



## The City that Ended Hunger

By Frances Moore Lappé

CITY OF BELO HORIZONTE, BRAZIL

In writing *Diet for a Small Planet*, I learned one

simple truth: hunger is not caused by a scarcity of food but a scarcity of democracy. But that realization was only the beginning, for then I had to ask: what does a democracy look like that enables citizens to have a real voice in securing life's essentials? Does it exist anywhere? Is it possible or a pipe dream? With hunger on the rise here in the United States—one in 10 of us is now turning to food stamps—these questions take on new urgency.

To begin to conceive of the possibility of a culture of empowered citizens making democracy work for them, real-life stories help—not models to adopt wholesale, but examples that capture key lessons. For me, the story of Brazil's fourth largest city, Belo Horizonte, is a rich trove of such lessons.

### Scarcity of food means lack of democracy

Belo, a city of 2.5 million people, once had 11 percent of its population living in absolute poverty, and almost 20 percent of its children going hungry. Then in 1993, a newly elected administration declared food a right of citizenship. The officials said, in effect: If you are too poor to buy food in the market—you are no less a citizen. I am still accountable to you.



More than 10 years ago, Brazil's fourth-largest city, Belo Horizonte, declared that food was a right of citizenship and started working to make good food available to all. One of its programs put local farm produce into school meals. This and other projects cost the city less than 2 percent of its budget. Above, fresh passion fruit juice and salad are a part of a school lunch.

Photo by Leah Rimkus

The new mayor, Patrus Ananias—now leader of the federal anti-hunger effort—began by creating a city agency, which included assembling a 20-member council of citizen, labour, business, and church representatives to advise in the design and implementation of a new food system. The city already involved regular citizens directly in allocating municipal resources—the “participatory budgeting” that started in the 1970s and has since spread across Brazil. During the first six years of Belo's food-as-a-right policy, perhaps in response to the new emphasis on food security, the number of citizens engaging in the city's participatory budgeting process doubled to more than 31,000.

The city agency developed dozens of innovations to assure everyone the right to food, especially by weaving together the interests of farmers and consumers. It offered local family farm-

ers dozens of choice spots of public space on which to sell to urban consumers, essentially redistributing retailer mark-ups on produce—which often reached 100 percent—to consumers and the farmers. Farmers' profits grew, since

### Inside this Issue:

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- Bill C-38 antidemocratic
- Mega-quarry victory
- ...and more



The city of Belo Horizonte puts “Direct From the Country” farmer produce stands throughout busy downtown areas.

Photo by Leah Rimkus

there was no wholesaler taking a cut. And poor people got access to fresh, healthy food.

### **Food stands and market regulation**

In addition to the farmer-run stands, the city makes good food available by offering entrepreneurs the opportunity to bid on the right to use well-trafficked plots of city land for “ABC” markets, from the Portuguese acronym for “food at low prices.” Today there are 34 such markets where the city determines a set price—about two-thirds of the market price—of about twenty healthy items, mostly from in-state farmers and chosen by store-owners. Everything else they can sell at the market price.

“For ABC sellers with the best spots, there’s another obligation attached to being able to use the city land,” a former manager within this city agency, Adriana Aranha, explained. “Every weekend they have to drive produce-laden trucks to the poor neighbourhoods outside of the city center, so everyone can get good produce.”

Another product of food-as-a-right thinking is three large, airy “People’s Restaurants” (Restaurante Popular), plus a few smaller venues, that daily serve 12,000 or more people using mostly locally grown food for the equivalent of less than 50 cents a meal.

Belo’s food security initiatives also include extensive community and school gardens as well as nutrition classes. Plus, money the federal government contributes toward

school lunches, once spent on processed, corporate food, now buys whole food mostly from local growers.

The shift in frame to “food as a right” also led the Belo hunger-fighters to look for novel solutions. In one successful experiment, egg shells, manioc leaves, and other material normally thrown away were ground and mixed into flour for school kids’ daily bread. This enriched food also goes to nursery school children, who receive three meals a day courtesy of the city.

The result of these and other related innovations?

### **Food for all cuts infant death rates**

In just a decade Belo Horizonte cut its infant death rate—widely used as evidence of hunger—by more than half, and today these initiatives benefit almost 40 percent of the city’s 2.5 million population. One six-month period in 1999 saw infant malnutrition in a sample group reduced by 50 percent. And between 1993 and 2002 Belo Horizonte was the only locality in which consumption of fruits and vegetables went up.



ABC bulk produce markets stock the items that the city determines will be sold at a fixed price, about 13 cents per pound.

Photo by Leah Rimkus

The cost of these efforts?

Around \$10 million annually, or less than 2 percent of the city budget. That’s about a penny a day per Belo resident.

