



ACTION SPEAKS LOUDER

OPIRG TORONTO'S FIELD MANUAL FOR THOSE WHO'VE HAD ENOUGH
WINTER 2016

*"We can begin by doing small things at the local level,
like planting community gardens or looking out for our neighbors.
That is how change takes place in living systems, not from above but
from within, from many local actions occurring simultaneously."*

- Grace Lee Boggs

IN THIS ISSUE: • Community Land Trusts • Queer/Trans Resistance to Gentrification
Protecting the Pro-Palestine Voice • Fighting HIV/AIDS Stigma • And More...

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ACTION SPEAKS LOUDER

WINTER 2016

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Action Speaks Louder is the biannual magazine of the Ontario Public Interest Research Group at the University of Toronto. We work to create space for students and community organizers to reflect on pressing issues within current struggles for social and environmental justice.

If you would like to join our editorial collective, please write to us opirg.toronto@gmail.com. The editorial collective will begin meeting in June to start work on our Fall 2016 issue. If you would rather just write for us, submit a pitch! The submission deadline for the Fall 2016 issue is Monday, June 6 2016. To send us a short pitch, please e-mail actionspeaksloudertoronto@gmail.com.

Look for our Fall 2016 issue on campus next September!

OPIRG'S BI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS



**SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLES, INTERVIEWS, POETRY,
SHORT STORIES, AND ART TO
actionspeaksloudertoronto@gmail.com
FOR OUR UPCOMING FALL 2016 ISSUE
BY MONDAY JUNE 6, 2016.**

Action Speaks Louder creates space for students and community organizers to reflect on pressing issues within the current struggles for social and environmental justice.

More details: opirgtoronto.org/ASLmag
Past issue archive: issuu.com/opirgtoronto



WELCOME

ASL Editorial Collective



There's a interesting juxtaposition in using the word welcome with the above image, a person being booted out of a park by a large hand in a suit. But then it's quite fitting, given the context we're living in. As we progress further and further in the age of devastating environmental destruction, gentrification and increasing class disparities, we have to think about who spaces like that park are designated for. When we think about the neighbourhoods we live and organize in, who do we see as part of our communities? Oftentimes changes in our city are made through the justification of what's 'good for the community', but those in power certainly have a different idea of who belongs in the park, in the schools, in the community centres, than many of us do. How can any decision, no matter how it presents itself, speak for the many diverse needs of the community? Accommodation requires some sacrifices be made, and those who make the decisions are willing to make them. In this issue, many of our submissions work to interrogate how often oppressive practices, systems and policies are given tacit approval and enforced on various communities under the guise of it all being "for their own good". In reality, this work prioritizes the needs of a select group, while others are criminalized and pushed out. Whether it's enacted through the building of an LGBT athletic centre in a historically poor and working class neighbourhood, in a park homeless people call home, or the silencing of Palestine solidarity activists by right wing Zionists, one group's needs are often pitted against the other. And the group that wins out is usually the one those in power prefer.

We need to encourage a bottom-up approach, of a community coming together internally to speak up for what the needs of the most marginalized and oppressed amongst us are. Things will not change if we do not critically analyze those organizations and individuals who suggest they are working in our best interest, if we wait until the moment where the community around us is not something we recognize anymore. We need to create more collective spaces where these decisions

are looked upon with a critical eye rather than a silent tongue. *Action Speaks Louder* is one of those avenues where those on the ground can bring attention and criticism to the policies and actions of those in power. By actively deconstructing how, for example, the criminalization of non-disclosure of an individual's HIV/AIDS status, and the societal stigma that accompanies this illness, is detrimental to public and personal health and safety, we can begin to arrive at a more inclusive vision of the world. A world that is hopefully just around the corner. It starts with the conversations we have amongst our friends, family and comrades.

In this issue we feature many thought provoking articles on campus and community resistance. Stuart Schussler discusses the potential of land trusts as a means to fight off predatory banks and an answer to rising foreclosures in working class and poor neighbourhoods during and following the American economic crisis. Helen Lenskyj details how communities are coming together in new ways to defy the "divide and conquer" tactics that insidious developers and the city officials that collude with them enact on marginalized groups. Shriya Hari from the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP) discusses the stigma surrounding those living with HIV/AIDS and offers insight into how criminalization has impacted HIV/AIDS testing and the complexities of consent, desire, safety and safer sex. Tamara Rayan explains how the meaning of "free speech" is at stake in discussions around Palestine - Israel and how University administrators and community organizers need to show support for the BDS movement in our city, and their right to hold events in peace and safety. Finally, we have a poetry submission, and Students For Barrier Free Access elaborates on their research into accessibility bursaries at the University and how it will inform their campaign for better disability supports on campus.

The name of the newsletter, *Action Speaks Louder*, means we understand the awareness and educational work the publication can contribute to as only a stepping stone to the long, hard road of organizing for a better world. While things may seem dire, all our submissions reflect the difficult work of building communities of resistance. The *Action Speaks Louder* editorial collective is thrilled to bring you these articles and more in this issue. We encourage you all to flip through these pages, take in the radical ideas and movements instilled in this ink and be inspired to fight with us, or to continue fighting.

Rachele Clemente Gottardi, Kieran Hart, Tamara Rayan
- Action Speaks Louder Winter 2016 Collective

ECLECTIC VULTURES GO ON A WINE-TASTING SPREE

Eloisa Toledo Francia

I love blowjobs –
is what I would say in case this guy comes over in five
minutes to ask what I'd like for a drink.

Too much?

No. That should sound as casual as, "Sure, I'd have
sex on the beach."

Here he comes.

What else could I say that the world has not read, saw
or heard?

Us, who know it all, heard it all and seen it all, this
entirety we dare claim ours.

Us, who loves satire and sarcasm, because we're too
smart for anything ordinary.

Us, who can't keep our hands to ourselves, grabbing a
hold of everything like we're Midas; Publicly shaming
rape victims like they asked for it, stoning today's
Magdalenes and Judases.

Quick thinkers with short attention spans.

Speed readers with rapid moving eyes that may well
miss a vowel or a line upon which a pun depends.

What is my safest bet?

How does someone address the truth, at least
my version of the truth, without sounding either
desensitized or condescending?

As I think aloud, and speak of the holes we daily dig
for ourselves unconsciously?

Unconsciously - words are funny.

Okay. Deep breaths. Take it easy.

He's sitting beside you now. That's a move, right?

How do you vanquish hunger from a world plump and
rich of natural resources?

How do you expect a child to believe you when you
tell him to remain soft despite the world or pursue
artistry?

When all his life, he's been fed lies,
and the grumble from his stomach tells him
otherwise?

How do you wipe off ignorance from a line of species
claiming to be superior above all?

How are we licked for hundreds and hundreds of
years and still be able to find at least one hopeful
soul?

What is the point of your being? What of my being?
Or is this one frail attempt for there is none at all?

Right. He's just asking for my name. Do I go with a
nickname?

No, that may be too comfortable. I mean...

If I change my name from Eloisa to Maria so people
don't get tongue-tied anymore

Because tomato, to-ma-to, potato, po-ta-to.

If I dyed my hair blue, will I be any different?

Will people stop second-guessing my decisions if
my tongue was straighter, if my p and f's weren't
interchangeable, my b' and v's in their proper places?

If I buy enough whitening products to lighten the
color of my skin, will it be easier for them to listen
then?

If I didn't start drinking coffee at the age of eleven,
like my mother told me to, would I have grown taller?
Could that have altered the choices I have made and
turn out better?

Why am I consumed with vanity, if I'm aware the
world does not revolve around me?

What do I do? Does he mean my job? Of course, that's
what he meant.

This is all small talk, remember?

Who are we without these man-made titles, laurels
and badges we strive for and wear?
Do we comfort ourselves with false hopes of a larger
purpose to affirm our otherwise mundane lives?
Man versus man, versus self, nature and society.
Maybe the irony of it all is lost on me.

7 billion self-proclaimed prophets, self-deprecating
heroes and whores, self-diagnosed diseases, selfies,
instant messaging, instant coffee, instant noodles and
instant celebrities.
Money-making machines on repeat.

