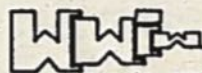


WOMEN WORKING WITH IMMIGRANT WOMEN OF METROPOLITAN TORONTO  
PRESENTATION TO THE CITIZENS' INQUIRY INTO PEACE AND SECURITY

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Women Working With Immigrant Women

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WOMEN WORKING WITH IMMIGRANT WOMEN is an umbrella organization of community-based agencies serving immigrant, refugee and women of colour. For this presentation WWIW has drawn on the experience of the people from these communities. These are the peoples who suffer the most the consequences and are the product of either the old World Order, colonialism, or what is presented as new World Order, neocolonialism. The difference between the old and the new order is that the power to control is shifting hands. The interests and the order remains the same.

These interests have caused the uprooting and movement of millions of people either within the same country and continent, or on the international level. Millions of people are on the go escaping political conflicts, persecution, the violence of poverty and environmental catastrophes which are brought by the interests of few. On the international level, this movement follows the direction from south to north where the wealth has been concentrated. Wealth that has been produced by the plunder of the natural and human resources, the destruction of the economies and the imposition of economic dependence of what is referred to as Third World.

Canada has benefited greatly directly and indirectly from these world orders. The Canadian State was established through the use of military force by the British and French colonizers who invaded the First Nations' territories and through the destruction of the First Nations' economies and the genocide of the peoples. While we believe that nations and countries have the right to defend themselves and their territory we would like to ask why Canada continues to invade the First Nations' territory and allows the low level flights over Nitassinan and destroys the Innu Nation's way of life ? Who gave Canada the right to invade the Mohawk Nation's territory last summer ?

Indirectly, Canada benefited by forming alliances with the U.S. and their foreign policy which financed and supported oppressive regimes. This support have opened markets which Canada, in the form of foreign aid with conditions attached, has exploited. The foreign debt of the developing countries should be written off because this debt was accumulated due to military aid to these oppressive regimes.

As an immigrant receiving country Canada should not get involved in local military conflicts. Getting involved in such conflicts means declaring war in its own citizens. Canada's involvement in the Persian Gulf war is an example of a Canadian civil war. For many of us the war was not happening elsewhere, but here, because Canada's involvement had fueled anti-immigration and racism which was directed

against People from the Middle East. We became targets of racist jokes and harrassment and watched our government use our tax money to kill our children and our women. The war is not over yet. The oil wells are still burning and the Persian Gulf has not yet been cleaned. The countries around the area are suffering the immediate effects, but sooner or later we will be suffering too.

Instead of being busy developing racist immigration policies to stop the entry of people who are escaping political conflicts and violence, Canada should work with the U.N. towards the peaceful resolution of these conflicts and instead of involving Canadian men and women into military actions Canada should participate in the U.N. peacekeeping forces.

Instead of spending tax payers money to protect the interests of others and hope to benefit from the opening of bloody new markets, Canada should pay attention to the domestic wars that wrath in this country. The war wrath against racial minority people, against her women and other equality seeking group and against her million hungry children, the homeless and the unemployed.

Instead of being the testing ground for weapons of mass destruction, and feeding the military and defence manufacturing industries which brought the international recession of the economy. Canada should work towards the conversion of the military production to production that meet peoples needs. We need to reset our priorities and reallocate our resources to be able to deal with violence instead of supporting the development of a culture of violence to which our children are exposed to daily and which make our schools dangerous.

The West is proud of its economic development and its civilization. We believe that the meaning of development should be redefined. We are not developing when we destroy the earth that is lent to each generation and we are not civilized when children die from the lack of medical care and from hunger. We are not civilized and secure when women cannot walk the streets without being raped. All the world's weapons cannot protect us against these wars that wrath in this country.