### **Food for all benefits all**

Behind this dramatic, life-saving change is what Adriana calls a “new social mentality”—the realization that “everyone in

our city benefits if all of us have access to good food, so—like health care or education—quality food for all is a public good.”

The Belo experience shows that a right to food does not necessarily mean more public handouts (although in emergencies, of course, it does.) It can mean redefining the “free” in “free market” as the freedom of all to participate. It can mean, as in Belo, building citizen-government partnerships driven by values of inclusion and mutual respect.

And when imagining food as a right of citizenship, please note: No change in human nature is required! Through most of human evolution—except for the last few thousand of roughly 200,000 years—*Homo sapiens* lived in societies where pervasive sharing of food was the norm. As food sharers, “especially among unrelated individuals,” humans are unique, writes Michael Gurven, an authority on hunter-gatherer food transfers. Except in times of extreme privation, when some eat, all eat.

*Abridged from Food for Everyone by Frances Moore Lappé in the Spring issue of YES! Magazine, posted Feb 13, 2009. Frances is the author of many books including Diet for a Small Planet and Get a Grip, co-founder of Food First and the Small Planet Institute, and a YES! contributing editor. The author thanks Dr. M. Jahi Chappell for his contribution to the article.*

## President's Column

### Working Together with Others

CUSJ is a growing organization. Your dynamic board is working to affirm and promote the Unitarian and Universalist Principles. We generate a public discussion through our high quality JUSTnews edited by Philip Symons, our discussion list, our facebook page and our website. We have written letters to politicians and conducted letter-writing campaigns such as the one on Bill C-10. Our priorities are focused on the issues of climate change and the losses in Canadian Democracy.



We cannot do this work alone. We are connecting with other organizations and supporting their campaigns.

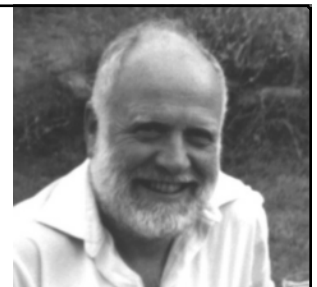
- On the Democracy issue we work with Fair Vote Canada and Reclaiming Our Democracy Now. We want to support efforts toward party cooperation in the next election for the purpose of implementing proportional representation. RODC worked with us on the Bill C-10 campaign, and NORML—a group supporting the legalization of drugs.
- We have had connections with and have supported campaigns shared by the Council of Canadians and the Indigenous Environmental Network. (Frances Deverell and Ahti Tolvanen crossed a police barrier to get arrested in November 2011).

### From the Editor

This issue of JUSTnews earns the title “Justice Fighters” because, though every issue might be so named, this one more than others focuses on the proponents who have struggled for justice. The lead and final articles relate two stories where, for once, justice fighters have won their battles, though the wars on hunger and mega-mining continue.

Unfortunately, in addition to these two uplifting stories, this issue also reports the loss of three Unitarians who have been prominent and persistent fighters for justice in Canada. All three have fought on many fronts: human rights, women's rights, poverty, hunger, and the environment. Others will step up to take their places, but their strength, courage and inspiration will be missed.

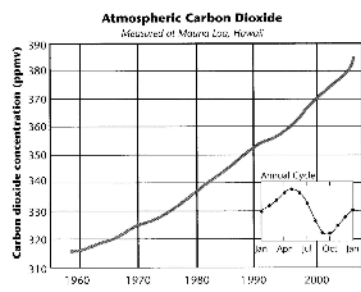
Also in this issue is a critique of the lead article in the past summer's issue of JUSTnews. The article was by George Monbiot, and I intended it as a wake-up call to progressives to quit trying to be nice, and call a spade a spade. Jeff Wilson, however, took exception to the article. I am happy to publish his views, and those of any others, for or against articles or opinions that appear in JUSTnews. Please write! PEKS





- We have supported the campaign of Climatefast.ca in taking a strong stand on climate change. Climatefast.ca was an incredible success. We got 48 MPs or Senators to sign the pledge and some fasted with us. Elizabeth May and Bob Rae both signed. Many wrote letters. Unitarians wrote letters.

While your central board is doing this, two BC congregations held congregation-wide discussions and voted to take an active stand against the tar sands and the pipelines. On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, Unitarians joined with 5000 people from every walk of life in BC to protest the pipelines. At a conference of 1200 young adults from across Canada called *Powershift*, we talked for four days about power issues (energy) and power issues (democracy). Our young people want to be an active part of shaping the world in which they will raise their children. A new economic system, a renewed democracy, and a sustainable energy plan were all on the agenda.