A virtual universe full of virtual friends and polished
projections of our tainted selves
-deluded by alternate realities, made braver by
anonymity, cradled by the pretense of connectivity.

What do I do with my spare time? Quick, think of
something cool.
I love doing the laundry, and curling up in bed with
freshly washed sheets.

This is a world where the 1% can't afford to lose
Cancer, or AIDS, and HIV, because it's a billion dollar
industry
We've all become so wary and jaded.
Somebody hands you a rose and the first thing you
look for are the thorns,
We read through fine prints for the catch because
we've been told, that nothing is for free anymore.

But

Each of us is a speck among the billions, making a
difference by merely existing,
Listen to the bull we feed ourselves to silence the
doubting voices we hear in the shower
Shouts into the void and comforting lies pulled out of
thin air.

Why are we dividing again the universe into gender,
wealth and countries?
Holier than thou's offended by loud voices and
cussing mouths, by grammatical errors, people talking
while chewing their food, less popular religious
beliefs, obscenity and same-sex marriages, - but not
of capitalism and corruption, media killings, hunger,
oppression and poverty?

Hypocrisy.
Where does it bud from so we can nip it from there?

Why are we fighting the same devils and battles our
forefathers fought?
Seeking refuge from the words and works of heroes
we live for and swear by, reiterating remnants of their
protests,
As names are hailed and exalted, lives are lost.
As books and various versions of history are being
rewritten,
The cause gets lost in the shuffle.

Has everything been for naught?

Maybe this is too heavy for a first encounter. Think of
something trivial.
This should be easy. Okay, control. Filters.

How does one not grow tired of hearing the same lies
over and over before it starts sounding like the norm,
before it becomes more believable than the truth?
How do you break a rotting system you are a part of?
I know, some days I get sick of myself too.

For ranting is a luxury we abuse to no avail,
This vicious cycle of pointing fingers is masturbatory
and we are offended by our own profanity.

I don't have the answers either.

Some days even I question the purpose of these words
and lines
As I try to find reason behind all the blabbing and
rhyme.
But maybe we wouldn't be complaining about the
same things over and over,
Had we actually listened when we heard it the first
time?

E-li-sa, E-lo-i-sa? Do I correct him? But how about
his ego? How else is he supposed to believe I am
impressed?

No, it's E-loi-sa.
Let me pay for my drink.
Take your hands off of my fucking breast.

*Eloisa Toledo Francia is a Filipino immigrant navigating the unfamiliar
and multicultural land of Canada. A TEFL student at the University of
Toronto, she is constantly translating her musings and agitations into some-
thing more productive - hence the need for writing. At 26, she is still discov-
ering parts of herself - versions that are oftentimes anxious, self-doubting and
uncertain. It took her a long time to realize that even those, are beautiful.
She's gone through a few rebirths, each one scarier than the last time, and
poetry got her through every single one. Her poems are mostly love letters to
herself, and microcosmic representations.*

COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS AS A TOOL FOR BUILDING AUTONOMY AND FIGHTING GENTRIFICATION

Stuart Schussler

Mexican dictator Porfirio Diaz famously said, "Poor Mexico, so far from God and so close to the United States." While there are many differences between Canada and Mexico, the same could still be said for the empire's northern neighbour, especially since Wall Street's frenetic ups and downs have an outsized impact on the Canadian economy. For proof, look no further than the slide in oil prices caused by American fracking and its consequences for the Alberta tar sands and the Canadian economy. Or how General Motors' offshoring has left tens of thousands of autoworkers unemployed in both Windsor and Detroit. Or the simple fact that three-quarters of Canadian exports go to the US.

Given such interconnected economies, it's odd that the tens of millions of foreclosures across the US sparked by the 2008 financial crisis didn't cause a similar downturn in Toronto's booming real estate market. Part of the answer is that the Clinton-era deregulation that allowed for the creation of financial Frankensteins such as "credit default swaps" and "mortgage-backed securities" are still illegal in Canada. But make no mistake, the GTA is in the midst of a massive, gentrification-inducing housing bubble, and no bubble lasts forever. When it bursts, the pain felt for years by working-poor Torontonians who have been priced out of the market with nowhere to go will be joined by the pain of the house-poor who were just barely able to scrape together enough money for a down payment, only to quickly find themselves in foreclosure. So before the bubble bursts, we'd be wise to learn about tools like Community Land Trusts that working class Americans created in the wake of the US housing crisis.

It's hard to overstate the impact of the US housing crisis. One truly staggering statistic¹ is that the net worth of Black households declined by 53% between 2005 and 2009. Fifty three per cent! Another is that 14 million Americans lost their homes to foreclosure, equal to the entire population of Michigan. But the most frightening statistic of all is the number of bankers who made millions peddling predatory mortgages that have gone to jail: one.² Instead of prosecuting, the US government has chosen to negotiate closed-door settlements with these loan sharks who call themselves "financial institutions." The settlements have resulted in massive payouts (one

1 <http://prospect.org/article/staggering-loss-black-wealth-due-sub-prime-scandal-continues-unabated>

2 <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/09/how-wall-streets-bankers-stayed-out-of-jail/399368/>

of which cost the five biggest Wall Street banks a combined \$26 billion), but no evidence is made public and no one serves time for the shameless theft that cost millions of people the roofs over their heads and cost Black America two whole generations of hard work and savings.

Forgotten by a government in the pockets of the bankers, the working poor in the US have come together and fought back for themselves. There are housing rights groups in nearly every major American city, especially in the wake of the Occupy movement, but I'll focus on the city I know best. Between 2009 and 2015 I was an organizer at the Albany Park Autonomous



Centre in Chicago,³ where Mexican, Guatemalan, Filipino, and Ecuadorian families created *Casas del Pueblo*⁴ (Homes for the People) in 2011 to defend their human right to housing.

Casas del Pueblo was created when a group of neighbours overcame their isolation, sat down in the community centre, and shared stories of struggling to make mortgage payments despite layoffs, medical emergencies, family members' deportations, and divorce. Some had paid religiously for 25 years, only to miss one payment and lose it all. Whereas the first response was a lonely sense of shame and disappointment, upon hearing others' stories and learning about the banks' criminal activity, shame turned to anger and anger into organizing. *Casas del Pueblo* began with neighbours coordinating protests in front of the banks that were foreclosing on group members, and many were successful in pressuring the banks to renegotiate their predatory mortgages instead of putting them on the street.

3 <http://mexicosolidarity.org/centroaut%C3%B3nomo/en>

4 <http://mexicosolidarity.org/centroaut%C3%B3nomo/casasdel-pueblo/en>

But after a string of successes, *Casas del Pueblo* hit a wall. Members were still winning the right to stay in their homes, but people began to ask at meetings, “Why should we pay thousands of dollars a month to these banks for years and years, only to go into foreclosure, fight like hell just to negotiate a new mortgage, and then pay thousands of dollars a month to the same bank for another thirty years? If housing is really a human right, why does it cost so much work and so much money?” As we had these discussions in *Casas del Pueblo*, we realized we were looking for ways to get housing off the capitalist market. We wanted to create community-controlled housing that wasn’t at the mercy of the banks. We wanted to create a Community Land Trust.

Community Land Trusts are usually associated with the non-profit industrial complex: land trusts buy houses at a discount from the big banks, rehab them, sell them to low-income families, and help the banks improve their image through a little charity that masks larger, structural problems. *Casas del Pueblo*’s Community Land Trust would be different. Instead of convincing banks to sell a few random houses as a PR stunt, we would pressure the banks to sell us the houses we were already living in at their corrected, post-bubble value. And instead of “flipping” the houses (rehabbing and selling them to a new owner who would take out a new mortgage), they would belong to the neighbour-controlled Community Land Trust in perpetuity, without any mortgage or connection to the banks. This way, *Casas del Pueblo* builds autonomy in their Chicago community. Understood as a collective resource that isn’t controlled by elites (such as a colonizing power, a bank, or a government), autonomy is a way to enrich the social fabric of the neighbourhood by giving its residents democratic control over its housing.

