stage) confer undeniable privileges on those who possess them.

The Leisure of Struggle

One of the most significant privileges is perhaps the comfort and security offered by Canadian society – a relatively wealthy country where social conflict is attenuated by a (fragile) human rights framework. While non-Indigenous Canadians may feel the impact of global injustices (ecological destruction, economic inequality, militarization, etc.), they are not the worst affected by them. A result of this situation is that solidarity, activism, and political action in general appear to us as one option among others, often a personal choice. In contrast, many resistance movements in the South are borne out of the immediate necessity to survive. It cannot be relegated to a 9 to 5 work schedule or limited to volunteer work in a person's free time. Moreover, resistance movements in the global South generally involve the risk of reprisals that are far more violent than in the global North. Thus, within North/South solidarity movements, these very different conditions structure relations between activists from North and South.

To take the example of socio-environmental conflicts, many campaigns in Canada are organized by directly affected communities (and their allies) to oppose the tar sands, shale gas development, hydro-electric projects, or nuclear projects. In such cases, resistance isn't necessarily a personal choice; it can be a community's sole option to protect its natural resources and the local economy. However, the consequences that the allies of those who are resisting these developments can face are very different, for example, from those faced by Indigenous communities. Similarly, the consequences are different in the case of an Indigenous community

PASC was formed after public mobilizations around the Summit of the Americas in Quebec (2001). In 2003, members of the Latin America Committee of the CLAC (Convergence of Anti-Capitalist Struggles) and Rebelles sans frontières, a working group of the Association syndicale étudiante (ASÉ) in UQAM, met to decide which resistance struggle to support in the context of a long-term solidarity project.

Participants in the meeting had solidarity links with the Mapuche people in Chile and the factory recovery movement in Argentina. In addition, one of the CLAC activists had just returned from eight months in Colombia, where she had worked alongside Afro-descendant communities in resistance in Choco Department (province). Her presence had served to deter several paramilitary incursions. It was agreed that this was a meaningful, concrete project and one which fit our political objectives, and with that PASC was formed.

The point, again, is that collective commitment of PASC to support these communities, Colombia was a matter of political choice, and not something sparked by immediate necessity. Members saw their involvement with PASC as something that fit alongside their personal goals, which can and do shift over time. The long-term continuation of our project is thus subject to choice and commitment.

in Colombia resisting a Canadian mining company, which will likely resort to force in order to silence the resistance.

Imagine a situation in which Canadian activists call for solidarity and condemn the repression used to quell resistance to a Canadian mining project in a community in the global South. While some members of the directly affected community may see their involvement as the only way of protecting their means of subsistence, despite the physical risk it entails to themselves and their families, the Canadian solidarity activists who oppose the project run no immediate risk. They can choose to devote their free time to this campaign, or not. The stakes are profoundly different. They also have the privilege of analyzing the situation with a distance, and often from a position of hindsight. This may lead them to advocate a legal strategy or the slow and laborious strategy of lobbying and to condemn outbreaks of violence in the local population as reactionary. In contrast, Canadian activists can travel to a conflict zone and engage in front-line direct confrontation actions. In doing so, the greatest risk they would usually incur is deportation (except in rare cases), leaving the community to suffer an intensification of repression.

If the Canadian organization supplies financial, media, technical, or other support to the local resistance, its (external) reading of the conflict will almost certainly shape how things are carried out on the ground, even though they are neither the main ones affected by the mining and the repression nor the protagonists of the resistance movement.

Similarly, foreigners in the field have the enormous privilege of being able to leave when things become too dangerous. In the case of sickness, political threat, or natural catastrophe - or simply at the end of our trip - we can pull out our passport and return to the security, comfort, and healthcare of our country. While many interns report feeling that they are "living like locals" during their trip, their Canadian citizenship affords them an "escape hatch", which means they will never share the same living conditions. That is, in an emergency, our well-being assumes a value superior to that of local residents: embassy doors open, political pressure may be deployed, and Western media becomes interested in our individual safety.

VIP Pass to Local Officials

As representatives of a Canadian NGO, we have – very unfairly - a special status in the eyes of local authorities, whether police, high level officials, elected officials, or others. When government offices are closed to partner organizations in the global South, doors open for us. Not only are the lives of citizens of wealthier, "developed"

After the Overseas Experience

Solidarity as a personal choice (rather than a matter of necessity) offers the privilege of selecting our involvements. Often this choice is a function of our personal path in life (social networks, experiences, political analysis) and can shift. Keeping members involved after they return from a stint overseas is a considerable challenge for international cooperation organizations. Yet, the involvement of people with this overseas experience is essential in order to maintain its links of solidarity. Those who took part are asked to testify about their experiences, to mobilize new support for the project, to actively participate in awareness campaigns in Quebec and more. However, many organizations complain that they quickly lose contact with former participants who cut ties with the organization once the "report-back" phase is over.

countries accorded more value, their speech also assumes greater credibility. This privilege is the basis of international accompaniment and international observation. The very presence of "internationals" in a conflict zone creates a deterring effect on authorities responsible for the repression. The political "costs" associated with the death of a foreigner (from the global North) is much higher than that of the death of a citizen (from the global South). In the same way, demands made by a Northern NGO will carry more weight than those made, year after year, by a whole group of local organizations. Many organizations from the global south use their contacts with Northern NGOs to help access decision-makers.