If we burn all the oil in the tar sands at the rate oil companies and the Harper government want to, we will have a devastating effect on the climate of the world. By stopping the pipelines, we limit

the capacity of the tar sands to expand. We want to see big oil clean up the tailings ponds, learn how to mine the oil without devastating surrounding water systems, reduce the toxic wastes, and set up a smaller scale sustainable model. We want to see them all respect the rights of First Nations to real consultation. We want the Federal Government to focus big development and innovation dollars on all areas that will support a conversion to renewable energy.

The next pipeline focus will be Enbridge's line 9. It used to carry natural gas from the Atlantic to central Canada and US. They want to turn it around and carry bitumen from Sarnia, past the Greater Toronto Area

and Kingston, to Montreal and through Vermont to Maine. The line is 37 years old and fears of underground spills that will affect city water systems are real.

We are learning how to engage with others to increase the effectiveness of our actions. These are dynamic times, important times. I recently attended a symposium organized by Reclaim Our Democratic Canada. It was the second conference in a month where the keynote speaker outlined the attacks the Harper Government is making on our democracy. If we don't stop this trend, we may not be a democracy for long.

Our vision of democracy is growing as we try to work together as Unitarians and with other civil society groups. The ideal model of organizational structure is a network. Our board will be stronger if it is working with strong chapters who are connected to the grass roots at the local level. Is your social action committee connected to CUSJ? See how to become a chapter at <http://cusj.org/get-involved/start-a-cusj-chapter/>.

Would you like to claim a page on the CUSJ website? Help me keep your issue up-to-date with solid, factual information that will help people inform themselves and learn what they can do. Please send your comments on the pages we have. We want this site to become a hub of interaction and support for clear, focused actions.

Watch for an event proposal for your congregation on our web-site Democracy page soon. We would like to encourage every congregation to run one event per year to educate the public on our democratic system and how it can be improved before the next federal election.

We are just beginning to learn how to work in this incredibly fast and exciting communication environment. If some of you are really savvy about social networking environments, or twitter, I would appreciate you contacting me directly at [president@cusj.org](mailto:president@cusj.org).

Of course, we would welcome new people on the board to help us steer all this.

What have you been doing this fall? Let us know and don't forget to send photos!



Dr Gary Groot, President of the Canadian Unitarian Council.

## CUC CONDEMNS CANCELLATION OF NON-CHRISTIAN PRISON CHAPLAINS

Dr Gary Groot, President of the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC), and the Rev. Julie Stoneberg, President of Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Canada, wrote to Prime Minister Harper on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012, condemning the cancellation of contracts of non-Christian prison chaplains. "[B]y employing only Christian Chaplains, the government is tacitly giving preferential status to Christianity," they wrote.

"We stand with other faith leaders in calling this unconstitutional, and strongly urge you to reconsider the decision. We further encourage you to demonstrate your support for freedom of religion for all Canadians by ensuring that prisoners have access to appropriate spiritual care and access to chaplains who are trained in multi-faith competency..."

## LETTERS

Dear Editor,

I was dismayed by the front-page reprinting of George Monbiot's reductionist and prejudiced essay, "*Conservatives Proven Stupid, but Progressives are Idiots*" in the Summer 2012 issue of JUSTnews. Mr. Monbiot rationalizes his pre-existing condescension toward people whose political opinions differ from his own with reference to allegedly empirical evidence published last year, which correlated racial prejudice, social conservatism, and lower than average intelligence test scores. Mr. Monbiot mischaracterizes the study, claiming that it "revealed that people with conservative beliefs are likely to be of low intelligence." Actually, it suggests that children measured with lower intelligence are somewhat more likely (but not necessarily "likely") to become conservative adults, not that conservatives are likely to have below average intelligence. But really his highlighting of the study is an excuse for Mr. Monbiot to indulge his own intolerance ("they now appeal to the basest, stupidest impulses"), prejudice ("the other side is, on average, more stupid than our own"), and extreme rhetoric ("conservative strategists have discovered that there is no pool so shallow that several million people won't drown in it").

### **The inherent worth of every person**

My distaste at this article results from several factors beyond the inflammatory nature of the language it employs. First, there is the pernicious stereotyping and implicit devaluing of people with lower IQ test scores than Mr. Monbiot. My Unitarian congregation includes a number of children with serious developmental difficulties that will prevent them from ever achieving high intelligence test scores. This does not prevent them from being valuable, loved members of our community, whose personalities and individual worth are not impeded by their intellectual struggles. The tenor of Mr. Monbiot's article, and indeed much Unitarian-Universalist discussion of intelligence, conflates high intelligence with existential value, and lower intelligence with lack of individual worth or dignity. This is not my understanding of human value. As a Unitarian-Universalist, I value all people in their individuality, not where they place on some scale.



