

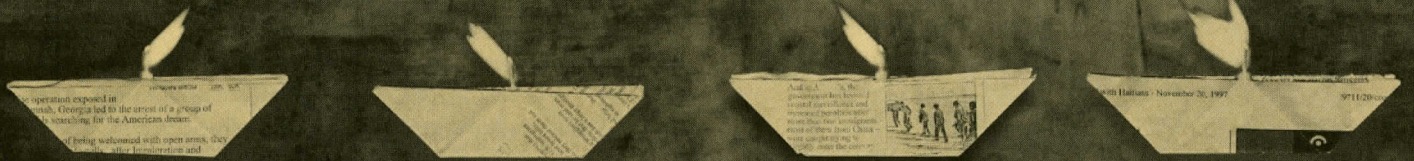
SUMMER 2001



# NETWORK NEWS

NATIONAL NETWORK FOR IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE RIGHTS

## Bringing Migrant Rights to the World Stage



- **The Movement Goes to South Africa**
- **New Videos for Immigrant Rights**
- **Week of Action against Anti-Immigrant Racism**



## Network News

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*Network News* is published three times a year by the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, 310 8th Street, Suite 303, Oakland, CA 94607. Tel (510) 465-1984; FAX (510) 465-1885; e-mail: nnirr@nnirr.org. Web page: www.nnirr.org. Commentaries, articles, and letters are welcome and should be accompanied with your name, address, and telephone or email.

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### Mission Statement

The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR) is a national organization composed of local coalitions and immigrant, refugee, community, religious, civil rights, and labor organizations and activists. It serves as a forum to share information and analysis, to educate communities and the general public, and to develop and coordinate plans of action on important immigrant and refugee issues. We work to promote a just immigration and refugee policy in the United States and to defend and expand the rights of all immigrants and refugees, regardless of immigration status.

The National Network bases its efforts in the principles of equality and justice, and seeks the enfranchisement of all immigrant and refugee communities in the United States through organizing and advocating for their full labor, environmental, civil and human rights. We further recognize the unparalleled change in global political and economic structures which has exacerbated regional, national and international patterns of migration and emphasize the need to build international support and cooperation to strengthen the rights, welfare and safety of migrants and refugees.

## EDITORIAL

### At the Global Crossroads

by Catherine Tactaquin

Over sixty representatives from immigrant communities and immigrant rights groups in the U.S. will travel to South Africa at the end of August to participate in activities for the UN World Conference Against Racism and Xenophobia (WCAR). They will be joining migrant rights groups from around the world in an unprecedented opportunity to spotlight the rights of the millions of people who cross international borders every year seeking work to survive. The World Conference will also be an opportunity to forge relations with anti-racism, anti-discrimination groups, and become part of a global movement against racism.

In addition to migration/xenophobia issues, significant issues of racism have shaped the preparations: indigenous peoples, reparations and the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the role of gender, and numerous other concerns. These will make the gathering both contentious and enlightening. Non-governmental groups have mobilized for participation - a daunting task given that many participants represent poor and disenfranchised peoples and organizations - hardly a well-funded, jet-setting crowd.

Participating along with the U.S. migrant rights groups will be organizations from Latin America, Asia, Europe, Africa and elsewhere - voices not often present in international fora. Issues of language access, economics, and immigration status are crucial factors affecting the participation of migrants in international activities as well as in national work. However, with diligent organizing, fundraising and support from the Ford Foundation and others, migrant rights activists and advocates will be present in South Africa to take advantage of this international gathering. An international migration caucus of conference participants has been emerging in recent months and will help to organize migrant rights advocacy, education, and networking in Durban.

In South Africa, there will be two important fora for participation - a forum organized for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the governmental world conference (WCAR). In both programs, the issues of "racism, xenophobia, and related forms of intolerance" will be the focus of deliberations aimed at analyzing the scope and scale

### An Opportunity for the Immigrant Rights Movement

of the problems and how they need to be addressed, particularly by national governments and international agencies. The NGO Forum will be the site of numerous workshops, caucuses and sessions as NGOs share information and analysis, and struggle to gain a presence for their respective concerns. They will also prepare for the UN conference, which will produce a declaration and program of action. By the time of the Durban conference, a draft declaration and program of action are expected that will represent compromises already agreed to by various governmental delegations.

### The Battle to Include All Migrants

The role and impact of globalization has shaped many of the deliberations. In this context, the migration question shows its relevancy: the over 150 million people in migration every year are contributing to a "demographic shift" in countries throughout the world. In white-dominated countries, the influx of migrants has intensified racial hostilities, sometimes resulting in anti-immigrant and racist violence. Migrants have become targets for virulent racism, yet their status as migrants - and sometimes without immigration documents - denies them even basic protections. In fact, national immigration policies and laws can contribute to the stigmatization of migrants and fuel anti-immigrant activity and institutional discrimination.

The world conference provides a timely opportunity to expand and to standardize protections for migrants, including those without legal immigration status. Migrant rights groups that have participated in world conference preparations in different regional conferences and in Geneva have lobbied hard for the inclusion of all migrants among the lists of "victims" of racism and xenophobia in all sections of the draft documents. They have worked to clearly define the protections all migrants should have. A longstanding issue in the application of the various rights protections - including those in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - is that there has been no legal

definition agreed upon, internationally, of a "migrant." Thus, while there is an assumption that everyone enjoys basic human rights, it is actually not the case for migrants, as well as many other groups of people.