Wealth – a Relative Positioning

Money is another source of privilege for Canadians. While some activists from the global North may see themselves as belonging to the poorer classes in their home countries, when they are overseas, they always have access to more money than the local population. Temporarily relinquishing economic comfort during a solidarity trip does not erase our economic privilege. If necessary, we can, for example, access private hospitals. Even without an emergency, we can generally "take a vacation" during a cooperation contract (a concept often foreign to poor populations), travel throughout the country, buy souvenirs, chose what food we eat, and so on. This economic privilege naturally creates an imbalance within solidarity relationships. While we may fully intend to avoid charity and circumscribe our work in a human rights or education framework, for example, we possess resources that can (temporarily) resolve problems that may be very important to people locally. Working in solidarity often means that you cannot give even small amounts of money to someone in the community. For example, a volunteer has to refuse to give even $2 to her neighbour to buy medication for her child. The explanation usually given is that it is not possible to meet all the financial needs in the community and that we are not there to do charity. If that volunteer is also the sick child's teacher, she has the privilege of deciding which solution takes priority: should limited funding go to medication or to teaching children in the community? Her neighbour, for her part, has no choice in the matter: she only receives what assistance the volunteer decides to give.

While economic privilege is glaringly obvious in interpersonal relations between solidarity workers from the global North and the people they are working with locally, it should be kept in mind that relationships between Northern NGOs and Southern organizations are even more determined by this imbalance, because it is written into their contractual relationship

PASC's accompaniers pay for their entire trip to Colombia. This obligation to self-finance is a way of demonstrating the strength of one's commitment to the work. On the other hand, it is the people with the best economic conditions who are benefited by this practice.

3.2 Roles of Northern Activists in International Solidarity

Canada, a Good Samaritan

Despite its political support for repressive regimes (for example, Colombia), its foreign military occupations (for example, Afghanistan and Haiti [see Appendix]), its responsibility for human rights abuses associated with its mining industry, its agricultural policies which destroy the food autonomy of Southern countries, and more, Canada positions itself internationally as a defender of human rights and democracy. Assuming this role of "Good Samaritan", Canadian activists overseas help to consolidate the image of a humanitarian and altruistic Canada, distancing it from complicity in these conflicts.

We have little influence over the way people we work with overseas perceive our participation in an international solidarity project. Even when we are very critical of Canada's international action and carry out our work from an anti-imperialist perspective, we can still help whitewash Canada's image and thus facilitate its intrusion into the South through investment, business opportunities, political influence, etc.). Our use of Canadian institutions, especially embassies, to build diplomatic pressure for human rights further fosters the image of Canadians as altruistic.

As discussed in Chapter 2, many theorists have highlighted the important role of missionaries in colonization. Offering the benefits of foreign presence to local populations, their charitable deeds allowed them to enter territories hostile to colonial occupation and to construct an altruistic and charitable image of empire.

It is then important to ask ourselves if, in the same way, our presence overseas helps polish the image of Canada, thereby helping to consolidate this imperialist state's power over countries of the global South. Sara Koopman argues that the role of Good Samaritan is not only a "tool of the master" to legitimate domination but also a claim to moral superiority. Playing the role of "saviour" involves assuming a superior role insofar as it implies that "we" know what is best for the Other.

Canadians have turned with alacrity to the vision of ourselves as a good nation overwhelmed by the brutalities of the New World Order. Our engagement with the world is everywhere depicted as the engagement of the compassionate but uninvolved observer. We come to know ourselves as a compassionate people; indeed, trauma suggests that it is our very vulnerability to pain that marks us as Canadians. From our position as witness, we help to mark out the terrain of what is good and what is evil. Possessed of unique sensibilities, sensibilities that take us to the depths of grief and trauma, we can diagnose the trouble and act as the advance scout and the go-between. In this way, trauma narratives furnish middle power nations such as Canada with a homemade, that is to say a specifically national, version of the politics of rescue. [188]

- Sherene Razack, *Canadian sociologist*

Peace Corps is a US government programme to send volunteers around the world.

The Westerner as Judge and Saviour

Imperialism affects "here" as well as "there". [...] Today the good helper role is being widely used [...] to work against empire. Yet this master's tool is toxic. It may appear to take tiles off the house, but it reinforces the systems of domination that prop up empire. Those of us who struggle against empire must also struggle against the imperialism within ourselves.[189] **- Sara Koopman**, *PhD, School of America Watch activist*

Only the dominated are figures of peril, scourge or threat; the oppressor being the only true hero of History.[190] **- Lise Noël,** *Quebecois historian*

Imperialist states are not only economic, technological, and military powers, they also dominate in the field of morality because they define norms and values for global society and present them as universal. When the "international community" is evoked, the interests of powerful states are at stake, not the interests of less powerful countries. Likewise, in international solidarity initiatives, condemnation of a practice by a Canadian NGO unfortunately always carries more weight than condemnation by an NGO in the South. Organizations based in the South understand this dynamic very well and sometimes call on their Northern partners to endorse their demands and legitimate their actions.

Westerners travelling overseas are always called upon to act as international observers; whether formally, as part of an international observation mission, or informally, reporting on their observations in their home countries by writing articles, mounting exhibits, screening videos, giving talks, or simply having conversations in their networks. The idea of international observation wrongly assumes that the observer is exceptionally endowed with the qualities of impartiality, invisibility, and universality. Underlying the concept and practice of international observation is the premise that an external "third-party" can witness a situation in an objective manner. This assumption raises many questions about who is designated as objective or neutral and who is considered biased. In reality, an observer always understands and judges a situation from her point of view, culture, social position, and ideology; she cannot be universal. Nor can she be invisible: her presence and actions do have an impact on the situation. For example, the visible presence of a Canadian delegation in a conflict zone can temporarily dissuade government forces from using violence; international observers are thus unable to witness state crimes.