George Monbiot

Secondly, Mr. Monbiot tars nearly all conservatives as being ignorant, mean-spirited, and greedy. I don't have to agree with conservative positions to recognize that such a large number of people (well over 100 million in Canada, the U.K., and the United States—the societies he has in mind) cannot be reduced to such facile stereotypes, and that conservative positions are arrived at by people for many different reasons, including deeply educated, compassionate, and selfless motives. It is no fairer to brand all conservatives with the worst excesses of some in their large camp than it is to paint all socialists as Joseph Stalins.

Given my feelings on Mr. Monbiot's article, it should be obvious that I also take exception to the editor's characterization that those who support conservative policies are "the poorly educated, the self-interested, and the stupid."

### **Negative rhetoric is destructive**

I don't know anyone who has ever been convinced to change their minds on a political issue by being called stupid and so forth, so I take this sort of rhetoric to indicate that liberals have given up on trying to convince other Canadians of the soundness of our positions and opted instead to rest in our own smug arrogance. As a political progressive, I find that unfortunate. But perhaps even more disheartening is the clear message that those who do not adhere to a narrow range of political ideas or have high IQs are unwelcome in our religious movement. That is not my Unitarian-Universalism. I follow a religion that seeks to include everyone, that recognizes the diversity of the human species, and honours people for who they are, not who we want them to be. My religion does not reduce people to their brainpower or their voting preferences—whatever they may be—and does not see society through a simplistic black-and-white lens of angelic us vs. demonic them. Indeed, I believe it is these sorts of attitudes—whether they are promulgated by people labelled "conservative" or labelled "progressive"—that are the root of much of the social injustice and suffering we see today. There is room in my congregation for people of all types, and if I disagree with any, I hope not to stoop to self-aggrandizing projections onto others that reduce my ability to consider their positions and eliminate my ability to persuade them in love.

### **Our record no better than others'**

Looking at the historical record, we find that intelligent, prominent, highly-educated Unitarians and Universalists have been major proponents of eugenics, including the forced sterilization of non-whites and those deemed of lower intellectual capac-

ity. Our overall record of racial inclusivity (in either the pews or the pulpit) has been no better than most North American denominations. We let ourselves off the hook when we claim that those who disagree with us are too dumb or prejudiced to follow our logic, and we both ignore our rocky past and violate our present values. Rather than hurling names or stereotypes at those we dislike, we should recognize that we are the ones who have failed to find ways to bring everyone—regardless of their capacities or starting-point positions—over to our side.

Yours in solidarity,  
Jeff Wilson  
Grand River Unitarian Congregation

March, 2012

Open letter to the leader of the  
New Democratic Party of Canada

The Hon. Thomas Mulcair:

I am seriously thinking of voting  
for you, except for one thing.

When you visited Thunder  
Bay, I asked you for your opinion  
on the Occupy Movement. You  
said that you wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole.

Wrong answer in my view, and the reason the NDP  
has little appeal for grass roots movements. If we really  
want [the NDP] to win, we do have to connect with  
these people—a diverse lot if there ever was one—rang-  
ing from the down-and-out to middle class folk, some  
without a job, others sympathetic to the occupiers' pro-  
test.

According to an article in the *NY Review of Books*  
(Feb. 9/12), "a recent Pew Research Center poll found  
that for the first time more people under the age of thirty  
view socialism positively than view capitalism positive-  
ly—although what they meant by socialism was not  
clearly defined. It seems possible that the wars and  
recessions of the past decade have given rise to a politi-  
cized generation that will have, over the coming years,  
a lasting effect on the country [USA]."

There was a sense of this happening in Canada at the  
outpourings of grief for Jack [Layton]. Because of his  
tragic death, we have lost that momentum.

If you do become the National Leader, I hope that  
you will not dismiss the Occupy Movement (if it rises  
again) or a similar movement out-of-hand, but that the  
NDP should consider its relationship to any movement  
opposing the great inequality in our society.

Jean Morrison, member  
Thunder Bay, Superior North NDP



*CUSJ President Reverend Frances Deverell's  
speech to the LeadNow rally outside The Hon. John  
Baird's office, Saturday June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012.*



Ottawa Chapter of CUSJ protests Omnibus Bill, Spring  
2012

## **C-38 – Anti-Democracy, Anti-Envi- ronment, Anti-Economic Justice**

Thank you for inviting me here to speak on behalf of the  
Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice, and thanks to all  
of you who came here today to stand in the rain and  
protest this terrible budget bill. I didn't want to come out  
here and stand in the rain for a protest! Did you? I came  
because my heart is broken. This budget bill is a terrible  
bill for Canada. I came to stand on guard for Canada. As  
a Unitarian minister I want to hold up three principles I  
hold sacred.