### Global Convention on Migrant Workers' Rights

One of the issues that migrant rights groups will be supporting in Durban is recognition of the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, approved by the UN General Assembly in 1990. Indicative of the international controversy over migrant rights, this agreement has still not been "brought into force," with the ratification of fewer than twenty countries. Several countries, including the U.S., have indicated that they would not ratify it. Yet the convention stands as one of the few international instruments that can help to clearly define the rights of migrants.

In the case of the U.S., collaborative strategizing and organizing between and among immigrant and non-immigrant, immigrant rights and racial justice, civil rights and human rights groups will potentially yield insightful contributions, strengthening existing relationships and developing exciting new alliances. The international context of the conference also provides the opportunity for U.S. NGOs concentrated in the immigration arena to gain a sense of the "big picture" of international migration and the incredible impact it is having in changing the face of the world. Connecting with organizations working in similar venues in other countries, and traveling to South Africa for the conference and parallel NGO fore, are bound to be incredible experiences that will build the maturity and depth of U.S. NGOs. At the same time, U.S.-based activities linked to the conference are sure to provide an avenue to highlight anti-immigrant racism locally. ■

*Catherine Tactaquin is the executive director of the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights.*

**On the Cover:** "Hope, 2," by Priya Kambli, is from the exhibit "American Dream(s): Ancestors and Diasporas Coming to America," at the Southeast Museum of Photography, March 22-July 31, 2001, in Daytona Beach, Florida. Priya Kambli was born in 1975 in Bombay, India and emigrated at the age of 18 to the United States. Ms. Kambli declares, "The move was dramatic; in a way nothing changed, but at the same time everything did." She received a BFA from the University of Louisiana, Lafayette and an MFA from the University of Houston, Texas. She is currently Assistant Professor of Photography at Truman State University, MO.



## And the Winner Is. . .

The National Network has been honored with several prestigious awards in recent months.

The Network was awarded funds as a grantee for the Working Assets 2000 ballot, which allows Working Assets Long Distance customers to vote for a select number of nonprofits to receive donations from the company.

The national office also received a two-year grant award under the New Voices National Fellowship Program. New Voices helps small nonprofits addressing a variety of social concerns bring fresh talent and expertise to their staffs. Claudia Gómez will join NNIRR as Project Coordinator for the National Legalization Implementation collaborative. Gómez will organize and facilitate communications between local/regional coalitions focused on legalization and immigrant concerns, develop public education and media plans, and oversee the convening of a national conference on legalization. Gómez, the daughter of Mexican immigrants, will graduate from San Francisco State University with a Master of Arts Degree in Ethnic Studies.

Several Network Board Members were also selected for the highly competitive Bannerman Fellowship, which awards sabbaticals to longtime activists of color. Board Chair Eddie Canales, a longtime labor organizer and immigrant rights activist, and Maricela García, Director of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, were among this year's recipients. Four other NNIRR Board members are among past recipients of the award. ■

## Transitions at the Network

The National Network is in transition. After twelve years at the same address, we have moved to new, more spacious offices - just down the hall! Please note our new suite number: NNIRR, 310 8th Street Suite 303, Oakland, CA 94607. Tel (510) 465-1984; fax (510) 465-1885. nnirr@nnirr.org; www.nnirr.org

On a sad note, Sasha Khokha, long-time NNIRR staffer - Communications Director and editor of *Network News* - is leaving the National Network in August. Sasha will be doing graduate work at the School of Journalism at UC Berkeley. We wish her the very best and look forward to reading her incisive writing and seeing her new video work. ■

## 5-4 Against Indefinite Detention and For Due Process

The Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 vote that indefinite detention was unconstitutional and must end. This inflicts a setback to the Clinton and Bush administrations' policies and practices of indefinite detention of immigrants convicted of a crime but unable to be deported - for lack of repatriation agreements with other countries, or the unwillingness of other countries to receive them. The maximum detention period is being lowered to 6 months, bringing relief to many immigrants who have spent years in custody - even after having served their sentences. Now after six months of detention, said Justice Breyer in the majority opinion, if an immigrant has not been deported and it appears unlikely that he/she will be, the government must release him/her.

In a second ruling, the Supreme Court also declared that the INS must guarantee immigrants in deportation proceedings their right to due process, a right it affirmed was guaranteed to all under the U.S. Constitution. Based on the 1996 reforms, all immigrants convicted of a crime could be arrested and deported by the INS, regardless of the type of offense or even if the crime had been committed before the laws were passed. Immigrants could be deported retroactively for previous crimes where sentences had already been served. While these Supreme Court rulings are significant victories, they bring no redress to the thousands of families whose family members have already been deported or have languished in jail. ■

## Last-minute Veto Dampens Texas Victory

In May, the Texas State Legislature approved bills allowing all state residents, including undocumented immigrants, to obtain driver's licenses and pay in-state tuition for college. The victory was the result of the hard work of immigrant rights activists around the state.

In June, Texas Governor Rick Perry killed the driver's licenses bill in an 11th hour veto. The vetoing of the bill came as a surprise on two counts.

First, because the bill passed quickly through the House and Senate, and was expected to hold and, second, because Perry had promised to "support legislation that will make our streets and highways safer."

One in five fatal car accidents in the U.S. involve an unlicensed driver, and the bill was a measure to protect safety. Perry also vetoed a bill that would allow construction workers in border school districts to be paid a living wage. ■

## Border Protest Against FTAA

Over a thousand people gathered on the Tijuana-San Diego border in April for a historic demonstration that coincided with hemisphere-wide protests against the Free Trade Area of the Americas, or FTAA.