The Western public contributes to this glorification of the role of external witnesses, endowing them with the capacity to see and understand local/global dynamics that local people apparently can't see for themselves. Whether in the posture of expert or simply as an observer, this exaggeration of Western knowledge strengthens paternalism and power relations, as Gada Mahrouse discusses in a study on "citizen journalism" in war zones:

> The activists also spoke of assuming, in interviews, the roles of objective observers or authorities. In general, they said they were perceived by Western media to be more knowing or trustworthy than the local people and were frequently asked by media to comment on the politics of situations that, in many cases, they knew little about. [191]

When in Colombia, members of PASC rely on North/South hierarchy to raise the profile of the struggles and demands of communities and organizations it is accompanying by calling on the Canadian government when we think it is necessary. PASC's accompaniers in Colombia wear a t-shirt bearing C-A-N-A-D-A in giant letters.

PASC wants to build anti-imperialist solidarity in practice and denounce Canadian companies profiting from and contributing to Colombian state violence. At the same time, by calling on the Canadian state to demand respect for human rights in Colombia, we strengthen the image of Canada as a promoter of peace and human rights.

However, we should not forget that, in parts of Colombia and elsewhere in the world, many people refuse to be fooled by this image and communities reject the presence of foreign NGOs outright.

Moreover, Mahrouse argues, when people from the global North travel to conflict zones, the tendency of the media is to focus on them and the risks they incur, rather than on the conflict itself or the affected population. Underlying this phenomenon is the fact that it is easier for the public in the North to identify with their fellow citizens. The situation itself becomes less important than what a "fellow" Westerner has to say about it.

A striking example is General Romeo Dallaire in Rwanda. In an article called, "Stealing the Pain of Others," Sherene Razack[193] shows how the Rwandan genocide became an object of interest to Canadians because it was presented through the eyes of a Canadian. Razack illustrates how Dallaire was elevated to the rank of national hero and, in turn how the Rwandan genocide became his personal story of trauma and despair. According to Razack, this figure creates a powerful national consciousness in which Canadians come to believe they are endowed with a higher moral character than the rest of humanity. The Canadian imagination is fed from these examples that make us believe in our exceptional propensity for compassion and humanitarian action, a process that Razack calls "stealing the pain of others".

If the ability to elicit compassion among bystanders depends on a white/Westerner mediator, such activists' practices are far from counter-hegemonic in their effects. Assigning humanity to the Other is, after all, whiteness in its finest form.[192] **- Gada Mahrouse**

We do not wish to call into question General Dallaire's intentions. However, it is important to remember that his presence in Africa, as a representative of Canada, with weapon and troops, is linked to a colonial agenda and thus not a question of pure victimization.

Finally, it is important to recognize that the act of testifying necessarily involves filtering information. The person doing the reporting chooses her discourse in a more or less conscious way; she cannot claim to be a neutral channel of information. An activist supporting a cause in solidarity with other people is faced with the question of whether it is possible to "give voice to the voiceless" without speaking for them.

... the suffering of the Rwandans has been transformed into our pleasure, the good feeling that we get from contemplating our own humanity. [194]
- Sherene Razack, *Canadian sociologist*

9th Annual Conference of Critical Race and Anti-Colonial Studies, RACE,
University Concordia, Montreal, 2009

Giving Voice to the "Voiceless"

"We are called to speak for the weak, for the voiceless, for victims of our nation …" **- Martin Luther King,** *4 April 1967*

"These homilies are intended to be the voice of this people, to be the voice of those who don't have one. That is undoubtedly the reason that they do not please those who have too much voice." **- Monseigneur Romero**, *29 July 1979.*

In his public speeches against the Vietnam War, Martin Luther King invited Americans to speak for the "voiceless" victims of the United States. As war raged in El Salvador, Monsignor Romero saw his speeches as the "voice of the voiceless", his sermons took up the cry of an oppressed people in rebellion.

Despite the popularity of community media and the growth of opinion forums, the metaphor of the giving voice is still relevant in an era dominated by an ideology stigmatizing all opposition discourse. It reflects a reality that arises in part from the international domination of Western media and in part from the privileged access to media that citizens of rich countries enjoy because they have more resources to get their messages across.

It seems important to ask, in a self-critical manner, how this privilege can be used in a way that helps to redistribute rather than strengthen it. As Arundhati Roy, Indian intellectual and activist, points out, "We know of course there's really no such thing as the 'voiceless'. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard."[195] The distinction she draws between "the voiceless" and "the unheard" invites us to prioritize listening over public speaking.

The privilege of having a "more listened-to voice" can inadvertently usurp the voices of others by speaking "in the name of others". This results in representing others in ways that deny the existence of different actors and discourses. Unless explicitly mandated by a Southern organization, a Northern activist or NGO should not speak in the name of others but in her own name, even though she is in solidarity with others. Her voice is her own. She is not a neutral megaphone. Rather than speaking for others, it is more productive for solidarity activists to consider speaking with them.

The idea of prioritizing listening over speaking is also critical. It can be put into practice by preparing our information dissemination practices in collaboration with those concerned. First, this involves asking, what messages do they consider to be fundamental? What analysis do they want to highlight? What words and concepts do they use to communicate these ideas? Second, solidarity activists must situate ourselves within these representational practices by contemplating our own political views, and our links to the political situations, both when in Canada and abroad. What are the links between us and those most affected? What are our respective political positions and points of convergence and divergence? What links can be drawn between the situation there and here? In this way, we may develop a unified voice that is respresentative of different actors and actresses.

