



# The Right Livelihood Award

*for outstanding vision and work on behalf of our planet and its people*

## Tony Clarke (Canada)

**Joint Award with Maude Barlow (2005)**



" for their exemplary and longstanding worldwide work for trade justice and the recognition of the fundamental human right to water."

Maude Barlow & Tony Clarke at a demonstration

**Both Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke are long-term activists on trade and justice issues, now with a special focus on water, whose campaigning lives have intertwined for many years.**

Tony Clarke, born in 1944, did graduate studies and earned his doctorate in social ethics at the University of Chicago in 1974, and, inspired by Paulo Freire's work, returned to Canada to work on the social justice programmes of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB), where he became head of the social action department, and worked on a whole range of national and international social justice issues. In 1987 he chaired (first with Barlow, later by himself), the Action Canada Network (ACN), the largest coalition of civil society organisations and labour unions ever assembled in Canada to mobilise opposition to the free trade agenda. Clarke was also a member of CoC's national board from 1997-2003 and vice-chair most of that time.

In 1993 Clarke was dismissed from his position in the CCCB (due mainly to his high profile organizing against NAFTA), subsequently writing a book, *Behind the Mitre, the Moral Leadership Crisis in the Catholic Church* (1995), documenting this experience. He documented the unaccountable power and influence of big business in another book, *Silent Coup: Confronting the Big Business Takeover of Canada* (1997).

In 1997 he founded the Polaris Institute (PI, with Barlow on the Board) for the purpose of unmasking the corporate power that lies behind government. Concentrating on water, energy and trade policy issues and struggles, PI works on both domestic and international fronts. PI's activities have included a project on 'city-countryside' water struggles in the global south, a campaign challenging the CEO Water Mandate at the UN, an ongoing action program on the WTO and the GATS, a campaign to stop Canada's participation in the US Star Wars program, plus numerous campaigns in municipalities and schools on bottle water. Today, a significant portion of PI's work is focused on building resistance to the Canadian tar sands which have been labelled 'the most environmentally destructive industrial project on the planet.'

Being the author or co-author of 10 books, Clarke's most recent publication is '*Tar Sands Showdown: Canada and the New Politics of Oil in an Age of Climate Change*' (2008). He also serves on the board of directors for such organizations as the International Forum on Globalization, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and the Oakland Institute.

Together, Tony Clarke and Maude Barlow played a key role in building opposition to, and defeating,

the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), and in campaigning against the World Trade Organisation (WTO) s free-trade agenda, especially at Seattle (1999) and Cancun (2003). With their working lives closely connected for many years, Barlow and Clarke are now recognized as two of the most respected citizen leaders in Canada and in the global justice movement generally. Both have been featured speakers at the World Social Forums in Porto Alegre and Mumbai. They have also been important innovators in cross-border organising, shown in their work against the MAI and WTO; in creating democratic models of organising and in bringing new issues to the forefront of the movement, as with NAFTA, the MAI and water; and in developing credible alternatives, which are discussed in their joint book *Global Showdown: How the New Activists are Fighting Global Corporate Rule* (2001). They have also worked closely together through the International Forum on Globalisation (IFG) which was set up in 1998.

A major common focus of their work in recent years has been the world s water resources. In 2002 they published *Blue Gold: the Battle Against Corporate Theft of the World s Water*, which, in 2009, has been published in 47 countries. A recent book by Clarke, *Inside the Bottle: Exposing the Bottled Water Industry* (2007) highlights concerns about the bottled water industry and its impact on the water resources of the poor. They have built a considerable network of activists in the South, and an important part of their work has been visiting and assisting communities struggling for water rights, e.g. the village of Plachimada in Kerala fighting against a Coca-Cola plant.

One particular victory for the international water movement was the inclusion by referendum into the constitution of Uruguay a new article ensuring not only that access to piped water and sanitation is a fundamental human right available to everyone, but also that in the creation of water policies social and ecological considerations take precedence over economic considerations.

#### Quotation

*"Under the current model of globalization, everything is for sale. Areas once considered our common heritage are being commodified, commercialized and privatized at an alarming rate. Today, more than ever before, the targets of this assault comprise the building blocs of life as we know it on this planet, including freshwater, the human genome, seeds and plant varieties, the air and atmosphere, the oceans and outer space. The assault on, and defence of, the commons is one of the great ideological and social struggles of our times."*

Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke

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