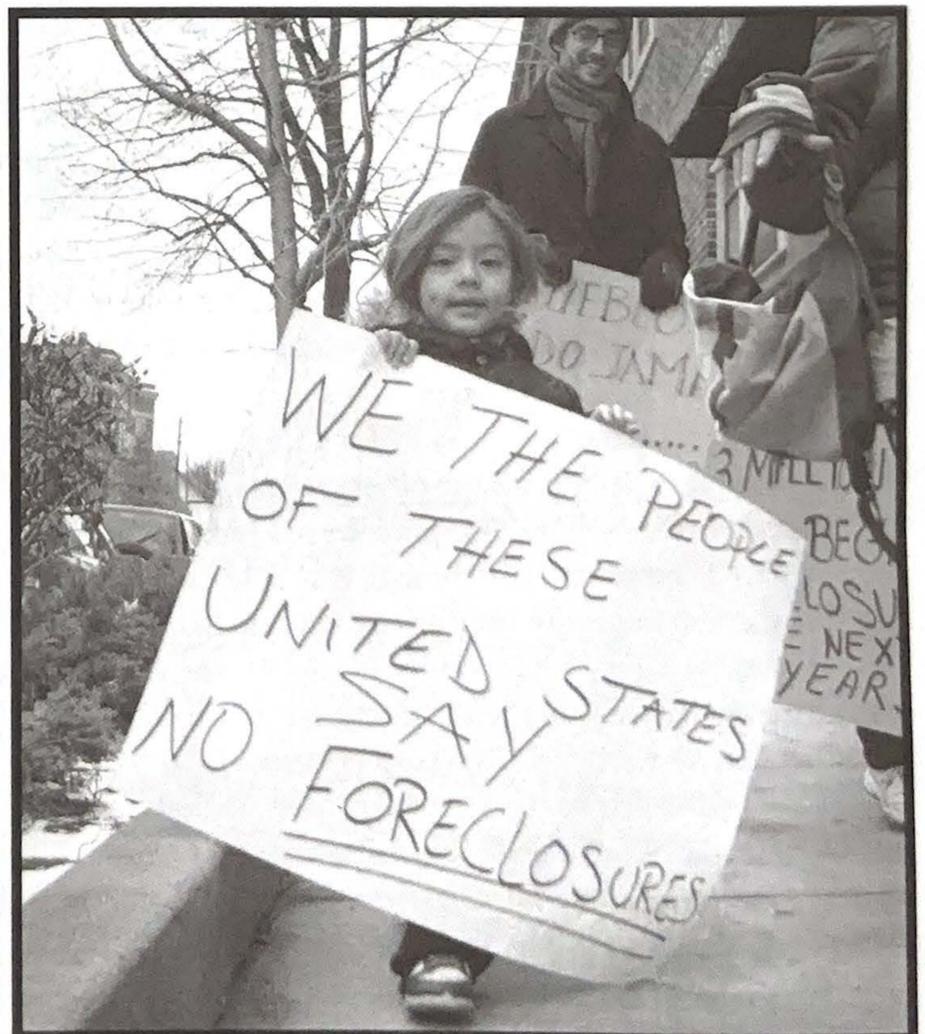
In practice, autonomy looks like a group of neighbours filing into the community centre after their day jobs as nurses, used car salespeople, factory workers, and child care providers. They sit in plastic chairs, drink coffee while their children draw in colouring books, and discuss who will host this weekend’s cookout, who will keep watch at a home slated for eviction, who will attend a meeting with a bank considering a sale to the land trust, who will fix another home’s plumbing. These decisions are made collectively because the land trust is a collective endeavour: while individual families live in the homes, each knows that without the dozens of protests, repair efforts, and eviction blockades that won each home, it would have been taken away. It’s also a collective endeavour because no one can sell their home and pocket the cash. Instead, the community land trust enriches the social fabric by ensuring that working class families can raise their children in a place where, more than just being on a first-name basis with their neighbours, they’ve locked arms together too.

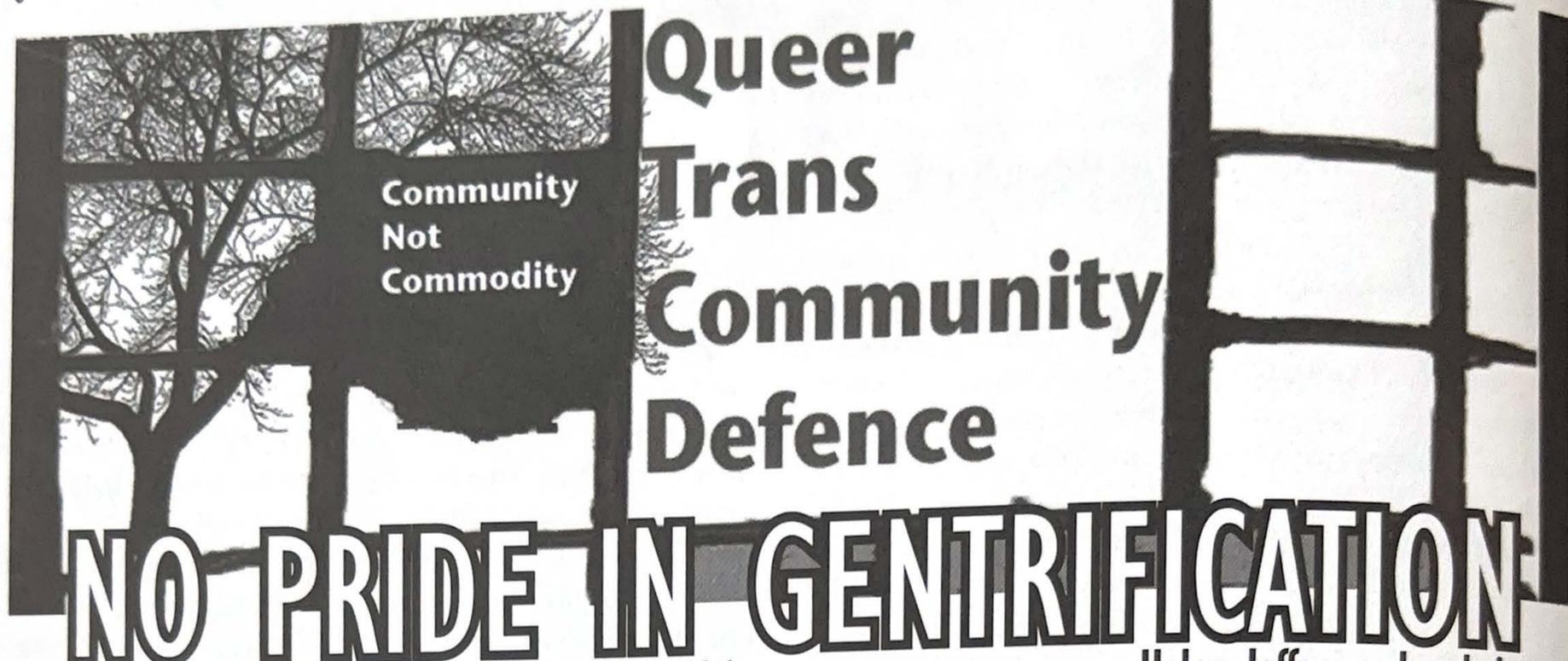
What does this all mean in Toronto? Anti-austerity movements should fight to defend and expand the government’s social housing programs, but we should also learn from the condos rising from the rubble of Regent Park.

The neighbourhood’s social housing is being torn down and replaced with “mixed income” condominiums that combine market rate units (which is to say, astronomically expensive units) with a token allotment of affordable units. The result is a net-reduction in social housing that displaces working families to the suburban periphery. The result is the familiar, creeping gentrification Toronto has been undergoing for years. Moreover, the election of a Rob Ford or John Tory city government can ramp up the pace and eviscerate social housing much more quickly. Community-controlled housing, however, cannot be so blithely dismantled. The Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust is embarking on such a project and could serve as home-grown inspiration for new land trusts.

