

The Dominion

news from the grassroots

SCENARIO A: Acknowledging the new Band Council, headed by Chief Casey Ratt

This decision is mainly based on the information obtained by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) over the past few days. We received confirmation that a leadership review process was held with a relatively large participation of community members (individuals). An observer was able to ascertain that a number of custom rules were complied with. The Quebec regional office, through a third-party administrator, verified that the new Council has undertaken some actions, appropriate with the regular activities of a Band council. However, he could not assess whether this council was exercising an effective control on the reserve. It should be noted that this decision will be fully compliant with the departmental practice to acknowledge the results of election or selection processes according to custom.

Positive Impacts

- Improved collaboration of the new council with INAC, the third-party administrator and other partners
- Likely emergence of a new environment more favourable to the development of the community
- Greater likelihood for the reopening of the school with a regular curriculum
- A new council less dogmatized and more concerned by the well being of the population
- A new environment more favourable in the medium-term to a healing process

Negative Impacts

- New tensions may appear in the community, including acts of violence
- Legal action possible from the council chaired by Mr. Nottaway;
- Media pressure – perception of a council sponsored by INAC;
- Barricades may be erected.

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A Montréal graffiti campaign against police violence has spread throughout the city. The inquest into the police shooting of Fredy Villanueva has been suspended amid high tensions in Montréal Nord.

flics-assassins.net

Nine women were arrested in a workplace raid at Lakeside Produce in Leamington, Ontario. "We are outraged by these arrests," said Chris Ramsroop of Justicia for Migrant Workers. "These attacks destroy our communities. Instead of attacking the immigration system, we are attacking workers who put food on our table." One arrestee is pregnant.

Guatemalans, Hondurans, members of the Nak'azdli nation and concerned Vancouverites protested outside Goldcorp's annual general meeting in Vancouver. Hondurans are demanding reparations for damage caused by the San Martin open-pit gold mine. In Guatemala, Mayan communities are demanding the Marlin mine be shut down. And in northern BC, the Nak'azdli nation are refusing Goldcorp's spin-off Terrane Metals to operate on their lands.

Thirty communities in the Northwest Territories united to call for a moratorium on tar sands development. "This is no longer just an issue for Albertans, and now poses a risk to all downstream communities in the Mackenzie Basin," reads the resolution.

Climate activists protested outside Duke Energy's annual general meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina, while a dozen shareholders questioned the company's

CEO for more than an hour from the meeting room floor. Their primary beef is Duke's proposed expansion of the Cliffside coal plant, which would cost \$2.4 billion, and increase the plant's capacity to 825 megawatts.

The federal appeals court (4th Circuit) in Richmond, Virginia, opened the possibility for mountaintop removal coal mining to restart in Appalachia.

Seventeen people were arrested in West Virginia for civil disobedience against the highly destructive mining practice.

The inquest into the police shooting of Montréal teen Fredy Villanueva and two other men was suspended indefinitely. The Villanueva family and the other shooting victims withdrew from the inquiry process. "The population of Montreal North was very touched by the death of Freddy Villanueva and there is a sentiment that the government authorities are hiding the details surrounding the case," according to Alexandre Popovic of the Coalition contre la Répression et les Abus Policiers (CRAP).

A federal court ruling questioned allegations by Canadian Security Intelligence Service against Mohamed Harkat. Harkat, accused of being allied with terrorists, is one of Canada's Secret Trial Five — one of five Muslim

men in Canada forced to live with a Security Certificate.

A Native warrior and father of five from the Ohlone & Chumash nations was arrested near Hope, BC. According to a press release from the Native Youth Movement, Shark's arrest was based on seven-year-old charges connected with protecting the land at Skwelkwew'welt, in the Secwepemc mountains. Shark is currently held at the Kamloops Regional Correctional Center.

The *Vancouver Sun's* reporter covering the 2010 Olympics acknowledged he wrote for the winter issue of the Olympic Review, the "official publication of the Olympic movement," published by the International Olympic Committee. Questions have arisen about conflict of interest: a journalist reporting on an organization that pays him. "I was waiting for you guys to call. Someone told me you were on this bullshit," Lee told The Tyee. Lee works for CanWest Global, an official media supplier of the Games, but not the official media carrier, which is BellGlobeMedia, owner of CTV and the *Globe and Mail*.

General Motors prepared to file for bankruptcy. GM is an Olympic sponsor, and VANOC claimed the company will still provide 4,300 cars for the 2010 Games.

California voters upheld Proposition 8, an amendment to the US Constitution that bans same-sex marriage. The 18,000 gay couples that married in 2008 will continue to be recognized as legally married. Supporters of gay marriage marched in Fresno, California, and will push to take the issue back to the ballot box in 2010.

Palestinian academics called for a British boycott of Israeli universities and post-secondary institutions, asking for "moral consistency," citing the academic boycott of apartheid South Africa.

In Mogadishu 45 people are dead and 49,000 people fled the city

in the latest round of fighting between the Somali military and al-Shabab, an anti-government group.

The government of **Sri Lanka** declared “total victory” over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Members of the LTTE countered that leader Vellupillai Prabhakaran is alive and safe. According to the United Nations, an estimated 7,000 civilians have been killed in fighting between the Sri Lankan Army and the LTTE since January.

Amnesty International’s annual report expressed “serious concerns about the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of air strikes” by US/NATO forces in **Afghanistan**. The report also condemned Canada for the RCMP’s use of Tasers, and the case of Omar Khadr, a Canadian citizen who is detained at Guantanamo Bay.

David Kilcullen, former counter-terrorism adviser to the Bush administration, said that US Predator strikes on **Pakistan** should be stopped. “Since 2006 we’ve killed 14 senior al-Qaeda leaders using drone strikes; in the same time period we’ve killed 700 Pakistani civilians in the same area,” he said.

The Independent revealed that the three highest-profile civilian massacres of the war in **Afghanistan** were committed by troops from the US Marines Corps’ Special Operations Command, or MarSOC, which was created in 2005 on the orders of Donald Rumsfeld.

After a long debate in the House of Commons, Bill C-23, the legislation which represents the final step in the ratification of the **Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement**, was withdrawn from the Order Paper by Stephen Harper’s Conservatives. Solidarity, campesino and union groups in Canada and in Colombia have campaigned against the deal and consider the move a victory. Bill C-23 may be re-introduced in the fall.

US President Barack Obama was criticized for showing interest in proceeding with a Free Trade Agreement between the US and **Panamá**. Most of the more than 350,000 corporations based in Panamá do not carry out operations in the Central American country, which is one of the most notorious tax havens in the globe.

Canada, the US and other high-income countries opposed a treaty to protect the rights of the **blind and reading disabled** to access and share written material at the UN’s World Intellectual Property Organization. “The main aim of the treaty is to allow the cross-border import and export of digital copies of books and other copyrighted works in formats that are accessible to persons who are blind, visually impaired, dyslexic or have other reading disabilities, using special devices that present text as refreshable braille, computer generated text to speech, or large type,” wrote James Love at the *Huffington Post*.

Bill Ayers, a former member of the **Weather Underground** who is now a university professor, was again denied entry to Canada. He was previously turned away at the border in January.

Mexico City blamed chronic water shortages on waste and over-consumption. The national water commission claimed that more than half the city’s water is lost to outdated infrastructure and leaky pipes.

Activists in Victoria, BC, held a practice protest against a practice run of the **Olympic Torch**.

Mohawk people on both sides of the 49th parallel protested the federal government’s decision to arm border guards with guns, temporarily shutting down the border at the US Port of Entry at Massena, near Cornwall, Ontario. On June 1, border guards there will be equipped with 9mm Beretta Px4 Storm guns. According to government plans, all 6,000 Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) agents along the Canada-US border will be armed

by 2016. May 1 is significant because on that day in 1899 Saiowisakeron, a Mohawk leader, was killed by Dominion of Canada Police for protesting attempts by the federal government to control Mohawk governance.

CBSA border agents and police with dogs raided **Mohamed Harkat**’s house in Toronto. Harkat was arrested in 2002 and spent 43 months in jail without charge. The cops rifled through the personal belongings of the Harkat family and confiscated notebooks. Harkat’s wife Sophie called the raid “the second-worst day of my life, after Mo’s arrest.”

Over 2,000 people mobilized in the streets of **Toronto**, demanding legal status for all in response to April raids on migrant workers in Ontario. “We occupied the Yonge and Dundas intersection in the heart of downtown Toronto to make visible the non-status people that this sweatshop city wants to hide away,” reads a statement by No One Is Illegal Toronto, which organized the demonstration.

Thousands of **Tamils** and their allies continued months of sustained demonstrations and took over a highway in Toronto to demand that Canada intervene in the ongoing war in Sri Lanka. Over the last two weeks, at least 378 civilians were killed and over 1,200 wounded by government shelling in a so called “no-fire” zone. A hospital was also shelled, killing at least 50 people.

Kitigan-Zibi police found bones near Maniwaki, Ontario, which were sent to a lab to determine whether or not they are human. Maisy Odjick, 17, and Shannon Alexander, 18, have been missing from the area since September 5, 2008, and searches for the two girls continue.

A leak in a storage tank at the **Kinder Morgan** oil plant caused more than 200,000 litres of crude oil to spill near a residential area in Burnaby, BC. Residents who live near the oil plant smelled an

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Cover design by Dru Oja Jay, based on a photo by Charles Mostoller taken October 6, 2008 in Barrière Lake.