Media justice now,
Favianna Rodriguez, 2003

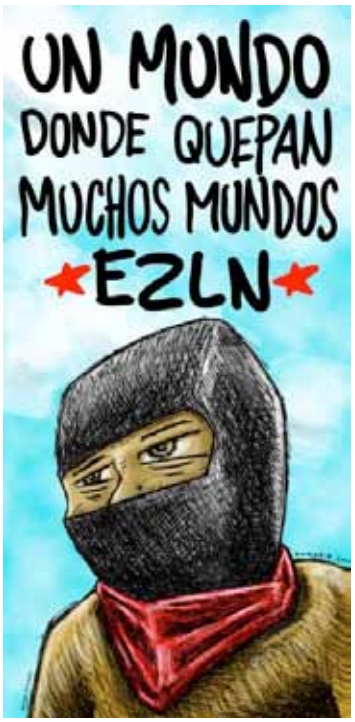
The Voice of the South: Between co-optation and idealization

The problem of speaking-for assumes different forms depending on the politics of the Northern organizations intending to transmit the demands of Southern social movements. We will look at two different tendencies which strengthen the privilege of the "most listened to" and the power relations underpinning it.

First, because the majority of NGOs in the global North adopt a non-confrontational tone in their public discourse - not blaming the system but aiming to improve it - they often clean up their Southern partners' discourse to fit their public relations campaigns. Southern activists struggling for social change become "human rights defenders demanding respect for human rights"; peasant communities who fight agricultural policies and the monopoly of arable land by the national bourgeoisie become "peasant associations promoting sustainable development and fair trade", and so on.

This same projection is at work when radical activists from the North speak in the name of Southern movements, presenting them as comrades in struggle and characterizing their demands in terms of their own anti-capitalist, anti-racist, feminist, and ecological positions. While it is true that Southern movements supported by radical organizations are part of a plural and diversified global fight, their political positions are not in line automatically with those advanced by the International of Resistance. The process of resistance, in North or South, cannot be reduced to a stereotyped ideal. Loosely translated, a Zapatista slogan captures this idea: "Let's build a world in which there is room for many worlds."[196]

Moreover, activists from the North often idealize the resistance of people in the South. They face disillusionment when they visit these movements and "communities in resistance" and realize that, in some cases, sexism is deeply rooted, very authoritarian structures are often the norm, ecological values are limited to discourse, and so on. The criticism should be expressed, but the intention here is not to criticize these movements but highlight the tendency in the North to idealize and project values onto Southern actors.



A world in which there is room for many worlds.

Zapatista poster, The Other Campaign

The term "communities in resistance" – redolent of anarchist values and an ideal of autonomy - provoked strong disillusionment in PASC's first accompaniment teams. In fact, the communities we accompany are not ideologically unified: some were not necessarily critical of the economic development plans of the region before they were driven off of their lands by force; and not all members of a community share all of our values. For many, the process of resistance is mainly about regaining what has been taken from them.

Similarly, our relations of solidarity often encounter walls like homophobia, sexism, and racism. This creates a difficult situation: intervening in these situations opens the door to intrusion, while not intervening makes us accomplices. An ongoing question within our collective is therefore, how do we act without betraying our own values?

3.3 Relation to the Other

From Pity to Empathy

> We define **empathy** as the ability to imagine oneself in another's place and to understand the other's feelings, desires, ideas, and actions[197] According to this definition, empathy involves a process of intellectual distancing which aims to understand the emotional state of the Other, without claiming to directly experience their emotions.

Pity, in contrast, is a "feeling of sorrow and compassion caused by the sufferings and misfortunes of others"[198], and which brings one to want to relieve them or see them relieved.

One's stance towards the Other is crystallized in the emotions experienced in the face of her suffering: for example, indifference, sadness, rage, pity, or empathy. These emotions depend on our relationship with and view of other people (Are they equals or are they strangers?) as well as the way in which we think of ourselves (Can what is happening to them also affect us? Are we different or similar? Are we responsible?).

Power relations between activists of the global North and peoples of the global South are such that the former receive empathy and the latter pity. This reinforces inequalities.[199] The relation of empathy is a relation between people who are more or less equal; it implies at least understanding, if not sharing, the suffering. In contrast, a relation of pity strengthens the power differential between viewer and sufferer. Pity often leads to charity; empathy more readily turns towards solidarity.

Images of Suffering

Emotions experienced in the face of suffering also depend on how the situation is explained. Suffering is often considered normal or inevitable. Nearly every day, there are reports in the media of so-called natural disasters around the world: hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, droughts, famines, and so on. We can almost come to believe that, in some regions, people are simply condemned to suffer endless disasters, resulting in destruction and death. If not, why do such things always happen in the same places?

The idea that Africa is somehow naturally stuck in tribal wars from another age, leading them to kill each other to the last man, is a colonial myth that benefits companies because it lets them wash their hands of any responsibility.
Alain Deneault,
author of Noir Canada

This perspective depoliticizes situations of "humanitarian emergency", instead sending messages like: "the consequences of natural disasters are inevitable," and "wars are bad luck or the manifestation of a chaotic nature", allowing disengagement from a sense of responsibility.

From Victims to Agents of Change

Just as suffering is socially constructed, the position of victim is also a product of discourse and perception. There are many ways of perceiving a "victim".

Victims can be seen as powerless. We feel pity and a moral obligation to help them, because they are incapable of resolving the situation, while we see ourselves as possessing the means of improving their condition.

The feminist movement, notably in Quebec, has adopted the term "survivor" in its fight against violence in order to emphasize the agency of the victim. Recognition of victims' capacities and potential to regain power over their lives (the idea of empowerment) makes it possible to see them as active allies and partners.