If housing is to be a real, accessible human right it must be controlled by neighbours themselves and not banks, developers, or bureaucrats. After all, the only people who will consistently put in blood, sweat, and tears for a neighbourhood are the neighbours themselves. Community Land Trusts are a way to access the human right to housing, and you don’t need a team of lawyers or a mountain of cash to create one. But you do need the resolve to stand up and make life difficult for the politicians and bankers who stand in your way, a meeting space, and a lot of coffee. And you need a steadfast vision of how beautiful our neighbourhoods can be when people are free to stay for a lifetime, to plant trees and watch them grow, and to build organizations that last generations.

Stuart Schussler worked for six years with the Mexico Solidarity Network, where he taught on an innovative study abroad program that allowed students to learn about organizing directly from Indigenous, peasant, and urban organizations in Mexico. He also helped launch a Master’s program in community organizing and a community land trust in Chicago. Stuart is currently a member of No One Is Illegal- Toronto.





Helen Jefferson Lenskyj

In the summer of 2015, some LGBTQ members of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), along with other concerned LGBTQ activists, formed the Queer Trans Community Defence (QTCD) to address the latest threat in the gentrification of Toronto's Downtown East - the proposed LGBTQ-focused sport centre at Moss Park. Closely related to sport centre plan is the George Street Revitalization, which promises to 'deinstitutionalize' that neighbourhood, to continue drastic cuts to shelter beds, to contain most homeless services and individuals under one roof, and to rebrand the area the 'Garden District'. All these changes would be implemented at a time when Toronto has failed to meet council's 2013 target of a maximum 90% occupancy rate of shelter beds.

In 2012, the City and the 519 Church Street Community Centre, a hub for Toronto's LGBTQ communities, began working together on a proposed recreation facility that would promote inclusion in sport while focusing on LGBTQ programming. QTCD members distributed flyers at the 519's AGM in September 2015, and in January 2016 had meetings with 519 executive director Maura Lawless and senior director Becki MacFarlane. We developed a blog¹, Facebook and Twitter presence, gathered support from many community groups and individuals, circulated flyers at community meetings, and have done extensive media outreach.

The 519 had identified the need for a specific LGBTQ-focused sport centre, citing among other reasons the pressure to accommodate over 40 LGBTQ sports leagues, whose members were mostly gay men in their 20s and 30s. A site in the Foundry district had originally been proposed but found unsatisfactory, and, in early 2015, the City turned to the Moss Park site, currently housing an arena, recreation centre and playing fields, as well as parklands occupied year-round by poor and homeless people, sex workers and drug users. In a particularly callous example of disregard for current users, a former 519 staff person referred to the facilities as 'underutilized', while characterizing the area as a 'bit of a blank canvas' waiting to be redeveloped.

¹ <http://queertranscommunitydefence.blogspot.ca/2015/12/>

According to the two 519 staff, the project changed from its original LGBTQ focus to an 'inclusion model' at the same time that it changed its original location early in 2015, but that they were too busy to communicate these changes to the queer community. However, as recently as September 2015, during the 519's AGM, the LGBTQ focus was clearly promoted in speeches, the annual report, and the sport-focused qualifications of several candidates for the new board.

An anonymous donor committed up to one-third of the capital costs, estimated at \$100m. The 519, through fund-raising efforts, would generate one-third, while the remaining third would come from various levels of government. According to the 519 staff, the donor's terms satisfy the 519's and the City's gift policies, has no conditions, and is entirely philanthropic. It is difficult to imagine, however, that a donor who in 2012 had envisioned a project focusing on the recreational needs of predominantly middle class LGBTQ users would suddenly be willing to extend their generosity to the very different needs of the low-income and homeless people of Toronto's Downtown East, a group that is rarely, if ever, the beneficiary of such generous philanthropy. It's equally difficult to envision these two diverse groups rubbing shoulders together in the new sport centre.

QTCD members repeatedly asked 519 staff what credentials they have to equip them to develop and implement an inclusive model of sport and recreation that would meet the needs of poor and homeless people, sex workers and drug users. The answers, which we found unsatisfactory, were that the 519 operates on Association of Community Centres 'community benefit' model, provides public space and services, builds partnerships with communities, and has a community-driven approach. This 'one size fits all' thinking is not persuasive.

We were assured that community consultations and communication, to be handled by professional consulting companies, would assess the needs of both LGBTQ and local communities in order to develop designs and programming.

However, on the question of communication, we were told that 519 staff has to get City approval for every public statement they make concerning Moss Park, no doubt because the City wants to control the message and the branding. When QTCD members asked if the 519 is committed to opposing gentrification, we were not given a clear affirmative answer.

The initial vote at City Council in 2013 saw only two dissenting voices, with several councillors supporting the project as a positive step towards inclusive sport and recreation, a financial windfall for the city in the form of a public-private partnership, and a generous donation that they should obviously accept. 519 staff emphasized that this funding was crucial, since Moss Park would not receive any City money for renovations until the 2020s, the implication being that this was an opportunity not to be missed. When QTCD members referred to the 519 viewing itself as 'the saviour of Moss Park', staff vehemently rejected our interpretation. In view of the staff's repeated references to the 'opportunity' provided by this project, it looks like the 519 can 'have their cake and eat it' – they get the LGBTQ focused sport centre, but they brand it an inclusive sport centre because they will have consulted the local non-LGBTQ community. QTCD will fight this project to the end. No pride in gentrification!

Helen Jefferson Lenskyj has been a community activist since the 1970s, most recently with Bread Not Circuses and other anti-Olympic groups, and with Queer Trans Community Defence. She was a Professor of Sociology at the University of Toronto from 1986 to 2007, and has written extensively on sport, sexualities and the Olympics.

Trans and Queer positive! Aboriginal Women and Women of Colour Group!

Nursing Corner! Child friendly! Free Condoms! Referrals!

**FOR WOMEN
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TRANS PEOPLE**

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Toronto, ON M5S 2J7

womenscentre@utoronto.ca
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agitate, or volunteer?

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Wheelchair accessible via Bancroft Ave.

Peer Support Programs! Resources! Events! Dr. Chun Resource Library!

DR. CHUN RESOURCE LIBRARY

The Dr. Chun Resource Library exists as a space for community members and University of Toronto students to access factual, critical and alternative materials that facilitates resistance to oppression among and between diverse communities.

OPIRG-TORONTO 2015-2016 ACTION GROUPS

Keep up to date with all the great work this year's action groups are doing by checking out their events on facebook or on our website at www.opirgtoronto.org!

FILIPINO CANADIAN YOUTH ALLIANCE

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MINING INJUSTICE SOLIDARITY NETWORK

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HIV/AIDS PHOBIA HURTS US ALL

Shriya Hari

In November of 2015, Charlie Sheen announced that he was living with HIV. Suddenly, HIV was back in the news, along with old fears, old prejudices, and every-day stigma. He should have disclosed¹, said one of his co-stars. His diagnosis was “punishment”² for his personality traits or previous actions, said some readers. Yet others were deeply misinformed about the transmission of HIV. Sheen himself mentioned the debilitating fear of living with the constant blackmail and extortion³ with the threat of disclosure of his HIV status.

Hardly two weeks after his disclosure, I attended the Community Carnation Memorial on December 1st, an event that the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP)⁴ supports each year, to commemorate World AIDS Day. At this event, where community members gathered, remembered, and shared, I stood witness to the powerful stories and experiences of people living with HIV. The history⁵ of this ceremony is poignant: The Toronto People With AIDS Foundation (PWA)⁶ used to send flowers to the funerals of people who had passed away from HIV. But during the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, so many people passed away that sending floral arrangements became unaffordable. Instead, they began to send a single black rose with a card saying “We Understand”.

Building on this powerful symbol of memory and compassion, the AIDS Vigil Committee and PWA came together to establish the annual Community Carnation Memorial to create a larger community-based event. Every year since 2008, PWA, in partnership with the AIDS Vigil Committee, engages the Toronto community through this ceremony: after sharing stories of living with HIV, and remembering those who have passed on, community members leave roses with black stems and red carnations at the AIDS memorial in Cawthra Park. Tied to the stems are simple, personal notes saying “We Understand”.