The FTAA would expand NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement) to include all of the countries in the Western Hemisphere except Cuba. The agreement is being negotiated in secret by trade ministers, without public input, and would expand the rights of corporations, liberalize trade, and privatize basic services such as water and electricity. Protesters argue that the FTAA is designed to benefit corporate interests at the expense of people.

Immigrant rights activists who attended the border protest also point to the contradiction between border policies designed to stop immigrants, while corporations are allowed to cross borders at will. The protest criticized the effects of Operation Gatekeeper and other "seal the border policies" which have led to the deaths of hundreds of migrants.

NAFTA generated migration by displacing many Mexicans from their farmlands and traditional ways of life, while allowing corporations free reign to set prices, build maquiladoras, and benefit from cheap labor. The FTAA is sure to magnify this effect. ■



photo by José Palafox



# Taking the Immigrant Rights Movement to South Africa

Community groups fighting racial injustice and other intolerances perpetrated against immigrants, people of color, and other marginalized communities are bringing their cause before the people of the world. They will converge on Durban, South Africa, August 28-September 7, 2001, during the United Nations-organized NGO Forum and the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerances (WCAR).

Since September 2000, a determined national coalition of immigrant and refugee community groups, activists and organizers in the U.S. has been preparing to take the immigrant rights movement to participate in the WCAR. The Immigrant Rights Working Group (IRWG), convened by the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, is focused on deepening the awareness of human rights in the defense of immigrant communities and strengthening alliances with the racial, social, and environmental justice movements. The IRWG will be taking a 60-person delegation to the conference, and is organizing community awareness by building campaigns in numerous cities.

The World Conference against Racism in South Africa is the third world gathering; the first two, in 1973 and 1983, focused on the struggles against apartheid in South Africa and the situation of the Palestinians in the Middle East. This third conference calls on governments and civil society to take direct action against the scourge of racism in every society. The IRWG is working to ensure that immigrant rights are prominent in the growing world movement against racism. The NGO Forum and the WCAR will be a time to network, build alliances, carry out educational and organizing activities, and work to draft a shared Declaration and Programme of Action to combat racism everywhere.

## Standing Together for Migrant Rights at the World Conference in South Africa

The Immigrant Rights Working Group (IRWG) has been meeting over the last year through conference calls and face-to-face planning meetings. Representatives have actively participated in national and international preparatory conferences and meetings to promote the rights of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and displaced peoples in the conference's official declaration.

During 2000 and 2001, the IRWG has sent representatives to the Americas Preparatory Conference in Chile, to a Southeast regional conference in Atlanta, to the NGO conference "Forum of the Americas" in Quito, Ecuador, to the Second meeting of the Preparatory

Committee of the WCAR in Geneva, Switzerland, and to several other WCAR-related events organized by community groups in the U.S. In Chile, Ecuador, and the Second PrepCom, IRWG members helped form Migrant Rights Working Groups and Caucuses that collectively developed recommendations and demands so that migrant rights were central to the World Conference preparations and deliberations. IRWG has also attended briefings by the U.S. government's Inter-Agency Task Force on the World Conference to discuss issues of migration, globalization, and racism. The IRWG is helping build a global movement for migrant, refugee, and immigrant rights united to the cause of racial justice and equality.

### But I'm not going to South Africa, how can I get involved?

- IRWG members are holding diverse activities in their cities. You can help organize educational workshops and forums and distribute information on the World Conference in your community. (Please see list of groups for your area.)
- IRWG is putting together a report on the state of immigrant rights and racism in the U.S.. You can help by providing testimony on anti-immigrant racism and community organizing against racial discrimination and abuse. The testimonies and report will be shared with other participants at the WCAR in South Africa. The report will be used before, during and after the World Conference in Durban to develop a grassroots-led movement in the fight against racism and demanding immigrant rights.
- Join in the IRWG's "National Week of Action Against Anti-Immigrant Racism," August 6-10, 2001, when we will be releasing our report on anti-immigrant racism and the proposed fight back.
- IRWG members will be reporting on the results of the World Conference and putting in place efforts to monitor and implement the Programme of Action. You can host or co-sponsor a report back in your community or workplace to hear about the WCAR and how you can join in the follow-up work.

Please contact the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights for more information (510) 465-1984 or email: [nnirr@nnirr.org](mailto:nnirr@nnirr.org)

# Bringing It to the International Stage

*Inmaculada Barcia of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights shares her experiences as a representative of the Immigrant Rights Working Group in international pre-conference activities:*

In late May of this year, I attended the World Conference against Racism's Second Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, as part of an NGO delegation convened by the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR). The PrepCom was one of the last attempts by UN member countries to work out their differences over the conference's outcomes and official Declaration and Programme of Action. Over a two-week period government delegates closely scrutinized document language, identified a myriad of problems stemming from discrimination and racism, and discussed possible remedies for victims.

Although the official negotiations were limited to government delegates, NGOs played a big role in lobbying delegates to address specific areas of concern. The U.S. National Network delegation was part of the Migration, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers Caucus, a group made up of several national and international organizations, including Human Rights Watch, the International Catholic Migration Commission, the European Network Against Racism, Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (Argentina), and Migrants Rights International. The primary work of the caucus was to ensure that the conference adequately addressed the rights of documented and undocumented immigrants, migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Our activities at the PrepCom included preparing statements that were presented at the plenary meeting of government delegates, analyzing the official conference documents, and preparing a lobby document that provided language and recommendations that our caucus wanted inserted into the conference declaration and plan of action. We also had the opportunity to meet with other delegates from the United States, Europe, and Mexico.

The PrepCom meeting also provided NGOs with an excellent opportunity to educate each other about the various struggles of communities around the world, to create transnational agendas and build an international network of organizations working towards social justice.