### **Right of Democratic process**

The first is democracy. I object to the process of  
C-38. An omnibus bill hides the facts. An omnibus bill  
suppresses debate. We pay MPs to examine the details,  
give close scrutiny, debate, and to LISTEN! Closure  
gives no time for this. In a democracy, government  
regulates industry for the benefit of the common good.  
This budget fires scientists who study Canada and pro-  
duce knowledge. This budget fires librarians, archivists  
and statisticians who organize and store and make mean-  
ing of knowledge and who keep our history. This govern-  
ment doesn't want to make decisions or set policy based  
on knowledge. It doesn't value who we are. This budget  
fires inspectors in all areas. When government abrogates  
its responsibility of oversight, it leaves the fox in charge  
of the chicken coop. We will have more Walkertons, food  
poisoning, Enbridge leaky pipelines, and Gulf oil spills.

### **The interdependent web**

The second principle is the interdependent web of all  
existence of which we are a part. I believe the earth, the



air, the water are sacred. I believe all species have a right to a place to live. Gigantic scale mining produces industrialized landscapes that wipe out all life in their path. This trend must stop. It is a false economy. We must change our ways to live in harmony with the natural world that sustains us and gives us life. Mr. Harper and Mr. Baird are dismantling our environmental protection, to promote fast tar sands growth. They want to ignore their obligations to consult with First Nations who live and die eating polluted wildlife. They care nothing for the needs and well-being of future generations. This bill changes the face of Canada without debate for the sake of greed and profit. This government was elected by 39% of the vote, but it wields 100% of the power and gives 61% no respect. One minister can make and change rules with no consultation. Absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Why are they afraid to talk? Why are they afraid to listen?

### **Justice, equity and compassion**

Third: I hold justice, equity and compassion sacred. Where in this budget do we care for the homeless? Where in this budget do we care for the hungry? Instead, funding for medicare and education is threatened. Our pensions are under attack. For the first time our children will have less security and well-being than we have had. The social safety net that my parents' generation set up is being dismantled piece by piece.

I stand here today, in the rain, to stand on guard for Canada. I call on this government to slow down, slow down, slow down. Break up this bill. Give us a national debate about the kind of Canada we want. We want democracy. We want environmental protection. We want government oversight of industry. We want respect and consultation with First Nations. We want equity and a fair chance for all people and all life.

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## **Canada and Unitarians lose a crusader for the environment and social justice**



Richard C. Bocking died on September 28th, 2012, at the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria. He was a caring husband for Winnifred Marie for sixty years, and a devoted father for his six sons. Richard (Dick) was born in Port Arthur in 1931. He and Winnifred met in high school, when they began a life-long partnership that continued throughout

his studies in agriculture at the University of Manitoba and their marriage in 1953. They raised their sons in Stony Plain, North Vancouver, Quebec, and Italy, before settling in 1988 in Victoria where he became a member of First Unitarian Church of Victoria. There they created a seashore idyll, the site of countless gatherings and celebrations cherished in memory by their family, especially their many grandchildren.

Throughout his career as an agricultural extension agent, a documentary filmmaker for the CBC, and an author, Richard applied his energy, eloquence, and knowledge to the defence of Canada's environment, the pursuit of social justice, and appreciation for music and the arts, always guided by his determined vision of a just and independent Canada. He produced over 60 films. Some of his feature documentaries produced in Canada and abroad include: *Tristan und Isolde* (1976), *The Music of Man* (1979), *Vivaldi* (1986), which was filmed in Venice and Montreal and awarded the Prix Anik, for best music program on CBC television in 1987, *Jon Vickers: A Man and His Music* (1975), *Canada Tomorrow* (1973), showcasing the development policies of Canada, and perhaps most notably, *Canada's Water: For Sale?* (1972), which studied the issue of exporting Canada's water to the United States. *Canada's Water: For Sale* was also a book published in 1972. Bocking donated copies of his documentary films to universities, where they remain available to students and faculty through the Audio Visual department. In 2001, he was made the Trent University Ashley Fellow for 2001/2002.

In 1997, Dick Bocking published *Mighty River: A Portrait of the Fraser*, for which he won the Roderick Haig-Brown Prize, in addition to being nominated for the Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize in 1998, and awarded a certificate of merit by the B.C. Historical Federation.

Three of Dick's articles were published in JUSTnews: *Ethics and Biotechnology* (Discussion Paper No. 3, July 2000), *NAFTA and the Future of Canada's Water: Water Export Makes No Sense!* (JUSTnews 5 (3), Autumn 2001), and *Reclaiming the Commons* (JUSTnews Discussion Paper No. 7, June 2003).