In other parts of the world, the term "victim" has been reclaimed and used to insist that crimes have taken place (and consequently there are criminals and victims). For example, the Movement of Victims of State Crimes is active in countries

subjected to dictatorships or repressive regimes disguised as law-abiding states. Claiming the status of victim in this context represents a move from a passive and neutral position to an active one of condemning state crime and demanding the right to truth, justice, and reparations. The Colombian chapter of this international movement defines itself as follows:

> The National Movement of Victims of State Crimes [...] demands the right to organize and mobilize: it's a commitment to the dignity of victims who develop political proposals, resist forgetting and refuse reconciliation and collaboration on the question of the rights of victims with a state capable of protecting those responsible for the crimes, even going to the shameful extent of impunity. [203]

Finally, some activists prefer the term "most affected" rather than "victims". This highlights the fact that we are all affected by systems of power responsible for crimes against humanity, while acknowledging that some are on the frontlines. Colonialism, agro-business, mining exploitation, militarism, and so on continue to have devastating effects everywhere in the world, including Canada. We see this as an enriching perspective that allows us to situate our international solidarity work in the context of struggles waged in our own country.

Victims are by nature impersonal and interchangeable. They appear, passive figures in emotional marketing, in NGO appeals. Most of the individuals affected do not think of themselves primarily as victims, but as individuals facing tragedy. [...] It is the gaze of a foreign other which constructs them as victims. Inequality and the absence of reciprocity characterize the relationship between saviours and saved.[202]
- Bernard Hours, *French anthropologist*

Famine: a natural catastrophe?

The former president of Action contre la faim (Action against hunger), Sylvie Brunelle, writes that, "today's famines are the product of geopolitics, malnutrition is that of under-development".[201] Global food production is sufficient to feed 6 billion people. Famines and malnutrition are not the result of natural conditions: political choices lurk behind this human suffering, though it is too often presented as an act of fate.

Geographers classify famine according to three categories:

1) Traditional or ideological famine: a weapon of war used by a government or group in power to pacify a population, often a minority, and force their displacement (examples: Armenia, 1915; Ukraine, 1932-1933; Jews and Romas during the Second World War).

2) Manipulated or instrumentalized famine: refers to the instrumentalization of a vulnerable situation (scarcity of resources due to poor harvests, natural disasters, etc.); public officials consciously decide to allow it to worsen so that they can later sound the alarm in the international media and demand emergency humanitarian aid. This aid helps the state to rebuild legitimacy in the eyes of the population (through the distribution of staple goods) and to reposition itself internationally by attracting the attention of NGOs (examples: Ethiopia, Sudan, Iraq, North Korea).

3) Created or green famine: these concern regions of surplus (where food production exceeds local needs). These famines are instigated and planned in the context of policies relating, for example, to export quotas or food reserves managed by the state or food oligopolies (examples: Liberia, Sierra Leone).

Who is Helping Whom?

I want to be very clear that solidarity is in part enjoyment and about forms of self-fashioning that may not be very self-reflexive [...]. We feel more content with ourselves when we are positioned as moral subjects against the voracious and unjust power structure and as the vehicles of justice for the victims whose side we take. [207] **Diane Nelson**, *American anthropologist*

After returning from an overseas project, a large majority of interns feel that they have "gotten more than they have given". For example, one woman, like other former Québec sans frontières (QSF) interns who participated in a study into privilege in international cooperation internships, remarked, "I learned a lot there, they taught me a lot. I feel like they gave me much more than I was able to be useful for them."[204]

Our point here is not to comment on the uses of these international cooperation internships for the host populations, but to highlight the fact that those who go to help have interests in solidarity actions and derive benefits from them. Understanding this helps to deconstruct the altruistic image of the Good Samaritan and challenge the power relations associated with it.

Interns most often cited both personal and professional benefits. Who has not heard friends speaking about their overseas experiences as a revelation, an existential crisis, or a time of personal growth? Furthermore, these projects not only offer the opportunity to encounter new realities and to open our "horizons", but also the luxury of taking a vacation from our Canadian life. Taking a step back from our daily lives encourages introspection, openness, and political learning.

Those who promote these internships see this exceptional experience as an opportunity to raise awareness among youth and strengthen their commitment to social justice. To assess the results of this strategy, Plan Nagua carried out a study of former interns in 2005, examining their "involvement in different mobilizations and social involvement in the North." The authors concluded that the most obvious outcome was support for the academic and professional careers of former interns, rather than increased social and political involvement.[205] How many of us benefit from indicating on our CVs and applications into university programmes that we had these experiences overseas? Likewise, a study in France in the 1990s, carried out with volunteers and staff at French NGOs, came to a similar conclusion:

> For upwardly mobile young graduates or for the disillusioned, a 'humanitarian' experience can represent an opportunity to show off abilities and skills valued by the professional world. It is thus an experience that can easily be 'cashed-in' on the labour market. [206]

Beyond personal and professional benefits, involvement in an international solidarity campaign or project helps build a positive self-image. In a solidarity movement, we are brought into close contact with people we admire and who give us their trust. The feeling of being part of a movement meets our need for personal worth and accomplishment: "I feel useful" or "I am on the right side".

In short, recognizing the personal benefits we derive from our international solidarity work makes us aware that these actions are not just about helping the Other. It may even prove useful to ask whether we are doing it for them and not in fact for us. The debate is ongoing.