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Propagandhi Scores Against War

Torture, Terror, and Don Cherry face the music in sixth release

by Erin Empey

Propagandhi, Winnipeg's "progressive thrash" heroes, have just released a new album. Supporting Caste is twelve and a half songs of political passion and metal-tinged post-punk. Singer Chris Hannah discusses the issues inspiring their sixth full-length album.

Erin Empey: Do you think that Propagandhi has evolved since the release of Potemkin City Limits? What's new with Supporting Caste?

Chris Hannah: I'd like to think so! At the very least, we added The Beave on second guitar to the line-up, so that's new, and in my opinion has added a lot more depth, dimension and atmosphere to our customary sonic pummelings.

Also, Jord has more gray hair on this record. I'm not sure if that comes through on the recording though.

Since you guys decided to fold your record label last year, how has working with Smallman been compared to G7 Welcoming Committee?

Well, considering we're in a time where the racket of selling recordings to people has been essentially eviscerated, it's been pretty good! We've known them for years, they understand where we're coming from and they live within choking distance. These are important factors.

G7 operated using Participatory Economics (parecon), where business decisions were made democratically and profits were shared equally among members. Based on your experience, do you think it could be applied on a larger scale?

After a decade of experience in a parecon-inspired enterprise that was subject to all the human



Left to right: Jord Samolesky, Todd Kowalski, Chris Hannah, and David "Beaver" Guillas.

frailties and palace intrigues that every single gathering of more than two people throughout history has always endured, I still can't come up with any good reason why people shouldn't endeavor to embrace parecon's core values of solidarity, equity, diversity and self-management in their workplaces. It makes sense and it is right.

The track "Human(e) Meat" opens with a howling Sandor Katz about to be cannibalized. Who is Katz and why do you want to eat him?

Sandor Katz is someone who talks and writes about food. He has a book called "the Revolution Will Not Be Microwaved" that is actually worth reading until you hit the absurd and utterly embarrassing chapter where he tries to rationalize torturing, maiming, killing and mutilating sentient animals for his personal enjoyment. It is the type of embar-

assing new-age hippy nonsense that sets serious debate about food politics and human ethics back a decade every time it rears its hippy head.

We simply used his logic, step by step, and daydreamed me rationalizing torturing, maiming, killing and mutilating him for my personal enjoyment. Which is of course also absurd, which was the point of the illustration.

Apparently he has no sense of humour (or of his own irony for that matter) and is very upset about it. Poor persecuted meat eaters! Will they never be free from the tyrannical oppression of vegetarians?

In "Dear Coaches Corner" you lament Don Cherry using his platform to promote militarism. Do you think that there are ugly politics in hockey culture beyond Don Cherry's routines?

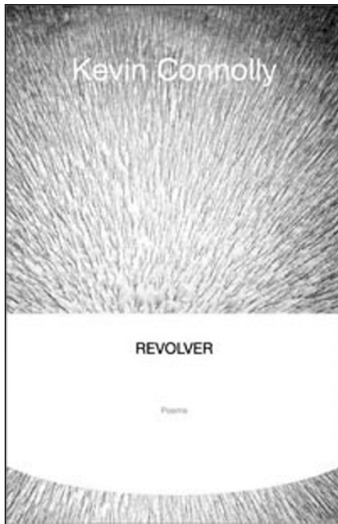
For sure. Cherry is just the emptiest and hence, the loudest

barrel. The culture of professional hockey is essentially a propaganda wing of the western elite and their geo-political objectives. Why else would Jim Balsillie, head cocknose of the company that makes the Blackberry, appear on Hockey Night in Canada thanking Canadian troops in Afghanistan for "defending our lifestyle?" Wait, I thought it was about liberating Afghan women? Whoops!

During the pre-release of Supporting Caste, proceeds from downloads went to Partners in Health, Sea Shepherd Society and Peta2. Why are these groups important to you?

Partners in Health provides a preferential option for the poor in health care. At its root, their mission is both medical and moral. It is based on solidarity, rather than charity alone. When their patients are ill and have no access

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Revolver
Kevin Connolly
House of Anansi Press, 2008

It's painful to admit, but poetry can be pretty predictable. This is especially true for Canadian poetry that gets nominated for major literary prizes. A reader can usually expect some variation of contemplative, lovelorn verses building up toward a climactic, self-realizing epiphany. Kevin Connolly, in his new Griffin Prize-nominated collection, *Revolver*, is refreshingly aware of these conventions without falling victim to them. Instead of adopting a lone voice to examine a set of well-trodden themes, Connolly pursues a gamut of unexplored poetic possibilities. Nearly every poem touches upon a different subject matter and engages a different structure. Connolly rejects the role of the poet as sullen narrator. Disarming as it is upon an initial reading, there is no unifying voice, tone, or narrative in this collection. This is a poet clearly enamoured with poetry itself, making verse out of whatever sparks his gushing imagination.

The risk, and maybe the

downfall here, is that Connolly's collection can feel more like an anthology than the work of a single author. From the goofy to the downright depressing, Connolly bounces between the extremities of inspiration without any segue or transition. You can almost hear Connolly's muse asking: How about a nature poem? A love poem? Got any about sports?

What first strikes you as plain novelty and quirkiness gradually becomes endearing as Connolly's many personalities all carve out original and gripping poems. From the start, the book opens with a table of contents that lists the names of vaguely familiar rock songs. A turn of the page reveals that these are not the actual titles of the poems at all. We're left guessing whether this was Connolly's soundtrack while writing the collection, or if it's a poetic collage on its own. Once the poems get started, we are given one poem that sounds like a graduate-school admission exam from hell, one that parodies the catechism, and another that is composed of a few columns of disconnected words under the heading "Three Sonnets (Assembly Required)."

Connolly's inspirations are spelled out explicitly in his notes, ranging from Mark Twain, contemporary American poets like Charles Simic, and the Welsh noise rock band Mclusky. After taking account of his sources and then reading the collection a few times, Connolly becomes strangely cohesive and coherent. Even as the poems clash stylistically, his reoccurring preoccupations provide a tiny modicum of unity that gives this eccentric and disparate collection its own vitality.

—Shane Patrick Murphy



Back
Henry Green
Dalkey Archive Press, 2009

Back, Henry Green's 1946 novel of wartime homecoming, is loaded with enough individual suffering that it could almost take place on the battlefield from which its amputee-protagonist, Charley, has been salvaged.

Charley returns home to England to find that his pre-war sweetheart, Rose, has died in his absence, while her look-alike half-sister, Nancy, remains tortuously close at hand. The novel's chief complication arises here, out of the sad fact that Charley's wartime trauma and accompanying waves of self-preserving amnesia bar him from fully absorbing the news of Rose's death. In meeting Nancy, Charley incorrectly assumes that he's being reunited with his departed lover. Moreover, when Nancy rejects his affections, Charley descends into a confused turmoil, at one point enlisting the services of a handwriting expert to prove that the two sisters are one and the same.

Just as Green's more touted masterpiece, *Loving*, documents the hermetic world of a tightly knit group of servants in a secluded Irish castle, *Back* bends around the wounded psyche of its protagonist with engrossing singularity. In one passage, the setting perfectly captures the muddled roiling of Charley's simultaneous grief over Rose's death and his hurt over Nancy's persistent brush-offs.

He fled Rose, yet every place he went she rose up before him; in florists' windows; in a second-hand bookseller's with a set of Miss Rhoda Broughton, where, as he was staring for her reflection in the window, his eyes read a title, "Cometh up as a flower" which twisted his guts; also in a seed merchant's front that displayed a watering can, to the spout of which was fixed an attachment, labelled 'Carter's patent Rose.'

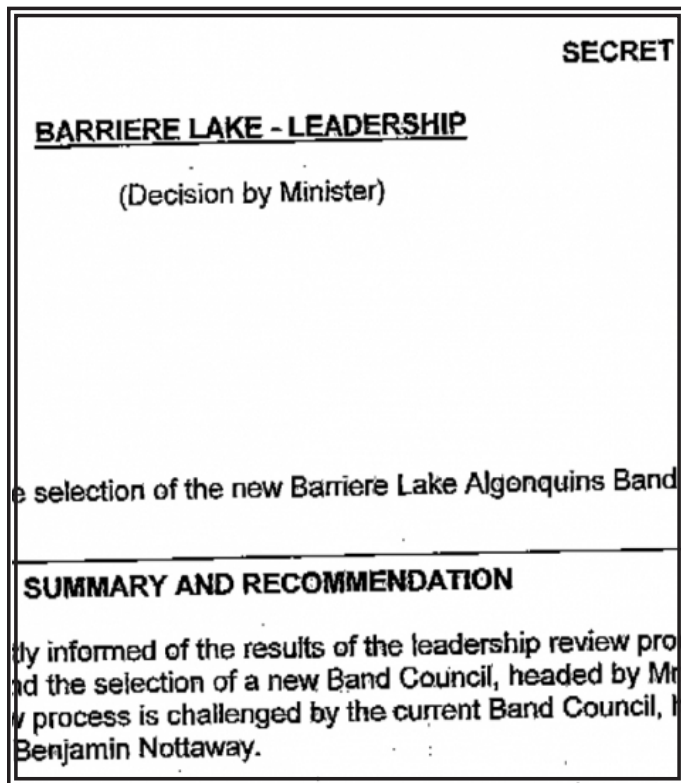
Green emphasizes the inescapability of Rose's memory by using the past tense of the verb "to rise" ("she rose up") in the very sentence that introduces the ubiquity of her namesake. And amid Charley's solipsistic bewilderment, Green the master stylist is out in full force. Beautiful, simile-laden descriptions like "[s] he was crying so much it made her face look like a pane of glass in the rain" crop up generously, appearing in scenes filled with Green's meticulous simulation of English working-class speech.