But do we, as a society, really understand how we are complicit in stigmatizing people living with HIV/AIDS? The mixed responses to Charlie Sheen’s disclosure left me grappling with how much stigma still remains. I have even heard misguided opinions on how stigma can be a prevention tool in fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic. This attitude towards stigma means

1 <http://thecelebritycafe.com/2015/11/jenny-mccarthy-upset-co-star-charlie-sheen-didnt-disclose-hiv-diagnosis-to-her-audio/>
2 <http://rhrealitycheck.org/article/2015/11/18/charlie-sheen-deserves-scorn-hiv/>

3 <http://www.t TMZ.com/2015/11/17/charlie-sheen-hiv-today-show/>
4 www.asaap.ca

5 <http://pwatoronto.org/english/pdfs/2011-newsletter-winter.pdf>
6 <http://www.pwatoronto.org/>

we must actively change the conversation around HIV, and the burden of responsibility around disclosure and stigma. This year, the National AIDS Trust’s campaign was #RethinkHIV.⁷ It’s time we, especially those not living with HIV, did just that.

At ASAAP, we often discuss the risk of HIV transmission and risk-related behaviours as part of HIV prevention and education initiatives. But in addition, we also consider risk with an intersectional lens that centers social determinants of health, “which are a better predictor of HIV outcomes than risk behaviours”⁸. For example, we can think of the risk of HIV transmission associated with not using a condom, and we can also consider someone’s lack of negotiating power to use a condom as a socially produced risk factor as well. Negotiating power, and risk of HIV transmission can, for example, intersect with gendered power relations and gender inequality⁹, racism¹⁰, wealth inequities¹¹, and age.¹² There is sometimes a world of difference between thinking “I’d maybe like to use a condom” and a condom actually being used.

Similarly, stigmatizing attitudes create sexual health risk; according to the World Health Organization and AVERT, HIV stigma is the main factor¹³ that drives reluctance to get tested for HIV increasing silence and non-disclosure of HIV¹⁴ to partners due to the possibility of negative repercussions, increasing riskier behaviours,¹⁵ circulating transmission misinformation.¹⁶ Stigma also drives violence¹⁷ against, and social exclusion of, people living with HIV.

Most alarmingly, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in 2012 that people living with HIV have a duty to disclose their HIV status prior to having sex if there was “a realistic possibility of transmitting HIV” and “the Court also found that almost any risk is “realistic”, no matter how small.”¹⁸ On

7 <http://www.worldaidsday.org/campaign/rethink-hiv>

8 <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt-report/2012/07/27/11834/hivaids-inequality-structural-barriers-to-prevention-treatment-and-care-in-communities-of-color/>

9 <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2820057/>

10 https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/ieeues/2012/07/pdf/hiv_community_of_color.pdf

11 [http://www.cdnaids.ca/files.nsf/pages/poverty_and_hiv_eng/\\$file/Poverty_and_HIV_En_Red.pdf](http://www.cdnaids.ca/files.nsf/pages/poverty_and_hiv_eng/$file/Poverty_and_HIV_En_Red.pdf)

12 <http://www.wgsi.utoronto.ca/GAAP/publications/other/gendery-outrisk.html>

13 <http://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-social-issues/stigma-discrimination>

14 <http://www.aidslaw.ca/site/hiv-stigma-and-charlie-sheen-outing/>

15 <http://www.pimatisiwin.com/online/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/06SaewycClark.pdf>

16 <http://www.aidslaw.ca/site/hiv-stigma-and-charlie-sheen-outing/>

17 <http://caps.ucsf.edu/archives/factsheets/stigma>

18 http://www.aidslaw.ca/site/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/SCC_De-

October 5th, 2012, the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network released a statement¹⁹ condemning the ruling, saying that it is “a cold endorsement of AIDS-phobia” and “opens the door to convictions for non-disclosure even where the risk of transmission is negligible”. The statement was signed by eight interveners, including the HIV/AIDS Legal Clinic of Ontario (HALCO)²⁰ and PWA. The Court’s ruling does not take into consideration the risk of violence or stigma that people living with HIV regularly face. Instead, the ruling perpetuates AIDS-phobia and some people have been discouraged from getting tested for HIV,²¹ due to the possible legal implications of non-disclosure if they are positive.

Instead of collective, compassionate efforts that recognize the basic humanity of people not living with HIV, alongside preventative efforts, stigma is a fear-based response that insists on creating and enforcing a hierarchy that prioritises those living without HIV. Stigma, codified into legal parlance such as the ruling, squarely places the onus of HIV transmission solely on the shoulders of people living with HIV. It’s clear that HIV/AIDS-phobia hurts us all in the long run by instilling a fear of HIV in those not living with it, and shame and fear of negative repercussions in those who do. The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network’s statement urges all of us to consider that “people not living with HIV need to be empowered to accept responsibility for their own health, and not proceed under a false sense of security that the criminal law will protect them from infection.”

The message that sexual health is our collective responsibility also informs our work at ASAAP, where we work to address stigma in many ways. We provide HIV/AIDS, sexual health, and support services for South Asian communities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). One of the ways we address stigma is through our Prevention/Education programs.²² The Healthy Relationships workshop, part of our Women’s Sexual Health Program, explores what it means to have a healthy, open conversation around sexual health, strategies to open the door to those conversations, and holding space for community members to discuss feelings of fear, stigma, shame, and curiosity about sex and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

We are committed to providing health promotion, care, and support for self-identifying South Asians living with, at risk of, or affected by HIV/AIDS. Our Men’s Sexual Health Programs offers peer counseling and support spaces for South Asian guys who like guys, as well as avenues for volunteers who identify as gay/bisexual/trans men to get involved. Similarly, South Asian people living with HIV/AIDS (PHA) access our PHA support programs.²³ They have produced amazing

material addressing stigma, self-care, and other resources. *More than Fiction*²⁴ for example, is an anthology of writings developed by twelve South Asian women about their ideas and thoughts on living with HIV.

Our vision at ASAAP is a world where South Asian communities have the access and means to determine their health and well-being. With the help of our volunteers, we build community capacity and increase empathy by facilitating workshops, reaching community members, and providing resources and HIV 101 training for other South Asian service providers around the GTA. Sexual health is not an isolated issue; through our community development programs²⁵ we connect sexual health to other service providers in housing, social work, gender identity, violence, and newcomer populations. Isolating the issue of sexual health only increases stigma and silence; by disseminating factual information about transmission, we break the silence and address fear, stigma, and shame. Our volunteers take the knowledge they gain from our workshops into the community at large by co-facilitating workshops, conducting community outreach, translating resources, designing agency materials, and much more.

It is ethically irresponsible to transpose the fear of contracting HIV to a fear of people who are living with the virus, but that is precisely what stigma encourages us to do. Instead, we must work together to build a world where people living with HIV also have the right to dignity, bodily autonomy, privacy, and safe disclosure. Those of us not living with HIV must consider the impact of stigma in contributing to the violence against people living with HIV, nondisclosure, and unsafe disclosure. It is therefore the responsibility of people not living with HIV to educate ourselves and each other about HIV-stigma. More than open, safe, and nonjudgmental conversations around sexual health, we need to be having compassionate conversations around sexual health. Charlie Sheen said that HIV “is a hard three letters to absorb”,²⁶ and part of the reason it’s hard is because stigma makes it hard on so many levels. People not living with HIV have a moral responsibility to create a compassionate space for their HIV positive partners to disclose their status because the responsibility for discussing sexual health rests on *all* our shoulders, and not just on the shoulders of people living with HIV/AIDS. Let’s move to shaping a more compassionate social world where such dialogue is possible.