Action contre la faim (Action against hunger), "Solidarity with Asia, Universal Studio is mobilizing"

Helper or Ally

Many people get involved in international solidarity with the best of intentions. We are committed to a cause as a result of our values and political beliefs. We therefore do not help others so much as we help our cause. This is what constitutes a relation of solidarity. Presenting international solidarity work as something we do for others is not only misleading but also skews the essence of solidarity. In presenting our international solidarity actions as performed for organizations and people in the South, they become the object of our solidarity, while we are the only subjects. Instead we must acknowledge that we are acting out of our own convictions, and that the objective of our solidarity is a better world for all. In this way our Southern partners are the subjects of this solidarity, just as we are.

"In Central America, people are liberating themselves," Développement et Paix, 1979

Returning from an international solidarity project, activists generally gain the admiration of their peers and conversations frequently turn around personal sacrifice rather than motivations for engaging in the solidarity project. Abandoning the comfortable position of "returning hero" for the more unsettling one of 'activist defending ideals' is not easy. It is certainly simpler to talk about difficulties endured, risks incurred, and exotic curiosities than to present a political analysis, explaining the ways in which the reality in Canada is connected to that of Southern allies and how their struggles are linked to ours.

Perhaps what is at stake is precisely this Canadian privilege of having our actions applauded as charitable and just, while the activism of our Southern partners is often denigrated in their own settings as social and political dissidence. Since we are privileged to have a "more listened-to voice" and to express our ideas without endangering our lives, should we not speak in the name of our ideals ?

As an international accompanier, my activities are endlessly observed, commented upon and analyzed. First is the question about my presence in Colombia: "Why is this person standing up for me when I didn't know her before going to prison and when society has condemned me?" "Why did she come to share our difficult life?" "Why is she risking repression?" and the response they come up with is my need to struggle, this sense of social justice, of solidarity between the oppressed, which can't be silenced. Less obvious is my global analysis, in which the imprisonment of any woman is a condemnation of all human dignity; one community's self-assertion safeguards the existence of others; each act of resistance creates possibilities for subversion in a tightly interconnected world within the same systems of domination. [...] Being our rebel self is the first foray into the ring. Our solidarity is political; it is not impartial or neutral. It must be explained. This motivation, this uneasy sense of justice must be explained in our everyday actions and words, beyond the precise form of resistance we are supporting: the fight is global. *PASC Accompaniment Manual*, 2007

Notes

188. Razack, "Stealing the Pain... ", p. 381.

189. Koopman, "Imperialism Within ..."

190. Noël, L'intolérance, p. 22.

191. Mahrouse, "The Compelling Story of the White/Western Activist ...", p. 261.

192. Mahrouse, "Race-conscious transnational activists with cameras... ", p. 99.

193. Razack, "Stealing the Pain of Others... "

194. Razack, "Stealing the Pain of Others... ", pp. 382-383.

195. Roy, "Peace and the new corporate liberation theology"..

196. Subcomandante Marcos, Press Release, "Un mundo donde quepan muchos mundos" (free translation), 26 February 1994.

197. Merriam-Webster Dictionary [Online] http://www.merriam-webster.com.

198. Oxford Dictionaries [Online] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/ (Consulted 21 February 2014).

199. Mahrouse, "Race-conscious transnational activists with cameras... ", p. 88-89.

200. Free translation: "L'idée que l'Afrique serait en quelque sorte congénitalement engluée dans des guerres tribales d'un autre âge les menant à s'entretuer tous jusqu'au dernier est un mythe colonialiste qui profite bien aux sociétés parce qu'elles peuvent ainsi se laver de toute responsabilité." Alain Deneault, in Gheller, "Dénoncer l'exploitation canadienne en Afrique. Entretien avec Alain Deneault."

201. Brunelle, Sylvie. 2002. Famines et politique. Presses de Sciences-Po, p. 53.

202. Free translation: " Les victimes sont par nature impersonnelles et interchangeables. Elles apparaissent, figurantes passives d'un marketing émotionnel, dans les courriers des ONG. La plupart des individus concernés ne se pensent pas, d'abord, comme des victimes, mais comme des individus confrontés à un drame.[...] C'est le regard d'un autrui étranger qui les construit en victimes. L'inégalité et l'absence de réciprocité caractérisent le rapport entre sauveteurs et sauvés." Hours, "Derrières les évidences... "

203. Free translation: "El MOVICE, [...] demuestra una personalidad y una identidad que reivindica el derecho a organizarse, movilizarse, y en todo caso es una apuesta por la dignificación de las víctimas, que elabora propuestas políticas, que se resiste al olvido y se niegan a conciliar y a concertar los derechos de las víctimas con un Estado, que ha sido capaz de favorecer a los victimarios hasta el límite de la más vergonzosa impunidad". Movimiento nacional de víctimas. [Online] : www.movimientodevictimas.org.

204. Mahrouse, G., "Solidarity tourism & international development internships: Some critical reflections."

205. Gauthier et al., "Retombées d'un séjour de coopération internationale..."

206. Free translation: "L'expérience " humanitaire " peut tout d'abord représenter, pour des jeunes diplômés en voie d'ascension sociale ou des cadres désabusés, une opportunité pour faire montre d'aptitudes et de compétences valorisées par le monde professionnel. Elle constitue ainsi une expérience aisément " monnayable " sur le marché du travail". Conclusion of a 1990s study of one hundred paid staff working in the field of international cooperation. Lechien et al., Du syndicalisme à la "solidarité internationale..., p. 110.

207. Nelson, "A Finger in the Wound...", p.62.

Conclusion:
To be continued

The manual, "Decolonizing Our Solidarity" is a work in progress. We have raised many questions which continue to preoccupy us, arising from our experiences in PASC. We hope they will be useful to everyone who believes in international solidarity.

We believe that further exploration of the questions raised in this text is needed. We invite all groups for whom international solidarity is relevant and who share our concerns to continue these discussions and take the time to reflect in a critical manner on their own practices and doubts.