Back is newly available from Dalkey Archive Press with a brilliant afterward by screenwriter and academic George Toles.

—Robert Kotyk

May was Membership Month
The Media Co-op now has over 100 sustaining members.
Thank you.

“Improved Collaboration”



A secret memo approved by Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl exposes Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's (INAC) motives for removing the chief of an Algonquin community. INAC expected improved relations with a new chief but feared legal repercussions and perceptions that they had “sponsored” him.

by Martin Lukaacs

MONTREAL—A secret document obtained by The Dominion reveals Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) decided to replace the leadership of Barriere Lake First Nation, which officials considered “dogmatized,” with a chief and council offering “improved collaboration.”

The memo sent to Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl recommends recognizing leadership claimant Casey Ratt in place of Chief Benjamin Nottaway, but predicts such a move will lead to community violence, erection of barricades, legal challenges and “media pressure” based on the “perception of a council sponsored by INAC.”

Strahl signed off on the memo on March 3, 2008. In an April letter to the Ottawa Citizen he maintains that INAC was following the wishes of the community and was not “backing one group over another.”

Ratt's ascent to power in

the northern Quebec Algonquin community of 450 has been fiercely contested by Nottaway's supporters, who allege INAC ousted an assertive leadership and empowered a group that violated customary leadership protocols.

The Barriere Lake Algonquins select their leadership not by ballot, but by a strict Customary Governance Code that involves the nomination of candidates by elders and their approval in community assemblies. As Strahl states in his public letter, INAC's “role is to simply acknowledge the outcome and register the results.”

But the Elder's Council in Barriere Lake quickly launched a judicial review of Strahl's move, arguing INAC went beyond their legal bounds in deciding who should be in power. In April, INAC motioned to dismiss the Elder's case, maintaining INAC did not make a “decision” reviewable by the courts.

The February 18 memo demonstrates that decisions were in fact made. Instead of carefully

assessing whether a leadership selection conducted by Ratt's supporters in late January 2008 accorded with the Customary Governance Code, it focuses on the benefits and drawbacks of three possible INAC responses: recognizing Ratt, maintaining relations with Nottaway, or withdrawing recognition for Nottaway and mediating or imposing an electoral system on the community.

According to the memo, keeping ties with Nottaway would entail “continuity of tensed [sic] relations between INAC and the Band Council, considering its claims.” For nearly two decades, Nottaway's supporters have been locked in a battle with INAC and Quebec over the implementation of a landmark Trilateral agreement that would give the First Nation say over resource use on 10,000 square kilometres of their traditional territory.

Despite Nottaway's council's “claim to its legitimacy,” the memo expresses preference for a band

council headed by Casey Ratt, detailing “positive impacts” that include “improved collaboration of the new council with INAC,” a “new council less dogmatized,” and a “new environment more favourable to the development of the community” and a “healing process.”

A 2006 attempt by Ratt's supporters to select a chief and council was dismissed after mediation in 2007 by Quebec Superior Court Judge Réjean Paul, who called the group a “small minority” whose selection process “did not follow the Customary Governance Code.” Over that year INAC withdrew recognition from Nottaway's customary predecessor, Chief Jean-Maurice Matchewan, until Judge Paul issued the report affirming his legitimacy.

The secret memo acknowledges Judge Paul's “approach” and admits INAC “does not have all the information” regarding Ratt's recent selection, but states an independent observer “partly related the process' compliance



A minor is arrested in early March 2008, for refusing to allow INAC-recognized Chief Casey Ratt into the reserve.

Marylynn Poucachiche

with custom requirements.”

When INAC cited this local court worker’s report in a March 10 letter notifying Nottaway he was no longer Chief, officials refused to release it to the community. The Elder Council’s lawyers obtained it through court months later and discovered that the observer had in fact stated he “couldn’t guarantee” Ratt had followed the Customary Governance Code.

The memo also dismisses taking advantage of the “shaky situation” in the community to impose an Indian Act election system, because its “major impacts” would require further analysis. Inside observers say such a move, which would unilaterally discard the community’s customary selection by a Minister’s order, could risk being deemed unconstitutional.

Strahl has come under fire

recently after documents leaked to the *Globe & Mail* revealed that INAC secretly plans to revive the Liberals’ First Nations Governance Act, which includes challenging “flawed” or “outdated” customary selections of First Nation leaders.

The memo mentions the possibility of “barricades” and suggests informing the Quebec police to “ensure the supervision of the community in the days following the announcement of the new Council.” Community members tried to bar Ratt from returning to the reserve in March, dragging trees along the reserve’s access road. Ratt required escort by police, who arrested a dozen people and maintained a heavy presence in the community for two weeks, preventing Nottaway’s council from accessing any administrative buildings.

While these earlier incidents received little attention, Barriere

Lake acquired a higher profile after Nottaway’s supporters blockaded a major Quebec highway in October and November 2008, rallying to the demand that INAC implement the Trilateral Agreement and appoint an observer to witness and respect the outcome of a new leadership selection. Nottaway was arrested and jailed for two months in the winter for his participation, arousing condemnation of the Conservative government from Green Party leader Elizabeth May, the NDP, and major unions.

Ratt issued a press release after the blockades stating the former council “focused too much of their attention on the trilateral agreement” and that it was time the “First Nation moves forward.” INAC pulled out of the agreement in 2001.

The secret memo was released by the Ministry of Justice on

March 13, almost a year after a request filed by lawyers for the Elder’s Council was initially denied because INAC maintained they had not made a “decision” about leadership.

Withholding the document, INAC won a dismissal of the Elder’s Council judicial review in August but then lost an appeal before a federal court in January. The Judge concluded that a reviewable “decision” had been made and emphasized that the legal status of the Ratt Council remained uncertain, despite recognition from Strahl. After another request for documents, a privacy commissioner green-lighted the memo’s release. The court case over leadership will proceed this summer.

Martin Lukacs is a writer and activist, and a member of the Barriere Lake solidarity collective in Montreal.

Strangers Scour the Land

The search for Maisy and Shannon continues

by Maya Rolbin-Ghanie and Dru Oja Jay

KITIGAN ZIBI—Maisy Odjick, 17, and her friend Shannon Alexander, now 18, vanished from Shannon's father's apartment in Maniwaki, Quebec, September 6, 2008. Both are from Kitigan Zibi, an Algonquin reserve adjacent to Maniwaki. Since September, neither the Kitigan Zibi Police Services nor the Sûreté du Québec has collected any evidence pertaining to the whereabouts of the two girls. When Maisy and Shannon vanished, their wallets and their money were left behind. The police are not ruling out the possibility that the two girls are "runaways." In addition, the police have repeatedly neglected to communicate with and report back to the two families. The little media attention this case has attracted may be attributed to the constant and determined efforts at media outreach by Maisy's mother, Laurie Odjick.

The two ground searches since the disappearance — December 7, 2008, and May 2, 2009 — were led by Search and Rescue Global 1; both times the Odjick family was the main organizer. According to Search Leader Lawrence Conway, the search for Maisy and Shannon is the first family-organized search he has ever taken part in. Normally, the police call rescue teams and arrange searches.

Indigenous women in Canada are five times more likely than other women to die as the result of violence. The official number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada since 1980 is 520, two-thirds of whom were murdered and about one-quarter of whom are still missing. Roughly half of these murders and disappearances occurred in the last nine years and over 300 cases are as of yet unsolved. Indigenous grassroots activists and communities put the number of cases closer to 1800.

Amnesty International, the

United Nations, and the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) have all put forth comprehensive recommendations to the Canadian government to address the violence and discrimination faced by Indigenous women, but so far no action has been taken beyond a small amount of funding allotted for research.

NWAC President Beverley Jacobs points out that even working with a number like 520, taken proportionately that "would equal 18,000 women among Canada's white population. If there were 18,000 white women missing and murdered, it would be headlines. There would be something done immediately."



More than 240 volunteers, mainly from Ottawa, come to help with the search. Amnesty International donates two school buses to help transport people to the site. We are two of four people from Montreal's Missing Justice collective who attend. Shannon's father, Bryan Alexander, orients volunteers.



Our 15-person team is smaller than the rest, which hold about twenty people each. We drive to a section of the woods in the Kitigan Zibi reserve and line up to receive further instructions. Everybody has been told to bring some sort of long stick with which to poke at the ground and push thick bush out of the way while we search.

► We are told to yell "Stop!" any time we see anything that might possibly be a clue. This includes beer bottles, as well as any form of litter that seems in any way unusual. The team leader radios in each clue that has been found. The "clue" we spent the most time investigating was something that appeared to be a sweater. The police took one look at it and told us it was a towel, and was insignificant.

Maya Rolbin-Ghanie is an independent journalist and Indigenous solidarity activist living in Montreal. Dru Oja Jay is an editor with The Dominion.



Searching is difficult and counter-intuitive; we are supposed to go straight through obstacles as opposed to going around them. It is a foreign mode of interaction with landscapes in general.





◀ Each person is given a number, and instructed to stay in a relatively straight line. Every 5 to ten minutes, the team must stop and regroup in order to maintain some semblance of order. At times the brush is too thick to see anybody else.