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*Charity depends on the vicissitudes of whim and personal wealth; justice depends on commitment instead of circumstance. Faith-based charity provides crumbs from the table; faith-based justice offers a place at the table. ~ Bill Moyers*

## Legal advocate for equality and social justice dies



Jean Mary McBean was born in London, England, on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1948, but spent most of her life in Edmonton where she met her husband, John, and raised her

daughters Bevin and Jane (Greg). After retiring from a distinguished career in family law, both in private practice and as the first Senior Counsel of the Legal Aid Alberta Family Law Offices, she moved to Victoria to be closer to her grandchildren, and became a member of First Unitarian Church of Victoria. Jean had a full life wherever she lived or travelled with the love of her life, John. She was a strong advocate for equality and for social and economic justice. She died peacefully of cancer at home in the presence of her husband and two daughters on April 7, 2012.

### Fighter for women's rights

One of her early accomplishments was to protect women's rights to property in divorce settlements. She was also a proponent of no-fault divorce, and was actively involved in transforming child custody rules and marriage contracts. Well-known for her bigger-than-life personality, and her passion for justice, Jean could be a force to be reckoned with in the courtroom. "God help you if you crossed Jean when she knew she was right," recalls Marie Gordon, a long-time partner in Jean's firm McBean Becker Cochard and Gordon. "Some judges would quake in their shoes when they saw Jean coming, and she was always strong, concise and forthright in her dealings with them. Jean had an inner confidence about her which served her so well through her whole career."

It was a career that started with early research on matrimonial property for the Institute of Law Research and Reform, moved to a partnership with Wright, Chivers & Company upon passing the bar in 1973, and then to starting her own firm in 1979—a firm that blossomed into Edmonton's first all-female practice. In the 1980s, when young families abounded, crayons and homework were common additions to the boardroom décor.

### Advocate and teacher

As the children grew up, so did the firm – and so did Jean's academic ambitions. In 1987, she was awarded her Master of Laws degree from McGill University, where she furthered her interest in matrimonial property law. All the while, she continued to practice, and she was an active advocate for Alberta's families. Jean taught throughout her career, at her alma mater, the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, and for the Legal Education Society of Alberta, where she was a frequent volunteer.

By mid-career, Jean became active in politics, furthering her pursuit to help Alberta's women have a voice in government. She joined the NDP and served as party president during Ray Martin's term in office, and worked on Alberta's electoral boundaries commission in the 1990s.

But her political work in no way subsumed her commitment to her legal career. If anything, her dedication grew with her QC designation and her tenure as a Bencher of the Law Society of Alberta. She was also Co-chair of the National Legal Committee of the Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF).

### Justice for the poor

In the early 2000s, Jean established a Legal Aid Office for Family law in both Edmonton and Calgary as part of her desire to make legal representation accessible for low income families. She continued her private practice until she retired in 2006.

But Jean's dedication to social justice did not end with her career. Upon moving with her husband to Victoria to be closer to family, Jean championed the homeless and raised funds for Child Haven, an organization that funds children's homes in central Asia. She volunteered with Grandmothers to Grandmothers and Edzimkulu, a charity that supports children of AIDS in Africa. Despite her own health issues, Jean never lost sight of helping others, and she was a steadfast volunteer even through her own illness.

"Jean's remarkable legacy is one of hope," partner Marie Gordon says. "She fought hard for what she believed in, and she is a testament to the social change we've seen over the last 30 years. She was simply an amazing person, and will be missed very much."



## Joop Schuyff—peace at last

Joop Schuyff died on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November, 2012, in Vancouver General Hospital, with his loving and caring daughter Quirine at his bedside.

Many will remember Joop (the Dutch pronunciation is “Yope”) as a one-legged fearless and ferocious fighter for social justice. He lost that leg to cancer, but he never stopped fighting. He was a self-described “de-frocked economist” battling the prevailing neo-liberal economic theories prevalent through the 1990s, which, thankfully, are finally, if slowly, becoming discredited.

Joop wanted to be involved in everything. He worked in a soup kitchen, he helped establish a refugee family in



Joop Schuyff chats with social activist Berta Schmidt. Photo by Terry Czyz.

Victoria, he led the study on Globalization for the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC), he contributed ideas to the federal budget. He was as

fearless physically as mentally, and one dark night on a street in Victoria he beat off a would-be mugger with his crutch.

His long-time buddy Alastair Mont says the following of his friend.

“Joop literally exploded on the scene in Victoria and immediately became known as a person who didn’t hesitate to express his concerns about many issues in BC. My own profession as a social worker was primarily focused upon micro family issues. Joop introduced me to the wider macro aspect of our world. It was for me a learning experience as Joop taught me concepts from his profession as an economist. I never looked at our planet the same way again!