Far from promoting apathy or inaction, our intent has been to address the tensions, contradictions, and struggle underlying our initiatives. We hope to revive the memory of the struggles behind our actions. What are the values that we hold dear? What is the social change we want to see? What is this unease, this sense of rebellion that drives us to change our global social order?

Finally, as citizens of the Canadian nation-state, we believe it is important to conclude with a word about the necessity of taking a position about this state. Sporadically, critics of national and international government policies are heard. These voices have challenged the presence of the Canadian military in Afghanistan, cuts of NGO funding and promoted the need to regulate the activities of Canadian mining companies. In doing so, we must be explicit about the fact that Canada is a colonial state, built on the conquest of land and the subjugation of indigenous peoples. Today, through its foreign policy, it exercises political control and extracts a share of global economic wealth at the expense of the populations of poor countries. To be in solidarity with the Global South while remaining silent on the imperialist policies of the Canadian state results in undermining the work we do abroad.

Supplementary material
NGOs at the Heart of the Turmoil: The case of Haiti

Editorial note:

We offer this debate, contentious as it may be, in the spirit of dialogue.

After more than 500 years of colonization, with colonial economic policies still in place, repeated disasters, and the largest ratio of NGO per inhabitant in the world, Haiti is a place of exacerbated, interacting, painful contradiction.

Coup d'état or Democratic Transition: Contradictory Accounts

> On February 29, 2004, the two hundredth anniversary of the independence of Haiti was marked by tensions that ultimately lead to the forced departure, under restraint, of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Victim of a 'modern coup d'état' for some, justly evicted dictator for others, the ex-President remains very controversial. But the outcome of the crisis also raises numerous questions about the ambiguities of the ex-opposition.[209] Maurice Lemoine, Editor-in-Chief, *Le Monde Diplomatique*.[210i]

Canada's deep engagement in Haiti falls within Canada's priorities for the Americas and focuses on Prosperity, Security, and Democratic Governance. Haiti is the highest beneficiary of Canadian development assistance in the Americas and the second highest in the world (after Afghanistan), delivered by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).[208]

- Government of Canada

Coup d'état and Military Occupation ...

Numerous grassroots groups in Haiti and around the world roundly denounced the "forced departure" of President Aristide, orchestrated by the United States and France. Aristide had headed up the Lavalas Party which, among other things, used an anti-imperialist discourse. The coup d'état, fomented by the Group of 184 with the support of Washington, was also aided by Canada, which militarily occupied the Port-au-Prince airport while President Aristide signed a "resignation" notice just before American soldiers escorted him to Africa. Aristide still insists that he was kidnapped by a Franco-American mission.

… or Aristide's Resignation and Political Transition?

Canadian NGOs interpret the facts entirely differently. They believe that Aristide's departure took place in accordance with international law. As stated in the Interim Cooperation Framework, President Aristide resigned and left the country on 29 February 2004, and Boniface Alexandre, President of the Appeals Court, took oath as interim President in conformity with the Constitution.[211] That same evening, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1529 authorizing the immediate deployment of a Multinational Interim Force (MIF).

Most Canadian and Quebec NGOs rallied behind the perspective that, "Far from orchestrating a coup d'état in Haiti, in fact, the international community's main act has been to abstain from sending troops to defend the Aristide government. At this point, such an action, in the face of massive opposition and the moral failings of the government, would have meant going against the will of the majority of the population."[212]

Controversy in the Field of International Cooperation

There is very little documentation available to help understand the perspective of Canadian NGOs. Some of the positions that were taken publicly raised many questions and debates. For example, on 15 December 2003, just weeks after the coup, AQOCI issued a press release, "asking the new Prime Minister of Canada, Paul Martin, to make a gesture of solidarity with the Haitian people by withdrawing his support for the Lavalas regime. The message to the international community will at last be clear." This release was republished by many organizations. However, Canada hadn't supported the Aristide government for quite some time. In January 2003, during a summit of American, French, and Canadian diplomats at Meech Lake, Canadian diplomat Denis Paradis stated, "The international community cannot wait for the end of President Aristide's five year mandate in 2005. Aristide must leave and the international community must prepare itself for a new round of humanitarian aid and military occupation, given its democratic responsibility to protect the vulnerable residents of this bankrupt state."[213]

Such statements by Quebec's international solidarity organizations were perceived as encouraging Canadian military intervention, which moreover was not subsequently criticized by these organizations. Nor were many voices heard condemning the wanton acts of Canadian soldiers.[214]

The 2004 coup d'état is viewed by some as just another phase in the shameless pillaging of Haiti since colonization. In their book *Canada in Haiti: Waging War against the Poor Majority*, Yves Engler and Anthony Fenton denounce Canadian complicity in the coup d'état and the role that NGOs played in presenting the coup as a democratic necessity and thus making it publicly acceptable. The authors document Canada's role in the period of instability prior to the overthrow of Aristide. They show that Canada, like the US and the EU, practically ended all international aid to the Haitian government, instead funding Haitian NGOs favourable to the anti-Aristide minority.[215] The authors invite Canadians to reflect on this strategy:

> Imagine a scheme to provide Canadians with education, healthcare, water and social security through private charities (financed by foreign countries), big businesses and wealthy individuals. What if these private charities were at the same time funding opposition parties and supported an armed take-over of Parliament? [216]

A Bankrupt Economic Model

International intervention in Haiti is legitimized by development discourse: "capitalism to the rescue" is the response to every disaster. For example, the same colonial policies that have weakened the Haitian economy since its inception were proposed as a reconstruction solution in the aftermath of the January 2010 earthquake.[217] With more than 10,000 NGOs in Haiti, their collective economic power is greater than the state's and they possess a corresponding political power. They can thus hardly be strangers to the "proposed" development model.