Bridget Tolley tells Missing Justice about her own family's case. Since 2002, when her mother, Gladys Tolley, was struck and killed by a Sûreté du Québec cruiser, she has been calling on the federal government for a public inquiry. "I won't stop if it takes me ten, fifteen years," she says. The police who investigated her mother's case were brothers of the offending officer. No charges have been laid.

A Letter from Kitigan Zibi

Mother decries police negligence in missing daughter's case

This letter was released to supporters on May 2, 2009 the date of the last organized ground search for Maisy Odjick and Shannon Alexander. Recipients of the letter have been encouraged to send it to their MPs.

I write this letter to you as a concerned mother and citizen. I would like to bring to your attention several issues concerning the disappearance of my daughter, Maisy Odjick, and the manner in which the Kitigan Zibi Police Services (KZPS) and the Sureté du Québec (SQ) have handled this case. Since my daughter's disappearance, on September 6, 2008, to the present day, very little to nil support or communication has been provided by these police services. From the onset this lack has created a long, frustrating and

exhausting six months for me and my family.

My 16-year-old daughter was not alone when she disappeared. She and her friend, Shannon Alexander (17 years old) were together. I am deeply concerned for Shannon's whereabouts, but out of respect for Shannon's father and family, I cannot nor am I speaking for her in this letter.

I am of the position that government authorities, agencies and the public need to be informed of the incompetent, unprofessional, uncooperative and unaccountable behaviour of police services, in particular, the KZPS. I, as a community member of the Kitigan Zibi Anishnabeg (KZA), am also unsatisfied with the Chief and Council's lack of leadership in directing concrete action and demanding accountability from



Maisy Odjick, left, and Shannon Alexander.

the police. As you may appreciate, the disappearance of your child speaks volumes of worries, immense feelings of loss, isolation, heartache, mental anguish, and extreme emotional pain. I live with these emotions every minute of each day.

I demand my right to services, justice and support in locating my daughter. I have been exercising my rights all along. However, I feel as though I do not have the right to exercise my

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right to information concerning my minor daughter. For instance, when I called the SQ to speak to a police officer investigating the Shannon Alexander case, I was told to speak to the KZPS because the SQ did not have my file, and I am not related to Shannon. I understand the nature of confidentiality, however, where else can I turn for police information when in fact I receive no information from the KZPS? And, when I do receive any information from them, it is very skeletal and unprofessional in nature.

Furthermore, the police only provided information after much persistence on my part. My demand for reports is a very time consuming and overwhelming task. For example, since September 2008, I have received only one report. It took me two months, from December 2008 to February 2009, of constant requests to the KZA Chief and Council, and only recently have I received a report. This report is eight double-spaced pages in length with no letterhead or signature. It should be noted that in reading the report, I am left with the feeling that I did the police's job because they report on leads and sources that I provided to them. In the end, there is nothing substantial. Once again, I am left with many more questions, uncertainty and emptiness.

It must be noted that at the onset of Maisy and Shannon's disappearance, no thorough ground

search or proper investigation was conducted. At this point, any evidence collected in September 2008 is damaged because the police who collected the evidence did not possess the expertise to do so. Furthermore, the families were not given any information on the results of evidence collected.

Very recently, a media source informed me that the SQ has evidence that indicates that the girls ran away. If this is true, why has not the KZPS or the band council informed me of this? If this is true, then is the file closed? If this is true, does this resolve my daughter's disappearance? What evidence was used to make this conclusion? What resources will be made available to find my daughter?

Since my daughter's disappearance, my inquiries and demands have not been answered in a respectful and satisfactory manner. I have been asking for an answer to two very simple but monumental questions: Why was my daughter's file transferred to the KZPS by the SQ? Who gave this order? I cannot help but feel that there is a cover up here.

I cannot understand why this occurred considering that Maisy was not on the reserve when she disappeared. On one hand, an argument can be made that the decision was made because of a jurisdictional issue. On the other hand, in a legal context, wherever the harm occurred determines

who will deal with the matter. In my daughter's case, her disappearance is the harm, and the disappearance happened while she was off the reserve. Therefore, the SQ is the proper police authority to conduct the investigation and handle the case. I do not wish for my daughter to become a jurisdictional issue, nor to be immediately ruled as a 'runaway' teen. These are lame excuses used to negate the seriousness of the situation, to deny support and resources, to default on action, to discriminate and against me and my daughter, to refuse responsibility. This is unacceptable to me as a human being, a mother, a member of the community, and a citizen of society.

In essence, I feel that both the KZPS and KZA have applied the standard practice of blaming the victim. I am the victim, but to these entities, it is my fault that Maisy ran away; it is my fault that she disappeared; it is my fault that I waited too long to inform the police; it is my fault that I do not contact the police regularly by way of phone calls or station visits.

To write my daughter off as a 'runaway' or to treat her as promiscuous, and to treat me as the party at fault is abominable. I feel that justice is denied. A young girl is missing. My daughter deserves the same support and justice as any other missing person gets, for instance: Brendan Crisp, Ardeth Woods, Jennifer Teague.

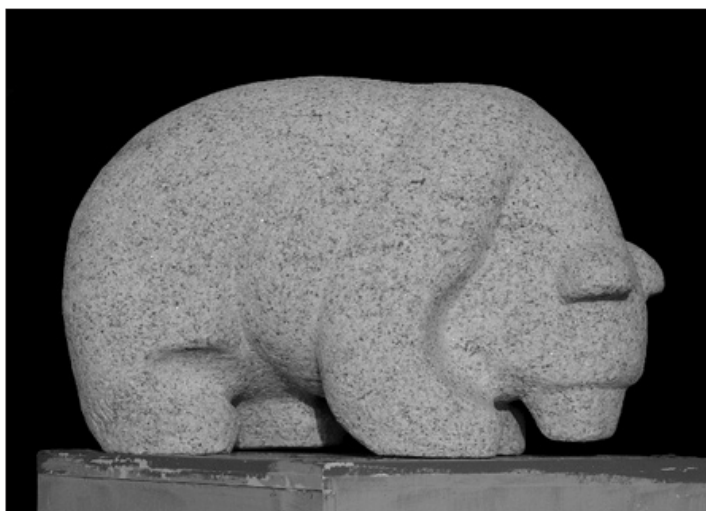
It does not make sense that the KZPS and the KZA community leaders invested so much time, financial resources and media attention to locate a missing lion cub, but nothing is invested for our missing young girls. How much money was spent on finding Boomer, the baby lion? Maisy and Shannon are community members; they are also citizens of society and they deserve attention.

My daughter's return home or, the very least, to know what happened to her are my main priorities and it is with urgency that I call upon your office to assist me in acquiring from the SQ, KZPS and the KZA Chief and Council prompt, professional and unequivocal answers to all my inquiries; to obtain a full and proper investigation of Maisy's disappearance; and for the KZPS and KZA Chief and Council to be held accountable to me, my family and to the people for their inability to demonstrate due diligence and transparency with my daughter's case.

Should you like to discuss the contents of my letter, please do not hesitate to contact me at justiceformissing [at] gmail.com. I look forward to hearing from your office concerning the issues I raised in this letter. I thank you for your attention and kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Laurie Odjick



Six years after attempting to hold CIBC accountable for genocide through direct action, Stewart Steinbauer reflects on colonialism and the economic system.

www.dominionpaper.ca/cibc

Jailed For Jaywalking?

Measures aim to clear out Vancouver's Downtown Eastside



Women from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and their allies took the intersection of Main and Hastings on February 15, 2009, to demand an end to street sweeps by the Vancouver Police Department.

Dawn Paley

by Gwalgen Geordie Dent

TORONTO—With the Olympics less a year away, many pundits and officials have been musing about how the city is going to make good on its plan to “clean-up” Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES) by 2010. One answer is both crude and sad: jaywalking tickets.

Housing advocates of the DTES say ticketing for minor bylaw infractions are up. According to Nicole Latham, a staff member at the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU), suspicions arose at the VANDU July 2008 AGM. “Someone asked how many people had been given a jaywalking ticket and half the room put up their hands.”

According to Laura Track, a lawyer at Pivot Legal Society, jaywalking tickets are only the tip of the iceberg. “Around 30 people were ticketed in two days for camping in parks in mid-July 2008,” she says.

Track and Ann Livingston, Executive Director of VANDU, claim that the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) is on a ticketing binge. Ticketing for jaywalking, selling merchandise and bicycle infractions in the DTES are all on the rise.

Under provincial laws such as the Safe Streets Act and the Trespass Act, 297 tickets were issued to Vancouver residents in 2007. In 2008, that number jumped to 600, well above targets. Both Acts have been labeled by advocates as laws that legislate against poverty and target the homeless.

Vancouver's Megaphone Magazine tracked, in December 2008, a major “ticketing blitz” in the DTES. A VPD report the following month stated 439 tickets were issued in 2008 for vending, panhandling and loitering in the DTES. “In 2007, bylaw tickets issued in the area totaled only 247,” read the report.

According to information obtained by The Dominion through a Freedom of Information request, tickets issued for illegal vending in all of Vancouver amounted to 263 in 2007. In 2008, 537 tickets were issued city-wide.

In other words, of all the vending tickets issued in Vancouver over the last 2 years, more than 80 per cent have been given out in the DTES.

Statistics from the Freedom of Information request show that other tickets, which seem to discriminate against the homeless, are similarly on the rise. Jaywalking tickets have increased drastically:

from 757 in 2007 to 1,086 in 2008. Riding a bike without a helmet resulted in 32 tickets in 2006 and in 2008 that figure rose to 92.