Sbriya Hari is the Community Development and Volunteer Coordinator at the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP), and delivers workshops for service providers on HIV/AIDS, sexual health, and stigma across Southern Ontario. She has previously worked as the Research Coordinator for a project at ASAAP investigating the impact of story-sharing as a sexual health promotion model. Interested in volunteering at ASAAP? Contact her at volunteer@asaap.ca.

cisionAnalysis-ENG.pdf

19 <http://www.aidslaw.ca/site/unjust-supreme-court-ruling-on-criminalization-of-hiv-major-step-backwards-for-public-health-and-human-rights/>

20 <http://www.halco.org>

21 <http://www.positivewomenthemovie.org>

22 <http://asaap.ca/programs-2/p1/>

23 <http://asaap.ca/programs-2/living-with-hivaids-2/>

24 <http://mtf.asaap.ca/>

25 <http://asaap.ca/programs-2/community-development/>

26 <http://www.thewrap.com/charlie-sheen-reveals-hes-hiv-positive-video/>



THE PROBLEMATIC PRO-PALESTINE VOICE

Tamara Rayan

In a community based on location which encompasses many differing identities, all groups regardless of minority or subaltern status are entitled to a voice with the space and means in which to safely express it. By subaltern, I refer to groups of people with shared values located in the margins of society with limited access to political, social, and economic power, and due to this unequal power relation, space is integral to their ability to have a voice. The New Year has begun with rising tensions on the University of Toronto and York University campuses regarding Palestinian solidarity and resistance that have been detrimental to the already threatened Palestinian voice in the larger movement for their rights. One specific event, hosted on January 12, 2016 by the Graduate Student Union's Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) committee entitled "Palestinian Popular Resistance: Building the Student Movement" was held with the purpose of educating those in attendance on the crisis of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation and to offer a means of solidarity and peaceful resistance through the growing BDS movement. This movement, as defined by the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC), calls "upon their counterparts and people of conscience all over the world to launch broad boycotts, implement divestment initiatives, and to demand sanctions against Israel, until Palestinian rights are recognised in full compliance with international law."¹ This article however is not in regards

to the specificities of the conflict, nor is it a commentary on Palestinian resistance. What I mean to address is the need for enhanced community support in allowing all voices to speak, without being impinged upon by others.

Despite the fact that the "Palestinian Popular Resistance" event was meant to offer a space for marginalized Palestinian voices and their supporters, that right to expression was impaired by the disruptive actions of the Jewish Defense League (JDL). The JDL is a religious-political group founded in the United States and is notorious for being branded by the FBI as a right-wing extremist organization. During the event, guest speaker Noura Ekarat, a human rights attorney, activist, and supporter of Palestine, found that her Skype-delivered speech was soon plagued by incessant disruptions from the JDL. Ekarat's talk was meant to bring awareness to the harsh realities that Palestinians experience under occupation, and how students and campuses can lend non-violent support to the Palestinian resistance movement. Despite her talk being limited to a discussion of Palestinian experience, she was subject to outbursts from the JDL members that accused her and the event on a whole of preaching anti-Semitism, terrorism, and an incitement to murder Jews. These claims are worthy of scrutiny, keeping in mind the JDL's status as an extremist group in the United States when terms such as "terrorism" are used to discredit the work of non-violent Palestinian solidarity groups.

¹ "Introducing the BDS Movement," Palestinian BDS National Committee, accessed February 17, 2016, <http://bdsmovement.net/bdsintro>

The JDL's actions are an attempt to silence the voices of Palestinians and Palestinian supporters by essentially erasing their validity. This is done by tainting the message of BDS, messages regarding the need for basic human rights of freedom, justice and equality for Palestinians, with connotations of racism and violence. However, Palestinian resistance is not synonymous with anti-Semitism and actions need to be taken to ensure that this connection is not normalized in public consciousness. The JDL's disruptive presence was not the most shocking development that night. The GSU BDS Committee, in full knowledge that there would be a high likelihood of the group attending, took measures to ensure a back-up venue was booked prior to the event. The most disappointing aspect, however, was the lack of support from the University of Toronto. When the warnings of the event moderator went unheeded by those disrupting the event, campus police did not force the JDL to leave and the event was moved to the back-up venue without further interruptions, though the same capacity of attendees could not be comfortably satisfied. The passivity on the part of campus police demonstrates an inherent lack of neutrality towards the two groups present and a lack of support for the GSU BDS Committee's right to free speech. This is even more concerning given that the university was willingly hosting the event within their space for a University of Toronto student group *and* a similar instance occurred at a Palestinian solidarity event in October 2014. Moreover, several times before the annual Israeli Apartheid Week events taking place at the University of Toronto, OPIRG-Toronto and SAIA (Students Against Israeli Apartheid) have had to organize meetings with the university administration in order to ensure the safety of attendees is taken into account. The administration has consistently failed to take initiative or action on this end or when issues of safety do arise during or after these events.

As outlined in the University of Toronto Governing Council's Statement on Freedom of Speech, the institution is a place where "unorthodox ideas, alternative modes of thinking and living, and radical prescriptions for social ills can be

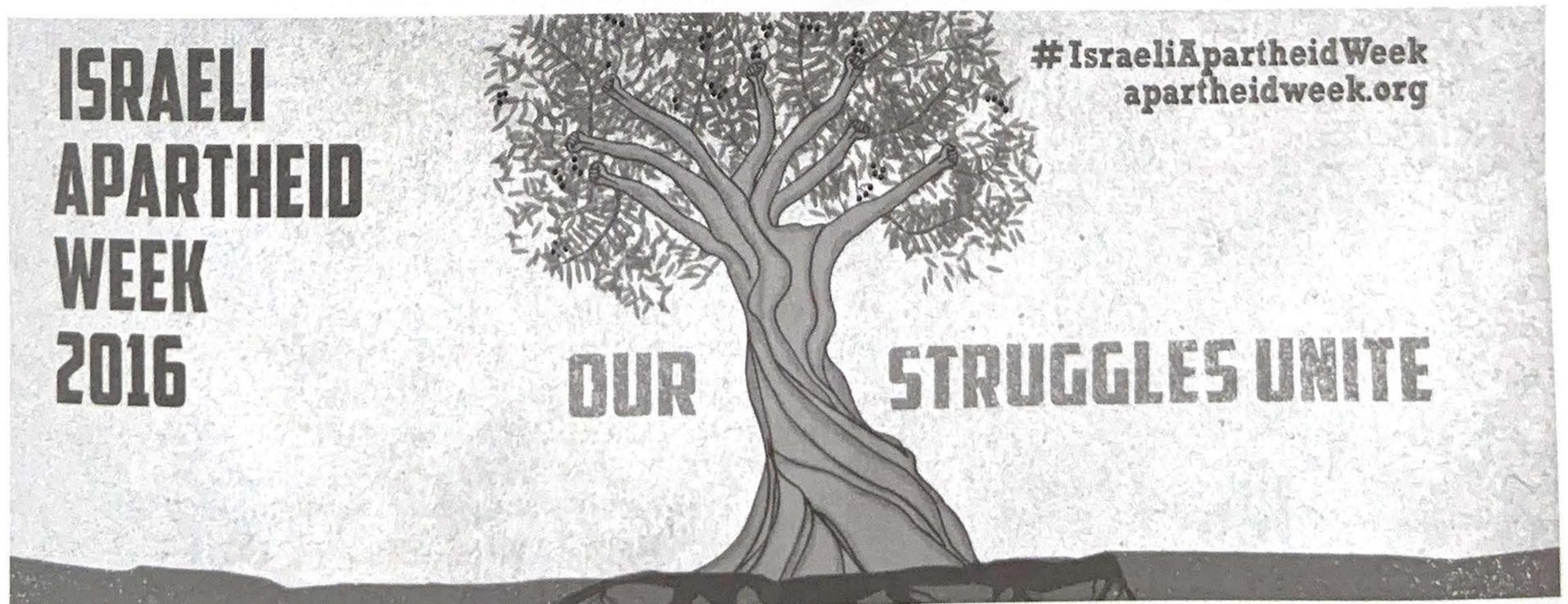
debated...often this debate may generate controversy and disputes among members of the University and of the wider community. In such cases, the University's primary obligation is to *protect the free speech of all involved. The University must allow the fullest range of debate.*"^{2 3} It is situations such as the "Palestinian Popular Resistance" event that showcase the University's failure to uphold its own values.