Members of the Migrant Rights Working Group formed at the NGO "Forum of the Americas: For Diversity and Pluralism," Quito, Ecuador, March 2001.

Photo by Guadalupe Ochoa

## The Immigrant Rights Working Group

On the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, & Related Intolerance

Durban, South Africa,

28 August - 7 September 2001

Sponsored by the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

- AFSC Immigration Law Enforcement Monitoring Project, El Paso, TX
- ANDOLAN: Organizing South Asian Communities, New York, NY
- Caribbean Empowerment Program of New Jersey, Newark, NJ
- Catholic Social Services, Anchorage, AL
- CAUSA, Salem, OR
- CAAAY: Organizing Asian Communities, New York, NY
- Center for Immigrant Families, New York, NY
- Centro de Trabajadores Latinos, New York, NY
- Centro de Derechos Humanos Arnold Mirelles, Chicago, IL
- Coalición de Derechos Humanos, Tucson, AZ
- Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
- Comité de Apoyo al Trabajador Agrícola, Glassboro, NJ
- Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Winter Garden, FL
- Farmworker Association of Florida, Apopka, FL
- Filipino Civil Rights Advocates, Oakland, CA
- Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Chicago, IL
- International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, San Francisco, CA
- Mujeres Unidas y Activas, Oakland-San Francisco, CA
- National Lawyers' Guild - National Immigration Project, Boston, MA
- National Mobilization Against Sweatshops, New York, NY
- National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Oakland, CA
- Pineros y Campesinos del Noroeste, Woodburn, OR
- Refugee Women's Network, Atlanta, GA
- Rights for All People, Denver, CO
- Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network, San José, CA
- Somos Un Pueblo Unido, Santa Fe, NM
- Southwest Alliance to Resist Militarization, Tucson, AZ
- United Methodist Church - Women's Committee, Los Angeles, CA
- Women Watch Afrika, Atlanta, GA



## sharing Struggles & sharing Dreams

A Network News Interview  
with members of the  
Immigrant Rights Working Group



Women Watch Afrika photo

**WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DOES THE WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM BRING FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION?**

**Rosa Perea, Arnaldo Mireles Human Rights Center, Chicago, IL:**

Work around the World Conference is a great opportunity to build new relationships. Locally, we are building a coalition of people working on the issues through outreach to youth and other agencies. Internationally, we hope it will be an opportunity to link our issues with others.

**Eric Tang, Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence, New York, NY:**

We are relatively new to the international terrain. We believe that the conference is an opportunity to strengthen our participation locally, develop links nationally, and begin to forge connections internationally.

We want to bring the voice of the Asian American movement - of Asian radicalism in the U.S. - to the conference. This is a movement that understands how racial oppression is at the core of U.S. democracy. It is also a movement that understands the ways in which the particular racial oppression of Asians in the U.S. is always linked to the international politics.

**Glory Kilanko, Women Watch Afrika, Atlanta, GA:**

We aim to link African women's concerns in the U.S. with that of women in their native countries, along with

global concerns on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. The World Conference Against Racism is an opportunity to link with both national and international human rights organizations to come up with practical measures to abolish racial discrimination.

**Somos Un Pueblo Unido, Albuquerque, NM**

The World Conference is a timely opportunity for New Mexico to be counted in national and international dialogues about immigrant rights, and for our local community to be exposed to the context in which many of our problems are engendered. The marginalization that immigrants experience in New Mexico as a result of institutional racism and xenophobia is not unique, it is shared by poor migrants across the globe. We live common struggles - and dreams.

**WHAT ARE YOU DOING LOCALLY TO GET READY FOR THE CONFERENCE?**

**Rosa Perea:** We have scheduled twenty-four hours of training for the human rights center members and local residents. Trainings will cover topics like 'what are human rights?', 'what and where are the United Nations?', as well as immigrant rights, leadership vision and development, how to organize campaigns, and how to talk to the media about what we are doing. We'll also hold a community forum and press conference as part of the National Week of Action in August.

Going to South Africa is really expensive. We are selling hot meals during lunch hours, and making tamales in order to get to South Africa. Local churches have donated new and used items, sold during sidewalk sales.

**Eric Tang:** Many of our members are undocumented immigrants and/or survivors of the racist criminal justice system, and are therefore at risk if they attempt to leave the U.S. and travel to South Africa. Our communities also lack the resources to travel. That's why we are mobilizing around the World Conference locally.

We are working with Third World Within, a network of New York City-based organizations of color, to hold Racial Justice Day 2001 on August 31st, to run parallel to the World Conference. This day will include a tribunal on U.S. white supremacy and racial violence. Third World Within has already convened two forums: Racism in the Movement, Race, Color, Caste, and Class Within, and one on U.S. military war crimes in the Third World.

**Glory Kilanko:** Women Watch Afrika (WWA) has conducted a number of awareness programs on racism and other forms of intolerance within the African refugee and immigrant community in Atlanta in preparation for the conference, in order to come up with a position paper to be presented at the forum. We are also collaborating with a number of U.S. grassroots human rights organizations.

In Atlanta, WWA is working on a program called "Steps to Eradicate Racial Discrimination Among Youth in Schools," and at the African regional level, we are mobilizing against all forms of discriminatory laws against women and girls. We have participated in a number of conferences and hosted workshops and presentations at forums such as the Southern Human Rights Organizer's conference and the conference of the Women's Commissions for Refugee Women and Children. We also organized a community awareness event called "African Women and the World Conference Against Racism: A Look at Gender Inequality."