Doug King, Pivot's Police Campaigner, holds that the targeting of residents in the DTES is intentional; the VPD has admitted as such.

According to King, “The DTES is where the street vending occurs and most of the increase [in tickets] is attributable to about four blocks. The police are being very open about this; they believe in the broken-windows approach to policing.” When contacted, VPD spokesperson Jana McGuinness confirmed that new initiatives that target the DTES are being used primarily to address the “open-air drug market.”

The idea to increase the amount of bylaw ticketing originally surfaced in 2006 during former Mayor Sam Sullivan's much maligned “Project Civil City.” Civil City was originally promoted as a means of reducing homelessness, street disorder and drug use. According to statistics published in *The Tyee* in 2008, all three have risen dramatically since the launch of Civil City. Despite this rise, the central strategy of Civil City has been fully embraced by the VPD.

The 2009 VPD Annual Business Plan places significant emphasis on bylaw tickets for crimes prevalent in the DTES. Graffiti, panhandling, street vending, camping and “the scavenger economy” are key issues the VPD says it wants to target. The report also stated that “chronic bylaw offenders” are being targeted with more tickets and more serving of summons.

“There's speculation in the DTES neighbourhood that this is being done to try to clean up the neighbourhood before the Olympics get into town,” says King. “The VPD [however] is very adamant that [this] is not what they are doing.”

While groups like VANDU and Pivot have been key in pointing out the increase in ticketing in the Downtown Eastside, other groups have been fighting it. The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (DEWC) held a press conference in February calling attention to the aggressive ticketing by the VPD. According to Priscilla Mays, a member of the Power of Women Group at the DEWC, the ticketing “is happening to ensure that residents live in a state of fear and intimidation so that the

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Kenney's Quiet Revolution

No discussion of government shifts in immigration policy

by Tim McSorley

MONTREAL—A massive police operation in the Toronto area on April 1 caught the attention of major Canadian news outlets.

One hundred and twenty-five people were rounded up in a pre-dawn raid and charged with arms, drugs and organized crime-related violations. The arrests made top headlines across national media and were featured in most large metropolitan dailies.

A day later, another police operation in Ontario resulted in the arrest of nearly as many people, but hardly a word was written about it.

On April 2, Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) officers and southern Ontario police officers arrested approximately 80 people on immigration violations.

While not as sensational as the first news item—which nabbed some 30,000 tablets of ecstasy and 40 firearms—the story contained much of the same interest, drama and newsworthiness: one hundred officers arrested undocumented workers at their places of employment and homes in at least three communities in Southern Ontario. And, according to the CBSA, it was the largest action of its kind in the Greater Toronto Area.

The April 2 raids received next-day coverage in small-circulation local papers like the *Barrie Examiner*. Not a word was mentioned in the *Toronto Star*, *Globe and Mail* or *National Post*. CTV.ca and the *Edmonton Journal* eventually picked up on the story, but only several days later, when dozens of people gathered in Toronto and Edmonton (and other cities) to protest the raids and the workers' incarceration.

The Toronto rally was held outside the Rexdale Detention Centre, where those arrested were being held. The individuals were all living or working in the communities of Bradford, Markham, Leamington and East Toronto.

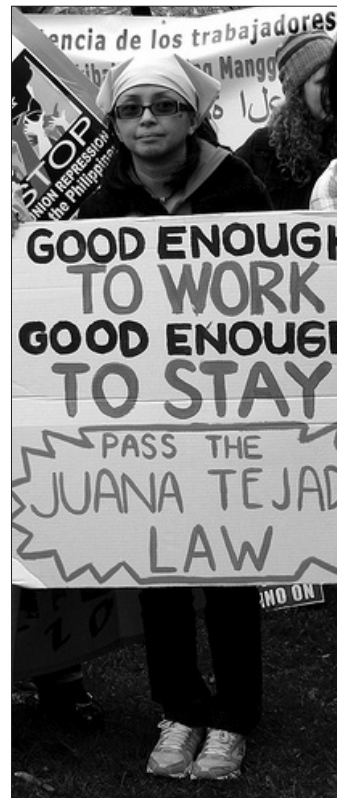
Most were apprehended at their workplaces; some were reportedly followed home from work and then arrested. Most were migrant farm workers, employed by at least three companies, including two farms owned by Cericola Farms, Inc.

The raids come at a time when Canadians are questioning subtle but important changes in the Conservative government's immigration policy and in the CBSA's tactics when arresting undocumented individuals. Just as concerning, critical coverage of this event—and recent immigration policy issues in general—has been lacking in the Canadian press.

A recent report by Citizenship and Immigration Canada says that over the past year, crackdowns on illegal immigration in the United States is causing thousands of non-status immigrants to flood across the border to Canada. Last May, then-Minister of Public Security Stockwell Day applauded the arrest of 45 undocumented workers in Toronto and declared that "[large-scale operations protect] the integrity of our immigration program," signalling the government's intent to continue on this path.

Spokespeople from No One Is Illegal (NOII) Toronto and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) denounced the April 2 raids. "Clearly Harper and his Minister of Immigration are moving closer to a US-style immigration system where fear and enforcement are routinely used to terrorize migrant workers," said UFCW Canada National President Wayne Hanley. Both spokespeople expressed concern that large-scale raids on workplaces targeting undocumented workers have become regular occurrences.

In a release from the CBSA, no reason was given for the timing of the raids, simply that they came after three months of investigations. While this is the first police action of its scope in the area, in a



Juana Tejada was denied permanent resident status because of a colon cancer diagnosis.

Tania Liu

report on the event NOII quoted several sources stating that this is not an isolated incident.

The *Toronto Star* recently ran an investigative piece on problems in Canada's home-care worker program, where individuals, particularly women, are incited to immigrate to Canada to work as domestic workers, only to find themselves labouring in extremely difficult and constrained conditions. The *Globe and Mail* recently reported that an immigration officer impersonated an individual's lawyer and lured him to a meeting before arresting him on immigration violation charges. The fact that nearly 80 undocumented workers were arrested in the largest raid of its kind in Canada's history and that the event was overlooked in news outlets is surprising. After all, both the *Star* and the *Globe* demonstrate a willingness to report to some

degree on immigration issues.

But their commitment to these issues is disappointing. By declining to cover the April 2 raids, they shied away from deeper questions about Canadian government policy in dealing with undocumented workers.

Neither the *Sun Media* nor *CanWest Global* news chains covered the massive arrests in-depth, and recent articles—particularly in *CanWest* newspapers—raise questions about what Canadians can expect from immigration news coverage in the months to come.

CanWest papers recently ran an article highlighting the toughness and work ethic of Immigration Minister Jason Kenney in his push to bring about an immigration policy revolution—without asking what that revolution might be. What they did highlight was that the government is continuing to use outreach policies, such as funds for immigrant communities to draw on to build statues and plaques.

According to NOII, the government has also given misinformation to the press: recently, as reported in *CanWest*, Conservative candidate Parm Gill claimed the government is aiming to reduce the number of rejected applications from Indian youth. New information reported by NOII and researched by the Canadian Migration Institute found that the number of refugees to be accepted from India is in fact slated to drop from 150 to 125 this year. And nowhere to be found in the article on Kenney was the news, reported by the *Toronto Star* in February, that the immigration ministry had admitted the economic downturn could reduce the number of immigrants accepted to Canada, all the while trumpeting a planned increase in immigration from 250,000 to 265,000 newcomers per year.

Tim McSorley is Media Analysis editor with The Dominion.

Political and Chemical Blowback

How the Canadian government poisoned rural New Brunswick

by Megan Stewart

VANCOUVER—The term ‘blowback’ has two definitions. One is environmental, the other political; both come with a human cost. Blowback happens when chemicals sprayed in the air catch wind currents, blow back towards those doing the spraying and fall on homes, farms and people. Blowback also describes the unintended adverse results of a political action or situation. Chris Arsenault documents how these dual forms of blowback met in rural New Brunswick in his first book *Blowback: A Canadian History of Agent Orange and the War at Home*.

Blowback documents the irresponsibility of the Canadian government as it pursued a decades-long campaign to spray small town and rural New Brunswick with more than a million litres of Agent Orange, considered one of the deadliest synthetic chemicals known to humankind.

From 1956 to 1984, the military and its private contractors showered more than 1.3 million litres of toxic defoliant on and around the Canadian Forces Base Gagetown, including the town of Enniskillen and its several hundred residents. The reason for spraying was simple: to defoliate trees and brush to make space for acres of training ground and shooting ranges at the base, writes Arsenault.

Arsenault is unabashedly critical of Canadian military neglect, which he describes as deliberate, and has choice words about the systemic defoliation at Gagetown:

...partially a story of inaction, ignorance incompetence and laziness: contract supervisors who didn't follow safety labels; military personnel who buried improperly sealed barrels of toxin in random locations; aerial sprayers who missed their targets, destroying crops and swaths of land; and power companies who decided spraying dioxin

was a cheaper way to clear brush from electrical lines than hiring workers with saws and axes.

Spraying was also used on the land because the topography and foliage simulated conditions in Vietnam. “Of all possible North American test sites,” Arsenault outlines, “it had the terrain most like Vietnam.”

Arsenault uses facts gleaned from Freedom of Information requests, primary sources and interviews to condemn the Canadian government for its complicity in using chemicals against its own people at a concentration higher than the US sprayed in Southeast Asia.