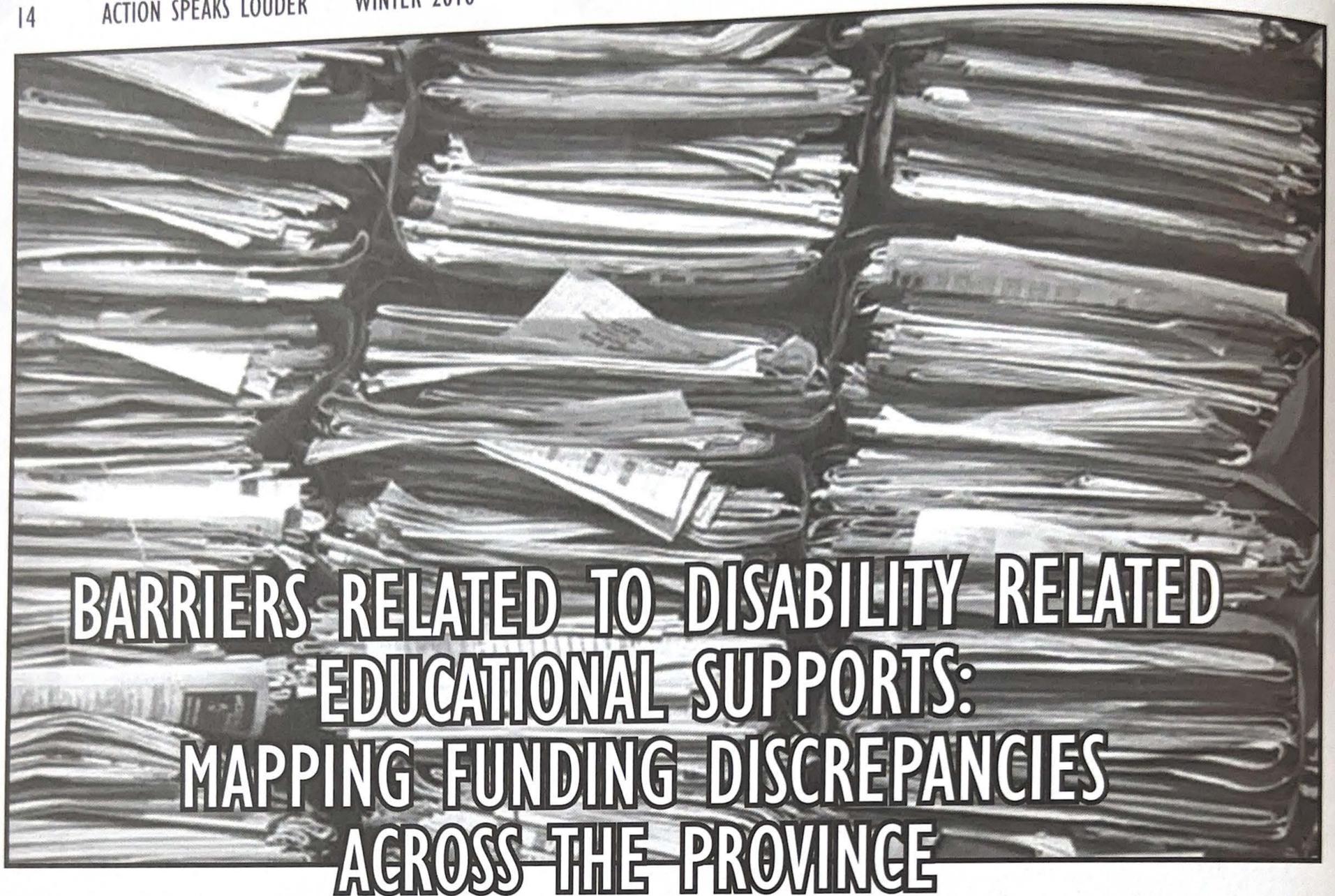
Whether the messages being voiced by one group may offend another, unless that message is oppressive in regards to race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, etc., that group has a basic human right to their own voice. The irony being practiced here is that in order to silence voices that are both ethical and valid in their concern for the systems of oppression Palestinians experience, accusations of anti-Semitism towards Israelis are used to justify that erasure. Therefore, spaces where these voices have the safety and freedom to express themselves are *integral* because voices such as the JDL are imposing obstacles on that freedom. Safer spaces cannot be upheld without supportive actions from the community and institutions such as the University of Toronto. Supportive actions on the most basic level would be to simply allow events to have the right to an uninterrupted space. Further actions could include giving enhanced attention to pro-Palestine organizations so as to counteract the fact that their space and power are being infringed upon by many pro-Israel organizations that support racism and colonialism in their work. Moreover, other community organizations and university administration can show support by having a physical presence at events, and advertising, promoting, and co-sponsoring events so that all voices can reach as far as possible.

2 Emphasis added.

3 University of Toronto, 1992, Statement of Freedom of Speech, para. 2.

Tamara Rayan is a Master's student in Ethnomusicology at the University of Toronto researching Palestinian identity, resistance, and diaspora, as expressed through traditional and non-traditional musical activities.





BARRIERS RELATED TO DISABILITY RELATED EDUCATIONAL SUPPORTS: MAPPING FUNDING DISCREPANCIES ACROSS THE PROVINCE

Nadia Kanani & Fady Shanouda

The Bursary for Students with Disabilities and the Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Persons with Permanent Disabilities (BSWD/CSG-PDSE) is a provincial and federal bursary administered by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The provincial/federal split is reflected financially in a 20/80% division, respectively. This means that out of the possible \$10,000 of funding disabled students can apply for annually, \$2,000 is provincially funded (BSWD), while \$8,000 is federally funded (CSG-PDSE).

To be eligible for the BSWD-CSG/PDSE students must: have a permanent disability; qualify for OSAP (\$1.00 minimum); be a Canadian citizen; and be enrolled in full-time studies (40% workload for disabled students). Even when students do meet all of this criteria, they still face various obstacles in accessing the bursary that often go unrecognized and that, in turn, limit their access to funding and support. To eliminate these barriers to access, the Ministry, along with universities and colleges, should make information about the bursary, including how funding is allocated and the process through which funding decisions are made, easily available and accessible to students. We have yet to see this level of transparency concerning the bursary and, as a result, Students for Barrier-free Access (SBA), a levy group led by disabled students at the University of Toronto that advocates for accessible post-secondary education, has initiated action to learn more about the administration of the bursary.

Copies of the manuals that outline the management of the bursary are not available to students. Counselors and staff have denied our requests for information (and for the manuals) arguing that the documents are government issued and, therefore, that they have no legal right to distribute them without the government's approval.

This lack of transparency, and the idiosyncratic decision-making that is characteristic of the administration of the bursary, could no longer go uninvestigated. Therefore, on May 27, 2015, SBA filed two Freedom of Information (FOI) requests: one with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities; and, the other with the University of Toronto's internal information and privacy office. While the University denied our FOI request, the Ministry did comply and SBA received copies of 15 manuals spanning the same number of years, from 2000-2001 to 2014-2015 (SBA has since filed for and received the manual for 2015-2016).

With only a few months since the request was received, SBA has not yet completed a full and in-depth analysis of the manuals. We are diligently working our way through each manual to determine how the bursary operates at the Ministry level, and the changes that have been implemented since the initiation of the bursary. Still, our preliminary analysis has led to one significant and astonishing finding.

We have discovered that each university or college can set maximum funds for each specific disability support that are different from the Ministry's caps, as long as they are below

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what the Ministry has outlined. For example, the Ministry cap for note-taking for the 2015-2016 year could be set at \$250 per course. However, York University could choose to set a cap of \$200 per course for note-taking while the University of Toronto's cap could be set at \$150. As long as both caps do not exceed the maximum set by the Ministry they would be in compliance with Ministry guidelines. Screen reading software is also covered through the bursary. This software reads the text off of the computer screen with a speech synthesizer. After the initial purchase of the software, according to the Ministry, students are eligible for software upgrades every two years. However, the University can choose to change this eligibility criteria by allowing for upgrades only every three-five years. In giving Universities the authority to set their own caps, as long as they are below Ministry caps, the Ministry is creating a system that leads to funding disparities across the province. Disabled students in different parts of the province have been receiving different levels of funding for the same service or technology.