“Two features come to mind:

“First, Victoria Social Responsibility Committee, which we co-chaired, was a rather successful blending of two diverse professions and personalities. We were involved at that time with an amazingly high number in our congregation who quickly learned about ‘those two characters who would never let anyone get away with anything!’

“Second, along with others, we put together a paper entitled “Globalization” and produced our own pamphlet featuring pictures and positions of our committee. The high point arose when we presented this material to a CUC AGM. Much to our surprise our position was passed and approved by the delegates by acclamation!

“It was never dull being with Joop.”

## Book Review: “Poor Economics, A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty,”

by Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo.  
2011. Published in the U.S. by Public Affairs.  
Can\$ 31.50.

This fascinating book takes you below the over-



Abhijit Banerjee

view of poverty in developing countries, described by Jeffrey Sachs in his book “The End of Poverty” (reviewed in JUSTnews 14 (1), Spring 2010), to the level of the foot soldiers who deliver aid to the very poor only to discover that that aid frequently fails to produce the

results expected. Again and again the authors ask why—why this failure? And then they march out into the slums and shantytowns to find out why, and they tell you in personal stories of discovery that are revealing, educational, and yes, fascinating.



Esther Duflo

The book begins with an examination of the concept of “the poverty trap,” not the poverty trap of the homeless and street-dwellers of wealthy nations where the poor cannot apply for a job because they cannot wash, put on clean clothes or leave a telephone number with a prospective employer, but the poverty trap where today’s income is insufficient to give any hope of an improved income tomorrow, which the authors portray as the bottom part of an S-shaped curve. That lack of hope profoundly affects the thinking of the poor and the way they function in their world and react to aid provided by us in wealthy countries.

Although the authors do not say so, they seem surprised by the refutation of a basic assumption of most modern-day economists: the assumption that humans act rationally, and therefore all that one must do is apply market economic theory and results will evolve logically. They don’t, because humans, and not just the poor, do not act rationally much of the time; and that is where market economic theory falls flat on its face.

The authors present evidence that poor adults in developing countries are not poor because they don’t have enough to eat. That is not the trap. However, poor provision of micronutrients to unborn babies and young children is part of the problem. There is also the health trap caused by

contaminated drinking water, diarrhoea and malaria. Health can easily be improved by providing packets of oral rehydration solution, bleach and mosquito nets. But even when these are freely available, the poor make little use of them. Why?

The reasons are multiple, ranging from inadequate education through poor provision of government health services to lack of hope and more. Schools fail because teachers are convinced kids from lower social classes are too stupid to learn, so teachers sit around drinking tea, and the kids become convinced the teachers are right, making this a self-fulfilling prophecy. Health clinics fail because patients must walk some distance to reach them, and when they get there, the clinics are often closed when they should be open. Foreign aid in the form of bags of wheat for the poor will not cure poverty in this situation.

Of particular interest to readers of JUSTnews will be the section of the book on micro-financing, because many of us have invested in KIVA, Oikocredit or other micro-credit institutions. Are these institutions making the difference intended and that we are led to believe is occurring? Banerjee and Duflo examine this in some detail. Their general conclusion is that micro-credit helps individuals have artisanal shops, but it does not change the culture, it does not create a nation of



Small-scale entrepreneurs in India.

business entrepreneurs. Like us, most people in developing countries are workers, needing decent paying jobs created by small and large businesses that flourish in cities where a substantial investment is required, not the kind of investment that micro-credit provides.

Banerjee and Duflo suggest that “Given that economic growth requires manpower and brainpower, ...it is more likely to catch fire if women and men are properly educated, well fed, and healthy, and if citizens feel secure and confident enough to invest in their children, and to let them leave home to get the new jobs in the city.” (p. 267). PEKS

## Mega Quarry

By Ellen Papenburg

### Victory!

While I was writing this, we received wonderful, almost fairy-tale-like news today (November 20, 2012) that the Boston-based hedge fund operated by The Highland Companies dropped their application to build the second largest quarry (the Mega Quarry) in North America. It was planned to be dug right in the neighbourhood of our beloved 43-year-old Unicamp in Southwestern Ontario. Finally good news and the proof of effective People’s Power and grassroots action.

Even though celebration is in order, I expect Highland will return with a series of smaller applications as the minerals in the ground are still there and they own 7,000 acres of prime class one agricultural land especially suited (because of the limestone which provides natural drainage) for growing potatoes. Undoubtedly Highland will grow and process potatoes, but that revenue is not comparable with the profits from extracting limestone.



Planning the campaign.