Agent Orange gained infamy when the US used it during the Vietnam War, resulting in serious health consequences for multiple generations of Vietnamese.

In his opening passages, Arsenault outlines similar consequences in New Brunswick, including a resident of Enniskillen who had 11 tumours removed from her body.

One of the most galling examples of private traumas endured by those spraying and being sprayed with the toxic defoliant is that of Ken Dobbie. As a teenager in 1966, he handled Agent Orange with his bare hands while on a six-week contract to strip the bush. Now suffering from a host of neurological and blood disorders, Dobbie told Arsenault, “We were told this stuff was safe enough to drink.” Dobbie is now a leading plaintiff in a lawsuit against the federal government.

In 115 pages, Arsenault has compiled a history of Agent Orange in Canada that includes both insight and humour. From the first internal memo to the NDP politician in the 1980s to the press exposés and to the largest class-action lawsuit in US history, *Blowback* is compelling reading for every Canadian who wants to know more about the wizard behind the curtain. The author’s research unearths years of military

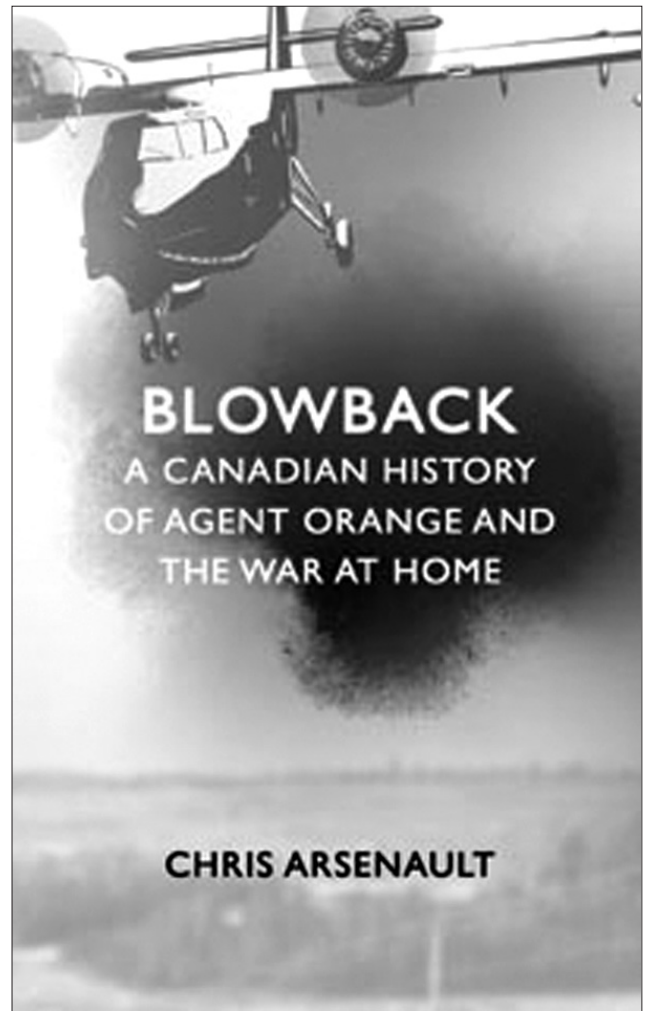
paper trails and includes extensive interviews with past Gagetown military personnel, labourers contracted to spray, and rural New Brunswick residents.

With dozens of footnotes per chapter, the passages can seem textbook-like. The stories he relates about the individuals most impacted by spraying—like Paul and Cora Thompson, who can’t have children, and Marilyn Kissinger, whose brother and teenage friends died en masse—are haunting and unforgettable, but also underdeveloped. Arsenault seems to have established the trust of one-time Gagetown infantry and past Enniskillen residents. He does each one justice, but would do the reader a favour by indulging a narrative

style to heighten memories, loss and sacrifice. However, he does corroborate first-person accounts with documented information, enhancing one through the use of the other.

The war at home, Arsenault writes, is not for mere poetic effect or political rhetoric. No, the history of Agent Orange in Canada is about the war coming home and being waged against Canadians. What citizens finally realized, and what spurred them to mobilize, writes Arsenault, is that they have the justification and agency to blow back against the government and military that poisoned them.

Megan Stewart is a Vancouver-based journalist.



Canada's Deadly Trade Deals

An interview with Laura Carlsen

by Stefan Christoff

MONTREAL—One of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's first major foreign visits after being elected in 2006 to his first minority government was to Latin America and the Caribbean. The trip aimed to promote a Canadian foreign policy focused on establishing "new partnerships in the Americas."

Canada has aggressively pushed to establish trade agreements in the Americas, and in pursuit of this signed bilateral trade deals with Peru and Colombia in 2009. Concurrent with the push towards more trade pacts in the Americas, Canada has cut the number of nations receiving bilateral aid through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Today's Canadian foreign aid policy sees a smaller number of countries being targeted for aid through the Conservatives' "countries of concentration" policy, which limits aid to 20 nations. The policy focus centres on trade with Latin America and the Caribbean, while aid to African nations, including Kenya, Cameroon and Rwanda, has been cut.

These shifts in policy are seemingly influenced by Canadian corporations that hold significant sway over government economic policy, such as mining, oil and gas corporations.

Bilateral agreements in the Americas signal this important shift. Canada's trade agreement with Colombia has been the subject of intense criticism from labour unions in both Colombia and Canada.

The current Colombian government is embroiled in political scandals over ties to right-wing paramilitary groups that target and assassinate labour activists, Indigenous people, and members of popular and community movements. Human rights activists argue that a bilateral agreement with Canada lends international legitimacy



A protest in Oaxaca. A flood of subsidized corn from the US has had a devastating impact on the local economy.

j pazkual (cc 2.0)

to Alvaro Uribe's government in the face of such gross breaches of human rights.

"As for labour rights and the freedom of association, the FTA [with Canada] is a shameful reward for government and managers when it comes to violating these rights, forgetting more than 2,700 murdered unionists and letting their killers go unpunished," outlined a February 2009 declaration to the Canadian government from Colombia's major trade union federations.

Canada's bilateral negotiations with Colombia come at a time when a similar US-Colombia trade accord has been halted in the United States by Congress due to concerns expressed by US law makers about human rights violations in Colombia and its government's connection with such activity.

US trade policy in the Americas was a major topic in the recent US elections. During the final campaign debate, Barack Obama slammed attempts by the Bush administration to sign

a bilateral trade agreement with Colombia:

"Labour leaders have been targeted for assassination on a fairly consistent basis [in Colombia] and there have not been prosecutions," he said.

Despite the open concerns south of the border, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper has pushed forward the Canada-Colombia deal.

Canada's accord with Colombia is rooted in the same free market economic policies enshrined in NAFTA, which have been the subject of opposition from labour unions and peasant associations across Mexico, the US and Canada for over a decade.

Resistance by social movements successfully halted the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) agreement, which would have seen a single trade zone throughout the hemisphere.

The governments of Canada and the US have since shifted their focus to creating bilateral and regional trade deals in the Americas, spelling out a new

policy battleground for the upcoming years that will undoubtedly be fought out both on the streets and within the halls of power.

In the interview that follows, Laura Carlsen, Director of the Americas Program of the International Relations Center based in Mexico City, outlines some specific economic and social impacts of existing free trade agreements on Mexico and throughout the Americas.

Stefan Christoff: First, can you outline the social and economic impacts of NAFTA as related to migration from Mexico to the US, and also within the contemporary context of the push by the US towards bilateral agreements?

Laura Carlsen: NAFTA marked the first time that there was a major trade agreement between two developed countries, including the largest economic power in the world and Mexico, a developing country, which presents major challenges in negotiating a free trade agreement.

Despite the inequality between the economies of Mexico and the US in regards to size and productive capabilities, the agreement basically delivered tremendous privileges to transnational corporations in the US to the detriment of Mexico.

Since NAFTA has been in effect we have seen serious damage done by the accord on Mexican society. There have been serious impacts on people in the countryside and also to small-to-medium size industries throughout the country, leading to growing rates of unemployment and a doubling of the rate of migration from Mexico to the US. The economic impacts of NAFTA have created serious internal displacement and forced migration.

Similar trade policies to NAFTA in Latin America have played a major role in forced migration. Could you address, for example, how the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) has impacted migration?

The CAFTA agreement is also going to lead towards increased outward migration. All the Central American countries have been going through an economic restructuring along the lines of these free trade agreements, leading to free trade zones where assembly workers are dealing with [working] conditions that are very bad and wages that are very low.

People are displaced from the rural areas in large numbers due to foreign imports upsetting local market values, creating the conditions for forced migration.

Essentially these [trade] agreements lock in an export-oriented model of development, a model which according to other experiences in Latin America, particularly in Mexico, benefits a very small group of people while causing serious dislocation for many social sectors.

Along the Guatemala-Mexico border a couple of years ago, most of the people waiting to cross into Mexico were then going to move on to the US: farmers who had been displaced by imports, or by growing corporate control over prices of commodities such

as coffee; farmers who could not make a basic living from harvesting their crops.

CAFTA will only increase this process of displacement, as the foreign businesses that move in work on an export-oriented farming production model, not employing a huge amount of local people, while the economic benefits are directed towards a very small social sector.