**Somos Un Pueblo Unido:** We've designed a series of events this summer where we will gather testimonies about immigrants' rights abuses in our state and also inform the public about World Conference objectives. In August, we will sponsor a public hearing inviting immigrants to give testimony about their experiences. We'll hold community dialogues about racism and xenophobia, and compile a report to distribute to local immigrants, lawmakers, teachers, service providers, and media. We have also organized a community education campaign about

racism and xenophobia here in New Mexico using the World Conference as a backdrop.

**WHAT OUTCOMES DO YOU EXPECT FROM THE CONFERENCE?**

**Rosa Perea:** I'm scared about going all the way to South Africa - I'm more of a person who stays in my own community. But other than that, I get really hyped up when I see people fighting for the same things we are, that we share common ground. We are also going to report back to our community when we return. If we are going to spend money and effort to get there, we need to bring something back, to have our community commit to something.

**Eric Tang:** We want to strengthen a global movement that recognizes the international nature of the issues we work on. For example, the legacies of U.S. and western colonialism in Southeast Asia are inscribed in the struggles of Vietnamese and Cambodian

refugees living in urban poverty in the U.S. Or the way in which today's low-wage Asian immigrant labor in "global cities" of the west function as an extension of the low-wage labor found in the free trade zones of Asia. We are drawn to Durban to make these connections apparent on an international scale.

**Glory Kilanko:** WWA hopes to be part of the African women's movement advocating for the interpretation of the conference resolution in each country's domestic law for effective implementation.

We have also been organizing a number of youth activities in preparation for the conference. We hope to employ a youth director to coordinate all our youth activities from now and beyond South Africa, for the effective implementation of the conference outcome, and necessary follow-ups. The better the youth, the better the society, particularly in the area of social change.

**Somos Un Pueblo Unido:** The conference provides the forum to unite our voices with those of other migrants' rights activists from all over the world. We chose to take part in the Immigrant Rights Working Group because one of our primary goals is to make information about migration within a global context accessible to our immigrant communities. A solid understanding about international migration issues and its effect on our local communities is a tool immigrants can use to advocate for the welfare of their families here at home.



# The Message We're Bringing To South Africa

By Eunice Cho



"Tecpatli" by Christine Wong.

The World Conference Against Racism and Xenophobia is an opportunity to bring the issues that face immigrants in the United States to the world stage. Anti-immigrant racism, violence against immigrants, and escalating xenophobia are serious concerns for immigrants in the U.S. — and are experienced in many communities. They are also reflected and reinforced by increasingly restrictive immigration policies that promote the scapegoating of migrants for economic and social problems. The 60+ immigrant community leaders participating as part of the Immigrant Rights Working Group will bring these concerns to bear as they attend the conference.

The Immigrant Rights Working Group has prepared two publications for the conference. The first is a groundbreaking report, *From the Borderline to the Colorline: A Report on Anti-Immigrant Racism in the United States*, that documents a disturbing pattern of racism against immigrants in the United States. Based on a nationwide survey of conditions for immigrant communities conducted by twenty-five organizations, this

report concludes that anti-immigrant racism poses significant barriers to equality and inclusion for citizens and non-citizens alike.

*From the Borderline to the Colorline* is the first comprehensive assessment of its kind, and will be delivered to the World Conference in Durban, South Africa by our delegation. Through an in-depth look at key areas, such as work and housing — as well as recent incidents of hate violence — this survey finds that anti-immigrant racism imperils the lives and well-being of a growing sector of the U.S. population.

In particular, the U.S. government has implemented a program of anti-immigrant legislation that justifies and encourages racial discrimination against immigrants by law enforcement officials and civilians alike. The climate of racial hostility towards immigrants is fostered by laws, policies, and practices that effectively tolerate and, in many cases, promote racial discrimination against immigrants and those who "look or sound" like immigrants in the workplace, community, schools, access to social services, and legal protections.

## "From the Borderline to the Colorline" Findings

- **Immigrants, and those suspected to be immigrants due to their race, continue to suffer from employment discrimination.** Legislative provisions, such as the anti-discrimination provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), written to safeguard workers who appear "foreign" from discrimination, remain inadequate and are not enforced.
- **Immigrant workers remain vulnerable to workplace abuse and exploitation,** and often face greater challenges in attempting to fight for fair working conditions. Employers have repeatedly used immigration law enforcement to threaten workers attempting to organize and unionize, often resulting in mass firings, penalization, and deportation of immigrant workers.
- **Immigrants and refugees, particularly those of color, suffer unequal treatment within civil and criminal justice systems due to their immigration status, have little access to protections guaranteed to citizens, and face standards of evidence and punishment unequal to those of citizens.** Examples include the denial of due process rights and equal protection rights of immigrants and refugees, indefinite detention, as well as the use of "secret evidence" in legal proceedings against non-citizens.
- **Over the last decade, detention and incarceration have become key enforcement strategies against immigrant and refugee communities.** Immigrants and refugees are now the fastest growing incarcerated population in the U.S.
- **Immigrants of color are often victims of hate crimes,** where they are targets of violence by private citizens acting on racist and xenophobic motives. Legal definitions for hate crime, in the states where hate crime legislation exists, do not extend to anti-immigrant bias.
- **Heightened law enforcement along the US-Mexico border has escalated human rights abuses of migrants and people of color in the southwest region of the United States.** Numerous incidents of harassment, sexual assault, and death have been reported as a result of US policies that aim to discourage undocumented migration from Mexico.
- **Heightened cooperation of immigration officials and local law enforcement has increased human and civil rights violations of immigrants.**

- **The 1996 welfare legislation in the U.S. undermined the economic well-being of poor immigrants, who bore the brunt of cuts to services for all welfare recipients. Undocumented immigrants often have little or no access to services.** Many individual states, which now control the allocation of welfare services under the new Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, limit and impose conditions on eligibility.