Testifying before the Foreign Affairs Commission of the US Senate on 10 March 2010, former president Bill Clinton, now a UN Special Envoy to Haiti, made a remarkable confession. Referring to liberalization policies, which he imposed on Haiti in the 1990s and subsequently forced that country to eliminate tariffs on rice imported from the United States, the former president admitted that it, "may have been good for some of my farmers in Arkansas, but it has not worked". Clinton continued, "It was a mistake. I had to live every day with the consequences of the loss of capacity to produce a rice crop in Haiti to feed those people because of what I did, nobody else."[218]

So while a former president of the United States admits that his foreign policy was directly responsible for the famines which have ravaged the Haitian people, do we dare hope that the change in government in Haiti, orchestrated by this same state and its allies, was motivated by concern for the well-being of the Haitian people and not by imperialist interests?

During her investiture as UNESCO's Special Envoy to Haiti, former governor-general of Canada Michaëlle Jean expressed her hope that her country of origin would stop being a "vast laboratory of trial and error for international aid."[219]

The example of Haiti overflows with illustrations of the need to adopt a critical attitude towards the goals and interventions of international solidarity. Despite all its good will, it is too often hijacked by the policies of imperialist states.

Haiti (Gitano), 1975

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208. Canada. Government of Canada. 2010. Canada-Haiti Relations. [Online] www.canadainternational.gc.ca/haiti/bilateral_relations_bilaterales/canada_haiti.aspx?lang=eng&view=d (Consulted 8 January 2013).

209. Lemoine, Maurice. 2004. "Bourreau ou victime ?". Le Monde Diplomatique, September.

210. At the end of March 2004, while the ex-President was languishing in South Africa, the preliminary results of a commission of inquiry on Haiti, led by former Attorney-General Ramsey Clark, were released in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic). The commission revealed that "the government of the United States and the Dominican Republic participated in the arming and training, in this country, of 'rebel' Haitians."

211. Canada participated in the elaboration of the Interim Cooperation Framework (2004-2007), a programme of international cooperation and economic restructuring, denounced by organizations of Haitian civil society. See "Haitian Civil Society Organizations' Declaration on the Interim Cooperation Framework Process" [Online] http://www.grassrootsonline.org/news/pressreleases/haitian-civil-society-organizations-declaration-interim-cooperation-framework-pr (Consulted 21 February 2014).

212. Développement et Paix. 2006. "La question du départ d'Haïti de Jean-Bertrand Aristide".

213. Dubuc, Pierre. 2008. "Coup d'État en Haïti 'revisité". L'Aut Journal, 13 June. [online] http://www.lautjournal.info/default.aspx?page=3&NewsId=925.

214. Heinrich, J. 2006. "Canadian troops in Haiti accused of making death, rape threats". The Gazette, 2 September.

215. Engler and Fenton refer to a CIDA report published in 2005 that states that, since 2004, nongovernmental actors, whether non-profit or otherwise, provided almost 80% of basic services. Without exception, the documents obtained from CIDA show that organizations ideologically opposed to Lavalas were the sole recipients of Canadian funding. Civil society groups favourable to Lavalas received no funding. The 2005 CIDA report reads, supporting non-governmental actors contributed to the creation of parallel systems of service delivery. "In Haiti's case, these actors [NGOs] were used as a way to circumvent the frustration of working with the [Aristide] government ¡K this contributed to the establishment of parallel systems of service delivery, eroding legitimacy, capacity and will of the state to deliver key services".

216. Engler, Yves and Anthony Fenton. 2005. Canada in Haïti : Waging War Against the Poor Majority. Winnipeg, MB and Black Point, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

217. Dupuy, Alex. 2010. "Disaster Capitalism to the Rescue: The International Community and Haiti After the Earthquake". NACLA Report on the Americas (July-August).

218. Idem.

219. Dolbec, Michel. 2010. "Pour Michaëlle Jean, Haïti ne doit plus être un laboratoire des erreurs". La Presse, 8 November.

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Illustrations

We would like to thank everyone who made the illustration of this manual possible.

Centre de recherche en imagerie populaire - CRIP

crip.uqam.ca

In 2003, on behalf of the *Écomusée du fier monde à Montréal*, CRIP also set up an interactive computer terminal providing easy access to 1001 posters from Quebec social movements. In February 2008, CRIP published an anthology called *POUR CHANGER LE MONDE: Affiches des mouvements sociaux au Québec, 1966-2007* (Changing the world: Posters from Social Movements of Quebec, 1966-2007) with LUX Éditeur. This work includes 659 posters and offers a voyage to the heart of social history and the political imaginary of Quebec over the past 40 years.

Justseeds Artists' Cooperative

www.justseeds.org

Justseeds Artists' Cooperative is a decentralized network of 24 artists (in the United States, Canada, and Mexico) committed to making print and design work that reflects a radical social, environmental, and political stance.

Favianna Rodriguez

www.favianna.com

"I am an artist, agitator, and techie working for social change." Favianna Rodriguez is a celebrated printmaker and digital artist based in Oakland, California. Using high-contrast colors and vivid figures, her composites reflect literal and imaginative migration, global community, and interdependence.

Ricardo Levins Morales

www.rlmarts.com

"I believe that art can contribute to changing people's perceptions, hearts and understandings of what has been, what is and what's possible. I'm enough of an organizer to understand that art can't do it alone; people getting together and acting together is the real source of social change. The dignity and possibility in all people is the underlying message of my work."

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