Often it is claimed that such agreements bring in foreign investment, however the lived experience is that foreign investment doesn't come pouring in the minute you sign an agreement. On the contrary, the economic impact is generally negative. In the majority of Latin American countries subject to such trade agreements, we are seeing a net outflow of capital.

In your time within regions impacted by NAFTA, can you outline how this agreement has impacted people, specifically small farmers and peasants?

It is best to examine a specific town; for example, a village within the Mixteca Indigenous region in Oaxaca, in the mountains where many families live [through] a combination between subsistence farming and selling corn on the regional market.

As NAFTA came into effect, we began to see large amounts of subsidized, cheap agricultural imports, specifically corn, coming in from the US, causing domestic prices in Mexico to dive.

For local farmers who rely on selling small amounts of corn to survive this was a devastating shift in the local and regional markets in Mexico, which undermined their ability as family farmers to survive.

Given the US corn imports, the Mixteca region in Oaxaca has become one of the major out-migration regions in Mexico, with townships that are showing negative population growth, specifically due to out-migration to the US.

Many local farmers in Mexico who used traditional farming methods, working often without mechanized equipment,

without fertilizing chemicals, were displaced by NAFTA, given cheap US imports.

It was clear that such farmers would face displacement even before the agreement was signed. A US trade representative outlined at the time of NAFTA's signing that US trade analysts were expecting around three million local farmers in Mexico to be displaced by the agreement. It was argued that these farmers would move into more modern and competitive industries, particularly the industrial corridors that were being constructed in the countryside, often by foreign corporations.

However, in reality, the massive displacement happened, in the millions, but the new jobs never arrived to Mexico, so people were left with nothing. Today, many local farmers are simply growing corn to survive. Often women are left on the farms with the family to survive while the men travel to the US to work. Major rural displacement caused by NAFTA has been very clear.

In villages within Oaxaca and throughout the country, many, many people are migrating to work in the US due to trade policies that have made survival at home impossible. Traditionally, there were always regions in Mexico where workers would travel to work in New York City or LA—this was a labour circuit—however, traditionally, this was a much smaller migration and most often the migration wasn't permanent.

Mexican workers would travel to the US to work during the harvests and then travel back to Mexico to work, however given that the border has been so hardened and militarized today, the migration to the US tends to be much more permanent. [This was] exactly the opposite result to the expressed intentions from US officials on why the border with Mexico was hardened.

Displacement has spread throughout Mexico, as the inability to make a decent living is now impacting multiple regions as a result of such trade policies.

In examining the impacts of free trade on peasant communities

in Latin America, do you have reflections on the reactions from social movements in Peru and Colombia to the US push for bilateral accords with these two nations? Do you think that bilateral deals with the US will have similar results to regional trade accords in Latin America?

Many of the general tendencies that we see in NAFTA basically hold to bilateral agreements; there have been few substantial modifications.

Democrats in the US claim that the Peru agreement is a new model for trade agreements, given there are a couple of clauses concerning labour rights and public health. However, the agreement is still based on the same trade model.

Essentially this agreement—like NAFTA—is based on a forum of development in which a developing country opens up markets completely, while granting a whole series of privileges to foreign investors and [hoping] that economic development trickles down to weaker social sectors.

However, this economic model ensures that there is no trickle down, while a country loses the ability to maintain national development policies that also support the weakest in society.

Peru's bilateral agreement with the US includes clauses for the privatization of social services, despite the fact that throughout Latin America, in other countries, privatization policies often lead to cutting off access to basic social services for the poorest.

So the key point is that these 'free trade' policies, in Central America, in Peru, in Mexico, equal increased inequality. Essentially, such trade agreements drive the gap between the rich and poor to grow.

Stefan Christoff is a journalist and community organizer. This interview was originally produced in audio format for the Fighting FTAs project, an international project that provides a global picture of free trade agreements (FTAs), and insight into struggles being waged by social movements fighting back.

Police Raid Communities around Trinidad Mine

Oaxacan civilians blockade road, occupy mine

by Komala Ramachandra

SAN JOSÉ DEL PROGRESO, OAXACA—Early on the morning of May 6, a helicopter was spotted flying low near the Canadian-owned Trinidad Mine in San José del Progreso, Mexico. In the hours following, approximately 150 trucks filled with between 740 and 2,500 police arrived at the mine site.

The silver mine has been peacefully blockaded by community members since March 16.

Fear of environmental contamination and dwindling water resources are motivating the nearly two-month-long permanent civilian occupation of the mine and all its installations. Neither the Mexican government nor Fortuna Silver, the mine's operator, was able to reach an agreement with protesters, so police were sent in to clear the blockade.

An urgent action issued yesterday by Comité de Defensa de Los Derechos del Pueblo (CODEP) describes how "twenty-five hundred members of the federal police, AFI, judicial police, and the bomb corps entered the mine with a wealth of weapons: using tear gas, shots from various types of firearms, police dogs, savagely beating the people, and searching the homes of the people who were peacefully guarding access to the mine."

Eye-witnesses estimate that there were 150 people from the community blocking the mine when the police arrived.

During the raid, police began arbitrarily entering and searching homes, as well as confiscating personal possessions in the community of Magdalena, and in the municipality San José del Progreso. They were also arresting people randomly on the streets.

At least 23 people—possibly as many as 28—were detained. Two people, and likely several more, are missing. As of May 7, the state had released 19 people, while at least four remain incarcerated.



Community members closed down the federal highway between the capital city of Oaxaca and the coast on April 20.

Komala Ramachandra

ated.

"We are struggling for our lives and we are defending our territory; the territory where we were born, raised, lived and will probably die," said one resident from the community of Magdalena, Ocotlán. "We sometimes forget that we poor people have the right to life; that we poor people can also defend all that we have."

Environmental concerns are at the forefront of the protests led by Indigenous Zapotec people against Fortuna.

Independent laboratory tests by Sanica, a clinical analysis laboratory, confirmed the presence of cyanide, mercury, arsenic and lead contamination in regional water supplies stemming from activities at Trinidad and other local mines.

Reports of the deaths of at least 20 head of cattle in the last three months have provoked outrage among residents.

They are also concerned with the mine's massive water demands.

"All the water that is at the bottom is water that the company

moved down to be able to work at the lowest levels of the mine," said one local farmer. "Now all the water is contaminated with different heavy metals and it's coming up to contaminate soil on the surface."

During the first stage of exploration, the water table had already dropped noticeably.

The primary mine shaft, which has been mined since colonial times, is estimated to be a few kilometres deep. Rising water levels inside the mine currently only permit access to 960 metres.

In response to the environmental effects that are starting to manifest after only three years of exploration, the residents of San José del Progreso held a community assembly on March 14. There, the community decided they wanted the mining company to leave.

According to Ríos Cruz, a resident of nearby Ocotlán and a member of CODEP: "Our objective is the cancellation of the project and the outright refusal from every one of the communi-

ties: a 'No' to mining." Cruz has since been disappeared, according to his family.

"All the authorities—state, federal and some municipal—are delivering our homeland, our soil, our land to the companies, but we can't give the land away. It is our children's and we are simply taking care of it for the moment," said Cruz.

Local authorities, most notably Mayor Venancio Oscar Martínez Rivera, Quintín Vásquez Rosario and the head of the commission that administers the ejido, stood opposed to the decision of the people, going as far as to threaten them if they dared take action against the mine.

Residents who attended a meeting with authorities on March 24 allege that the mayor used a gun to threaten members of the Co-ordination in Defense of the Natural Resources and Our Mother Earth, a group formed earlier in the year to organize resistance to the mine.

continued on page 19

The Right to Whale

First Nations encounter barriers to traditional whaling

by Kim Petersen

TRADITIONAL TERRITORY OF SNUNEYMUXW FIRST NATION (NANAIMO, B.C.)—On the Pacific Northwest coast, the nations of the Makah in Washington State and Nuu-chah-nulth on western Vancouver Island are struggling to engage once again with their heritage of whaling, which was suspended decades ago due to depleted whale populations.

On March 19, University of Washington American Indian Studies Professor Charlotte Coté was in Nanaimo to present a lecture entitled, “The Cultural, Societal, Spiritual and Dietary Importance of Putting Whales back on Our Dinner Tables: The Revitalization of Makah and Nuu-chah-nulth Whaling.”

Whaling, said Coté, is central to the identity of the Makah and Nuu-chah-nulth; it appears in their storytelling, art, and songs, and was also an essential part of their diet. The Makah and Nuu-chah-nulth are trying to reconnect with their traditional lifeways and the resumption of sustainable whaling is considered an important part of this.

Public opposition to hunting is strong for an iconic species such as whales. Moreover, the Makah face legal and bureaucratic barriers in the United States. In Canada, the Makah kinfolk—the Nuu-chah-nulth—face lengthy treaty negotiations.

Article 4 of the 1885 Treaty of Neah Bay secured the right for the Makah (who call themselves Kwih-dich-chuh-ahtx: “The people who live by the rocks and seagulls”) to catch salmon, and hunt whales and seals. For this right and money, the treaty holds that the Makah relinquished “their right, title, and interest in” about 121,000 timbered hectares of Olympic Peninsula land in what is now Washington State.

Coté explained that the smallpox-decimated Makah Nation had little choice but to sign the treaty “to protect what they



The Makah and Nuu-chah-nulth are trying to reconnect with their traditional lifeways, and the resumption of sustainable whaling is considered an important part of this.

Makah.com

could protect.”

But even what was “protected” is now under threat.