## Convention to Eliminate Racial Discrimination

The second document is a letter authored by the National Network's Immigrant Rights Working Group, addressed to the United Nations' Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). The letter is signed by over 40 individuals and organizations based in the United States. The CERD is a committee of 'experts' that monitor countries' adherence to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). ICERD is considered to be the only international legal instrument that specifically addresses comprehensive issues of racial discrimination.

The United States ratified the ICERD in 1996, although the convention has been in force since 1969. As part of the ICERD's requirements, the U.S. must submit a report to the CERD committee every three years. The U.S. only submitted its *Initial Report of the United States of America to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* in September 2000. Our letter presents a brief analysis on the shortcomings of the U.S. report, and suggests alternative measures that would bring the United States into compliance with the CERD and support the inalienable human rights of migrants in the United States. The letter also addresses specific points raised in the United States' *Initial Report* that affect immigrants and refugees, and provides further analysis, recommendations, examples of best practices, and strategies for change.

Copies of *From the Borderline to the Colorline* are available from the National Network (order information on back page). Copies of the CERD letter on the shortcomings of U.S. compliance with the Convention are also available (\$5, includes S&H). Contact NNIRR at (510) 465-1984 or echo@nnirr.org for more information.

Eunice Cho is World Conference Project Associate at the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. Christine Wong's artwork is featured in the National Network's report *From the Borderline to the Colorline*.



# Taking Up the Camera: Immigrant Rights Activists Make Their Own Films

In the Summer 1999 edition of *Network News*, Jacque Larrainzar provided a list of movie favorites highlighting the best flicks on immigration available at the time in local video store, and gave tips on how to use everything from "Men in Black" to "Lone Star" as organizing tools. A lot has changed since then. As video production technology has become more accessible (and less expensive!), activists and immigrant rights organizations are taking up the camera themselves. Here's a quick snapshot of four new works that are great for community education, leadership trainings, and as examples of how local organizations and activists are creating their own media.

## **UPROOTED: Refugees of the Global Economy** (National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights with Sasha Khokha, Ulla Nilsen, Jon Fromer, and Francisco Herrera, 28 min, 2001)

It was Seattle, 1999, at the huge WTO protest. Sea turtles and anti-Starbucks folks alike took to the streets to raise their voices against corporate globalization. But where was the voice of immigrant rights? Wasn't there something out there that could help anti-globalization activists - and the immigrant rights movement - make this important link? As the Network's BRIDGE (Building a Race and Immigration Dialogue in the Global Era) project kicked off, we wanted to find a video about globalization to help explain some key concepts to immigrant rights groups. Unfortunately, the globalization videos out there didn't seem to factor in the immigration connection.

Frustrated with the options, we decided to create our own film, hoping to pull it together in a few months and use it as a tool to raise awareness about the upcoming World Conference Against Racism and Xenophobia. We had no idea what a long - and fascinating - journey we were about to take.

Our video project, *Uprooted: Refugees from the Global Economy*, took over two years to complete. We managed to raise a small amount of money and find some dedicated activist-filmmakers interested in collaborating on the project. We spent hours talking about the concept, deciding whom to interview, and how we wanted to illustrate our ideas. Did we want it to be a bunch of talking heads and experts? Or did we want to show personal stories? We decided that personal stories would help us reach the broadest possible audience. Then came filming and researching for footage that could illustrate some of our interviews as immigrants talked about the impact of globalization on their home countries. We recorded an original score (featuring music in English, Spanish, Tagalog, and Haitian Creole) and put subtitles throughout the piece so it could be used in bilingual settings. Throughout, input from National Network members and allies - as well as staff involvement through all stages of the process - made this project a true collaboration between the organization and the filmmakers.

The result is a narrative that weaves together the stories of three immigrants into a compelling tale of how the global economy (including U.S. corporations and the International Monetary Fund) has forced people to leave their home countries. Maricel is one of thousands of women encouraged by the Philippine government to work abroad as a domestic in order to pay its international debt. Her employer, a top New York corporate executive, refused to pay her the minimum wage. Free trade destroyed Jessie and Jaime's family business in Bolivia; they came to the United States and worked as janitors despite their engineering degrees. Luckner left Haiti after working for 14 cents an hour at a U.S.-owned baseball factory that moved to China, in search of cheaper labor costs. These powerful stories raise critical questions about U.S. immigration policy in an era when corporations cross borders at will.

## **New World Border** (28 mins, Directed by Casey Peek and José Palafox, 2001. Available from NNIRR.)

*New World Border* is a must for organizations looking for educational tools on border issues. This video documents the rise in human rights abuses along the U.S.-Mexico border since the imposition of border blockades and strategies of increased militarization. It includes interviews with migrants on both sides of the border, immigrant rights organizers, and an excellent analysis of how "free trade" policies impact migration. It also features footage of Border Patrol agents explicitly stating that the strategy of moving migrants into more dangerous crossing areas is an intentional one.

The film was co-created by José Palafox, an immigrant rights activist and former NNIRR intern, currently working on a PhD at UC Berkeley, focusing on the militarization of the Mexico-U.S. border. Co-producer Casey Peek is an activist and filmmaker whose other works include a project on the internment of Japanese Latin Americans during World War II.