The fact that each University or college can establish their own maximum funding caps leads us to believe that there must also be internal manuals or guidelines at each university and college that governs the internal operations of the bursary and sets these internal caps for services. Evidence of these internal manuals is still missing; and if no internal manuals or guidelines exist, then there is no clear sense of how disability and financial aid officers make decisions around the bursary. Having consulted with students in different parts of the province, we know that students are receiving significantly different levels of funding for the same type of service.

Within this complex process, disabled students are expected to be compliant with the decision they receive and

the funding level their university or college allocates to them, even if this limits the level of support and services that they require (such as with the note-taking example above). This labyrinthian process obscures how decisions are made, who is responsible for making these decisions, and what appeal process, if any, exists. This prevents disabled students from being active agents in shaping their path to equitable post-secondary education.

SBA has now filed 20 FOI requests, one to every university in the province, asking for the internal manual or guidelines that governs the administration of the bursary. There are also plans to file similar FOI requests with every college in the province. SBA has received files from seven universities, with twelve requests pending. Analysis of these documents will take some time, but SBA plans to share its initial findings in the coming weeks. If you are interested in assisting us in this process, please consider joining our Advocacy Committee (contact: sba.advocacycoordinator@gmail.com).

Nadia Kanani is the Advocacy and Volunteer Coordinator at Students for Barrier-free Access (SBA) - a levy-student group that advocates for accessible post-secondary education at the University of Toronto. She is also a graduate student in the Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies at York University and a community organizer.

Fady Shanouda is a third-year Ph.D. student at the University of Toronto at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, in the Social and Behavioural Health Sciences division. He earned a Master's degree in Critical Disability Studies from York University in 2011. Fady is involved in this academic community as Chairperson of Students for Barrier-free Access (SBA) - a levy-student group that advocates for accessible post-secondary education at the University of Toronto.

THINKING ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY ON CAMPUS?



SBA
STUDENTS FOR
BARRIER-FREE ACCESS

SBA is a non-profit, University of Toronto student-levy organization that advocates for equity, access, and the rights of disabled students and supports more generally, the greater disability community. SBA and its allies work towards eliminating physical, informational, and attitudinal barriers on campus and in the wider community.

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416-967-7322

RESOURCES

SPACES ON AND AROUND CAMPUS

A Different Booklist	www.adifferentbooklist.com
Another Story Bookshop	www.anotherstory.ca
Bike Chain	www.bikechain.ca
Centre for Women and Trans People at U of T	womenscentre.sa.utoronto.ca
Harvest Noon Café +Co-op	www.harvestnoon.com
Native Canadian Centre of Toronto	www.ncct.on.ca
Toronto Rape Crisis Centre	www.trccmwar.ca
University of Toronto Sexual Education and Peer Support Centre	www.sec.sa.utoronto.ca

NEWS AND ANALYSIS

LOCAL

BASICS Newsletter Toronto	basicsnews.ca
Briarpatch	briarpatchmagazine.com
Incendies Feminist Press	www.incendiesmag.wordpress.com
New Socialist	www.newsocialist.org
Shameless Magazine	www.shamelessmag.com
subMedia.tv	submedia.tv
Toronto Media Co-op	www.mediacoop.ca
Two Row Times	www.tworowtimes.com
Upping the Anti: A Journal of Theory and Action	www.uppingtheanti.org
York University Free Press	www.action.opirgyork.ca/yufp

NATIONAL AND GLOBAL

Canadian Association of Labour Media	www.calm.ca
Cinema Politica	www.cinemapolitica.org
CounterPunch	www.counterpunch.org
Socialist Project	www.socialistproject.ca
Truthout	www.truth-out.org
Warrior Publications	www.warriorpublications.wordpress.com
Z Communications	www.zcommunications.org

ACTIVIST NETWORKS AND ORGANIZATIONS

LOCAL

\$15 and Fairness	www.15andfairness.org
AIDS Action Now	www.aidsactionnow.org
Toronto Anarchist Black Cross	www.torontoabc.wordpress.com
Black Lives Matter-Toronto Coalition	facebook.com/blacklivesmatterTO
Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid	www.caiaweb.org
End Immigration Detention Network	www.endimmigrationdetention.com
Humber PIRG	www.hummpirg.wix.com
Industrial Workers of the World-Toronto	www.torontoiiww.org
Jane & Finch Action Against Poverty	www.jfaap.wordpress.com
Latin American & Caribbean Solidarity Network	www.lacsn.weebly.com
Laurier Student's PIRG	www.lspirg.org
Lost Lyrics	www.lostlyrics.ca
Maggies Sex Worker Action Project	www.maggiestoronto.ca
Migrant Sex Worker Project	www.migrantsexworkers.ca
Network for the Elimination of Police Violence	nepv.org
No One is Illegal-Toronto	toronto.nooneisillegal.org
Ontario Coalition Against Poverty	www.ocap.ca
Prisoners with HIV/AIDS Support Action Network	www.pasan.org
OPIRG-Provincial	www.opirg.org
Worker's Action Centre	www.workersactioncentre.org

NATIONAL AND GLOBAL

Assaulted Women's Helpline	www.awhl.org
Free Grassy Narrows	www.freegrassy.net
Idle No More	www.idlenomore.ca
INCITE Women of Color Against Violence	www.incite-national.org
Indigenous Environmental Network	www.ienearth.org
Justice for Migrant Workers (J4MW)	www.justicia4migrantworkers.org
Native Youth Sexual Health Network	www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com
Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel	www.pacbi.org



OPIRG
TRACX

TORONTO RESEARCH AND
ACTION COMMUNITY EXCHANGE

The Toronto Research and Action Community Exchange (TRACX) is a new program intended to match University of Toronto students with Toronto-based community organizations to engage in participatory action research for academic credit.

In keeping with OPIRG-Toronto's mandate to direct resources and research towards anti-oppressive, social and environmental justice projects, we hope TRACX will create critical links between the university and Toronto community to make research accountable, non-voyeuristic, and multipurpose in its distribution and use as a shared resource.

We are working to build research projects that encourage the interests of students committed to social justice work while providing resources for the campaigns and goals of community organizations. Each year, we host a symposium in the spring to showcase work from students and community members that reflects the important role research can play in organizing work.

To find out more about TRACX or to get involved with the TRACX committee, visit www.opirg-toronto.org/tracx, find us on facebook as Toronto Research and Action Community Exchange or email us at opirg.tracx@gmail.com

Come by the office! Please contact OPIRG for more information about our events and projects.

Ontario Public Interest Research Group- Toronto

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TOOLS FOR CHANGE

Activist Skills Winter Training Series



A project of Earthroots, Greenpeace Canada, OPIRG-Toronto, OPIRG-York, OPSEU, the Centre for Women and Trans People at York and the Community Action Centre of George Brown College, TOOLS for CHANGE is a series of free skills-sharing and skills-building workshops designed to help you gain the tools to work towards social change.

Registration takes place online at toolsforchange.net. Most workshops take place in downtown Toronto. All venues are wheelchair accessible. University of Toronto, York and George Brown students, community sponsors, OPIRG-Toronto and OPIRG-York volunteers, Greenpeace, and Earthroots members can attend all of the workshops for free.

For more information, please contact tools.change@gmail.com.

MARCH 5 >>
Research Skills for Activists
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Trainer: Mac Scott

MARCH 12 >>
Deploying and
Customizing a Simple WordPress
Website
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Trainer: Victoria Barnett

MARCH 20 >>
How to Organize a Great Direct
Action
1:00 PM - 6:00 PM
Trainer: Leah Henderson

MARCH 31 >>
Setting Up and Improving Your
Group's Structure
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Trainer: Jessica Bell

APRIL 3 >>
Organizing Rallies and Marches
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Trainer: Syed Hussan

MAY 28 >>
Storytelling Through Radio and
Podcasts
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Trainer: Kristiana Clemens

**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE FOR A FULL LIST
OF TRAININGS THIS WINTER!**

WWW.TOOLSFORCHANGE.NET