### The beginning

Take 1200 soccer-fields and you will have the size similar to what would have been the formerly proposed Mega Quarry in Melancthon, north of Shelburne. They intended to dig 200 feet below the water table and pump 600 million litres of water for the rest of eternity. Unicamp near Honeywood is very close (3 km) to the Melancthon Township area.

About six years ago The Highland Companies bought 7,000 acres of prime potato land where they said they would grow and process potatoes. Highland made generous offers to buy land from farmers who had no next generation to continue the family farm. Understandably many farmers sold their farms which often had been in their families for several generations.

Then about four years ago, The Highland Companies announced they wanted to dig for limestone,



and conducted many community info events and sponsored local communities with Zamboni machines and other equipment, and they built a YMCA in one town, so communities would warm up to them and many indeed did. When the size (2300 acres) and the depth (200 feet below the water table) of the proposed open pit mine was announced, people realized this was a potential disaster for their wells and the head waters of five rivers for most of SW Ontario (Grand River included), and the North Dufferin Agricultural Community Task Force (NDACT) started up their action. Carl Cosack, an organic beef farmer and Unicamp's next door neighbour, spearheaded this organisation and made Unicamp aware of what was afoot. I was on the board of Unicamp, became president at the time and I made it one of my tasks to attend the Melancthon Council meetings mostly once a month. Thus I was present at the meeting of March 3, 2010 when at the very last moment the announcement was slipped in that Highland finally had filed their application. Now we could take action.



### Alone but not for long

When I rang the alarm, some actually felt this was beyond their time and scope and withdrew their involvement. For a while I entered a state of panic started sending urgent emails around to Unitarians in Toronto and other cities to create awareness. Fortunately the NDACT started to push more than ever beyond their local area. Then somehow a turning point was reached. People, activists, environmental organisations and First Nations realized the scope of this potential disaster for all living in SW Ontario (and beyond) and suddenly the cause received Ontario-wide interest. Now the NDACT and friends of Unicamp were not alone anymore. In fact my jaw dropped seeing how the snowball started rolling, grew and became an avalanche of protest with even AVAAZ having 100,000 people signing a petition, followed with many events like Food Stock and Soup Stock with 10,000 - 20,000 people enjoying food and soup. It just shows that effective action can be started by very few people as long as others join and take over.

I also bet that Highland had not counted on protests outside the local area...

### Why the worry?

Why were we so worried about the mega-quarry? Drilling into the aquifer would likely have affected the quantity and quality of water supply to local wells, springs, as well as the headwaters of

rivers such as the Nottawasaga, Saugeen, and the Grand River, involving millions of people in Ontario. A whopping 600 million litres of water would be used every single day to minimize dust. Four thousand trucks a day would transport the limestone over the mostly gravel roads in the area, and the noise level of ongoing blasting to extract the limestone would have had an impact on the quality of life for residents.

Damage was done... The Highland Companies demolished over 30 homes, which they had let go derelict, and removed many old-wood lots. "Normal farming practice" they claimed.

A striking example of the government's attitude was Ontario's Minister of Natural Resources, Linda Jeffrey who basically told Melancthon Mayor Bill Hill that he "should get the community together, calm down and appreciate that they might get a golf course out of this." (!!)

In 2010 the Ministry of Natural Resources and Highland received over 2,000 official letters of objection to the quarry in the allotted three months after the filing of the application. A year later the Ministry of Environment ordered an Environmental assessment. Then another year later Ontario parliament was prorogued.

### It's not over yet

Now that Highland has withdrawn per November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012, probably due to enormous negative publicity, we should focus on our next steps. The old 1950s Ontario laws give priority to minerals over protection of environment, water, nature, people and agricultural land. These laws must be changed.

Highland still owns the 7,000 acres and will grow and process potatoes, but I would not be surprised at all if they will come with a series of smaller applications to reach their original goal of extracting the limestone in stages and so still would get away with this. With changed laws this would be much more difficult.

We will stay alert.

*Ellen Papenburg, Elora & Fergus Unitarian Universalist Church, past president of Unicamp, moderator FriendsOfUnicampStoptheQuarry egroup.*

*Related links:*

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The CUSJ purposes are:

- to develop and maintain a vibrant network of Unitarian social action in Canada and elsewhere and to proactively represent Unitarian principles and values in matters of social justice and in particular
- to provide opportunities, including through publication of news-letters, for Unitarians and friends to apply their religious, humanistic and spiritual values to social action aimed at the relief of (1) poverty and economic injustice, (2) discrimination based on religious, racial or other grounds, (3) abuses of human rights whether of individuals or peoples, (4) abuses of democratic process, and
- to promote peace and security, environmental protection, education, and literacy in keeping with the spirit of Unitarian values.

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