## **Eating Welfare** (Produced by the Youth Leadership Project of CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities, 2001. Available from CAAAV at [www.caaav.org](http://www.caaav.org) or (718) 220-7391.)

This is an inspiring documentary about the Southeast Asian refugee community in the Bronx, New York - and its struggle to survive under mayor Rudy Giuliani's administration. *Eating Welfare* was produced by the youth organizers working in CAAAV's Youth Leadership Project in New York City.

In the summer of 2000, twenty Southeast Asian youth filmed their community struggles at local welfare centers, forced work ("workfare") programs, and community spaces. *Eating Welfare* is their story, tracing their arrival from war-torn Vietnam and Cambodia, to their literal insertion into urban poverty. But it also shows how they fight back - showing their current battle against right wing welfare "deform."

## **Los Trabajadores/The Workers** (Directed by Heather Courtney, 2001. Available from [hcourtney85@hotmail.com](mailto:hcourtney85@hotmail.com))

*Los Trabajadores* documents the plight of day laborers in the context of economic development in Austin, Texas. Two men - one from Mexico and one from Nicaragua - tell their stories as part of a group that is helping to build Austin without reaping profits from its economic boom. The film includes interviews with family members in Mexico, excerpts from conversations with City Council members, and interviews with some of the residents living next to the new site. The film also puts the stories of day laborers within the larger context of globalization: Ramón, the Mexican worker, was laid off from his job in Mexico after the peso crashed in 1994. He explains the trauma of having to leave his family and cross the border as an undocumented worker, only to be met with picket signs that said, "No Day Labor Near Families."

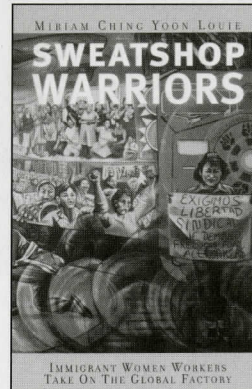
Filmmaker Heather Courtney worked in Rwandan refugee camps at the Rwanda/Tanzania border, and for several refugee and immigrant rights organizations in Washington, D.C. She has received accolades for her work, including "Best Documentary First Film" Audience Award at the SXSW Film Festival in Austin.



still images from Uprooted



# Sweatshop Warriors Immigrant Women Take on the Global Economy



The following are excerpts from *Miriam Ching Yoon Louie's Sweatshop Warriors*, a new book on the fight waged by immigrant women for their rights in the global economy.

"This book is dedicated to the immigrant women workers who are barred from board rooms where deals get cut; whose stories end up on the cutting room floors; who get punished for telling the truth; who are asked to speak only as victims, not as the trail blazers they truly are. These women warriors have trekked across mountains, rivers, oceans, and borders, cutting deep paths through the heart of this nation's industries and inner cities. Tucked inside their weathered work jeans, double-knit pants, cleaning uniforms, cooking aprons, and serving caps are continents and worlds of experience. These are the women who sew our clothes; grow, cook, and serve our food; make our fancy little gadgets; care for us when we get sick; and clean up our messes. For those of us who come from communities of color and working-class families, these are the women without whose labor, love, sweat, and tears we would not even exist on this planet.

Yet the powerful and the privileged often stifle these women's voices. Luckily for us, these workers are chiseling through thick walls of censorship to make themselves heard. They are organizing themselves in worker's centers, creating their own groups when the labor or community organizations that already exist fail to meet their needs. Contrary to conventional wisdom that leans heavily on white and/or male academics, these women are the real experts about the inner workings of the global economy, labor markets, and immigrant communities - speaking to us from the bottom of the sweatshop industry pyramid. They stand steadfast as the first line of whistle-blowers and flak-catchers against corporate greed, government negligence, and racial wrongs. They serve as the tree shakers who knock down the fruit, the piñata busters who break open the goodies - of economic democracy, gender justice, and human rights - for all of us. They are neither victims nor superwomen. These sweatshop warriors are simply everyday women in our communities who have much to tell and teach..."

To order, please send a check or money order to South End Press, 7 Brookline Street #1, Cambridge, MA, 02139. For credit card orders, call 1-800-533-8478. Cost: \$18.00 per book plus \$3.50 for postage and handling first copy, 50 cents each additional copy

## Snapshot of Immigrant Rights Working Group Events on the World Conference against Racism

### Alaska

- The Alaska Governor's Commission on Tolerance will listen to testimony from the immigrant community on their experiences of racism.
- "We The People," a demonstration primarily organized by the Alaska Native community to protest racism in Alaska, including immigrants.

Contact: Catholic Social Services, Anchorage, AK, (907) 276-5590

### California

- Community Forums and Press Conference
  - Legalization March
- Contact: CHIRLA, Los Angeles, CA, (212) 353-1339, Mujeres Unidas y Activas, San Francisco, CA, (415) 243-8215, or SIREN, San Jose, CA, (408) 286-5680

### Georgia

- Awareness programs on racism and other forms of intolerance within the African refugee and immigrant community
- Community awareness event called "African Women and the World Conference Against Racism: A Look at Gender Inequality"

Contact: Women Watch Afrika, Decatur, GA, (404) 292-0069

### Illinois

- Leadership Training for residents, covering topics such as Human Rights, Immigrant Rights, Leadership Development, the Economy, etc.
- Community forum to be held in Chicago to reach the immigrant population, featuring speakers discussing: Globalization, the Amnesty Movement, Lack of Access to Health Care, Worker's Rights, Youth Issues, and Access to Benefits.
- Racism, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance Campaign in the South Chicago, the Little Village and West Town Communities. Forum to be held in Our Lady of Guadalupe Church.

Contact: Arnold Mireles Human Rights Center, Chicago, IL, (773) 542-8870

### New Mexico

- Public hearing with testimony from immigrants, and community dialogue about racism and xenophobia
- Community Education Campaign about racism and xenophobia

Contact: Somos Un Pueblo Unido, Albuquerque, NM, (505) 424-7832

### New York

- Racial Justice Day, including a tribunal on U.S. white supremacy and racial violence.
- "Anti-Immigrant Racism in the Global Era." Forums on Racism in the Movement, Race, Color, Caste, and Class Within, and on U.S. military war crimes in the Third World.

Contact: the Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence (CAA AV), New York, NY, (718) 220-7391, Center for Immigrant Families, New York, NY, (212) 531-3011, or ANDOLAN, Astoria, NY, (718) 728-1768

### Oregon

- Press Conference and Forum

Contact: CAUSA, Salem, OR, (503) 763-7694

### Texas

- Forum and Press Conference surrounding the Abuse Campaign
- Legalization Forums throughout the state.

Contact: ILEMP (Immigrant Law Enforcement Monitoring Project), El Paso, TX, (915) 577-0724

## Publications and Resources

The following publications and web sites provide various perspectives of interest to our readers. Contact the National Network at 510-465-1984 or email [nnirr@nnirr.org](mailto:nnirr@nnirr.org) if you need assistance in locating any of these materials.

### Reports and Publications:

*The Human Rights Education Handbook: Effective Practices for Learning, Action and Change* combines the theoretical thinking of human rights and practical teaching experience, providing activities, exercises, and helpful tools for human rights educators. \$19.95 + \$5 s/h. Check payable to the Human Rights Resource Center, Univ. of Minnesota, 229 19th Ave. South, Suite 439, Minneapolis, MN 55455.

*Challenges to Equality: Poverty and Race in America.* This book brings together leading progressive thinkers and activists with essays and analysis on integration, education, poverty, democratic participation, environmental justice, immigration, and racial justice. Edited by Chester Hartman, executive director of the Poverty & Race Research Action Council, 3000 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20008. Tel (202) 387-9887; fax (202) 387-0764; info@prrac.org, www.prrac.org

### Videos

(see article page 12 for more video resources)

*New World Border* documents the rise in human rights abuses along the U.S.-Mexico

border since the implementation of border blockades over the last decade. This 28-minute video includes interviews with immigrant rights organizers, immigrant testimony, analysis of "free trade" and current efforts to build a vibrant movement for immigrant rights. Institutions: \$50 + \$3s/h, Individuals: \$30 + \$3 s/h/ Check payable to NNIRR, 310 8th St. Suite 303, Oakland, CA 94709.

*Border Crossings/Cruzando Fronteras*, a follow-up to the video, *Unity Crosses Borders*, investigates journeys across the US-Mexico border and the abuses suffered and overcome by immigrants. Institutions \$50 + \$3 s/h; Individuals \$30 + \$3 s/h. Check payable to NNIRR, 310 8th St. Suite 303, Oakland, CA 94709.

*Raids and Rights: INS Activity in Washington / Redadas y Derechos: La Migra en Washington*, 1998, addresses the abuses and effects of INS raids on workplaces, schools, and homes on immigrant communities in Washington State. Institutions \$25 + \$3 s/h; Individuals \$15 + \$3 s/h. Check payable to NNIRR, 310 8th St. Suite 303, Oakland, CA 94709.

### Websites related to articles in this issue:

NGO sites on the World Conference Against Racism:

<http://www.wcarmigrants.org> is the website of the Immigrant Rights Working Group.

<http://www.racism.org.za> is the official NGO Forum website. Provide key information, as well as logistical support, for NGO participation in World Conference activities.

<http://www.ngoworldconference.org> has up-to-date information on NGO preparations for the World Conference.

### International Migrant Rights Campaigns:

[www.december18.net](http://www.december18.net) hosts the international campaign celebrating December 18 as International Migrants' Day, and provides information on a number of international migrants' rights campaigns.

[www.migrantwatch.org](http://www.migrantwatch.org) links viewers to the campaigns of Migrant Rights International, a global organization which works to build international alliances among migrant rights groups.

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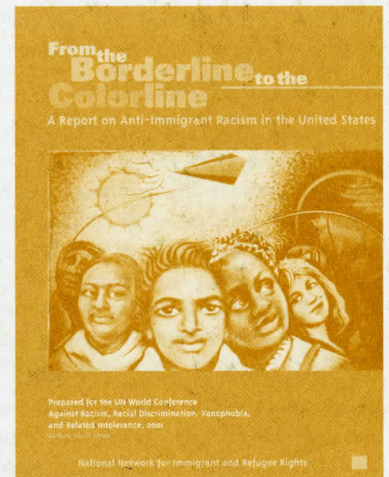
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## New Report on Fight Against Racism

*From the Borderline to the Colorline: A Report on Anti-Immigrant Racism in the United States* provides an in-depth picture of the nature of anti-immigrant racism in the U.S. today.

Through personal testimony and frontline analysis, these articles detail key issues impacting immigrant and refugee communities - from trafficking, enforcement, and detention centers, to policy, legislation, and social rights. *From the Borderline to the Colorline* is a primer on the rights of immigrants and a guide to action against all forms of racism and intolerance. Includes original work from seven artists living in the U.S., many of them immigrants themselves.

**Order today!** Send your check or money order payable to the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. Single copy: \$15.00-community groups; \$35.00 libraries and institutions; include \$3.00 S&H for first copy; \$1.00 each additional copy. Please inquire for bulk orders.



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