Gray whales were plentiful before “Yankee whalers” decimated the stocks, says Coté. In 1937, the US banned gray whale hunting and in 1972, the gray whale was placed on the endangered species list.

The Makah and the Nuu-chah-nulth honoured the ban on whaling.

Coté said the number of gray whales had dropped to 1,500, but now about 24,000 ply the Pacific coastline. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (FOC) states the gray whale population peaked in 1998 at 27,000. Up to one-third died from a food shortage between 1998 and 2002, but the population has since stabilized and is possibly growing, according to FOC.

After the gray whale was removed from the endangered species list in 1994, the Makah were given permission from the International Whaling Commission to hunt 20 gray whales (a maximum of five per year) until

2004.

In May 1999, a 9-metre gray whale gave itself to the Makah. Coté explained that in the Indigenous parlance and belief system, they do not kill creatures; rather the creatures give themselves to the people.

The taking of the gray whale was a major cultural event and the Makah community shared its meat. Eating whale, says Coté, is “an example of self-determination”; it’s important for both the cultural health of the community and the physical health of many Indigenous peoples, she said.

“Canada takes approximately 1,000 whales per year for food,” said Kathy Happynook, author of *Whaling around the World and Whaling for Food*. This is hunting solely by Indigenous peoples.

Happynook, of the Huu-ay-aht First Nation, noted that whaling has a long tradition among many Indigenous peoples in Canada: “[The Canadian government] pulled out of the International Whaling Commission in 1982 in order to protect

the Inuit’s right to hunt whales. Until recently, Canada was one of the largest whaling nations in the world[in terms of the number of whales killed each year]. More than 50 communities still hunt whales in Canada.”

Not all First Nations in Canada are able to whale, however. The federal government has prolonged the whaling moratorium in the Maa-nulth (“villages along the coast”) Agreement—despite the gray whale population having reached a size where sustainable hunting can occur.

The Maa-nulth Agreement is a six-stage treaty negotiation process that started in 1994 to address First Nations aspirations and Indigenous rights to self-governance, which were recognized and affirmed under the 1982 Constitution Act. It involves the B.C. provincial government, the federal government and five Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations whose communities approved the draft Agreement in Principle:

continued on page 19

A Harbour For War?

The defence industry grows in Halifax

by Hillary Lindsay

HALIFAX—In April, Lockheed Martin announced it would be growing its operations in Halifax, creating 100 new jobs over the next five years. The announcement was hailed by Nova Scotia Premier Rodney MacDonald as “further proof of Nova Scotia’s reputation as a destination of choice for the world’s best companies.”

Lockheed is one of the world’s largest weapons manufacturers, reporting sales of \$42.7 billion last year. The province, through Nova Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI), is supporting its expansion with a \$1.8 million payroll rebate.

“It’s frightening when you have a company doing as well as Lockheed and they’re getting tax breaks,” says Heidi Verheul, a member of the Halifax Peace Coalition (HPC), an organization speaking out against Lockheed’s expansion and payroll rebate. “We should be investing in more sustainable industries,” she adds.

NSBI is not in the business of sustainability, however, but of increasing economic activity in the province. And industries like defence and aerospace contribute \$1.5 billion to the provincial economy each year and provide jobs with \$70,000 annual salaries, says Sarah Levy of NSBI. “You can’t argue with numbers like that.”

But Verheul says it’s unethical for the province to support companies like Lockheed. “This is a company that earned over \$3 billion in profit last year from war. It should not be getting government handouts. Its Hellfire missiles are used to kill people in the Middle East.”

HPC member Tamara Lorincz adds that it’s the choices and policies of the provincial and federal government that help make weapons manufacturing more profitable.

A year ago, the Harper government unveiled the Canada First Defence Strategy, which commits



Canadian warships in Halifax Harbour. Tax-breaks to military contractors like Lockheed-Martin make the area a favourite for weapons manufacturers.

Glenn Canning

to raising defence funding from \$18 billion in 2008-09 to over \$30 billion in 2027-28. In total, the government plans to invest close to \$490 billion in defence over a 20 year period.

The move is an obvious boon for weapons manufacturers who will profit from large contracts with the Canadian military. In November, a Lockheed Martin-led team was awarded a \$2 billion contract for the installation, integration and long-term in-service support of a new combat system for 12 of the Canadian Navy’s frigates, or warships.

When announcing the new jobs in Nova Scotia, Tom Digan, president of Lockheed Martin Canada, stated that “an expansion in Halifax simply makes sense.”

Nova Scotia is home to approximately 40 per cent of all Canadian military assets. Operating in Halifax provides a “proximity to clients,” says Levy, an advantage that NSBI highlights on its website.

Indeed, one of Lockheed Martin’s offices in Halifax is inside the Canadian Forces base. The company has a 25 year ongoing relationship with the Canadian Navy, says Levy – a relationship Lockheed refers to as a “25 year legacy.”

Lorincz does not support the Canadian military having such cozy relations with Lockheed. She points out that Norway’s government pension fund divested itself of its shares in Lockheed because the company’s activities as a weapons manufacturer are considered in breach of its ethical guidelines. Lorincz adds that no socially responsible investment (SRI) fund will invest in weapons manufacturers either.

“If it’s not ethical for Norway, if it’s not ethical for SRI, why are we doing this?” she asks.

Lockheed isn’t the only weapons manufacturer to see the advantage of locating in Halifax. L-3 Electronic Systems, General Dynamics and Xwave also have offices in the city.

“We’re not opposed to the workers,” says Verheul. “People need to feed their families. We want to see more sustainable industries supported.”

“Jobs to make combat systems are not the kind of jobs that we need,” echoes Kaleigh Trace, a Dalhousie University student and a member of the Student

Coalition Against War (SCAW). In February, SCAW protested Lockheed’s presence at a Dalhousie career fair. “The

government should be supporting companies involved in the green economy and investing more in education, not supporting a weapons industry,” she says.

While the Canadian and provincial government invest in weapons and defence, Lorincz points out that the “real enemies” are going unnoticed. “We’re facing real threats like climate change,” she says, but the same year the federal government spend \$18 billion on defence, \$1.5 billion was spend on environment.

“When we ask Canadians what their priorities are, they say health and the environment,” says Lorincz. She points to a 2005 poll done by the Centre of Research and Information that found the top three program priorities for Canadians are protecting the environment (78 per cent), spending more on health care (74 per cent) and spending more on education and training (73 per cent). She would like to see the federal and provincial government shift their priorities accordingly. “Let’s get people working on solar and renewable energy.”

Hillary is an organizer with the Halifax Media Co-op and Managing Editor at The Dominion.

“Whaling,” continued from page 17

Huu-ay-aht First Nation, Ka'yu:'k't'h/Che:k'tles7et'h First Nation, Toquaht Nation, Uchucklesaht Tribe and Ucluelet First Nation. The treaty, signed by the Maa-nulth First Nations and the B.C. provincial government on April 9, 2009, still awaits federal government ratification.

Whaling was dropped from the Maa-nulth Agreement language in 2006; however, there was a side-agreement where the Maa-nulth First Nations agreed, for 25 years effective from date of the treaty, to hold off exercising their traditional right to hunt gray whales and sei whales in return for other benefits. Kathy Happynook explained, “That was the only way Maa-nulth could get grey and sei whales in the [side-] agreement.”

The side-agreement acknowl-

edges the Maa-nulth First Nations to be “historic whaling nations” with the right to harvest Fish for domestic purposes. The definition of fish includes marine animals. Moreover, it was stated that, “The grey and sei whales have recovered from industrial exploitation and are no longer considered by Canada to be endangered species” and the “Maa-nulth First Nations have the ability to propose an allocation for harvest of grey and sei whales in an annual fishing plan.”

Hereditary Huu-ay-aht Chief Tom Mexsis Happynook, grandson of a whaler and supporter of Indigenous rights, was pleased that the right to future whaling is preserved by the side-agreement, despite the fact that traditional whaling by the

Nuu-chah-nulth people will not be possible for some decades to come.

For the Makah in the US, their treaty right remains, but court cases have kept exercising that right in abeyance.

In *Anderson v. Evans* (2004), the US Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the Makah Nation must obtain a waiver from government regulatory bodies if they wish to whale. The Makah have applied for a waiver and await a decision.

According to the Makah Whaling Commission, the whaling is to be conducted humanely and is to be non-commercial, with meat being shared among all people in the Makah Nation. Moreover, the Makah Whaling Commission stated, “We

will only permit whaling if there is an unmet traditional subsistence or cultural need for whale in the community.”

The Makah Nation seeks understanding in their quest to hold onto their culture and way of life: “We ask the public to remember that throughout the history of the United States there has been a sad record of intolerance of Indian culture. We hope that thoughtful Americans will ask themselves whether they can and should respect the efforts of a small Tribe which is trying to preserve its culture in ways that are consistent with the conservation of natural resources.”

Kim Petersen is Original Peoples Editor for The Dominion.

“Oaxaca,” continued from page 16

El Imparcial, a local newspaper, reported that the local officials are being paid by the company to maintain their support and that the mining company has armed paramilitary groups to intimidate people who oppose the project.

Regardless of these tactics, people decided to blockade the mine site. Days after the closing of the mine, several trucks filled with soldiers arrived at the mine site.

When the people refused to give entry to the army, soldiers began to provoke and threaten them. When the army did gain access to the site, they proceeded to remove more than 30 tons of explosive material from the tunnels. This shocked local residents and generated more questions about the safety and environmental impacts of that quantity of explosives.

A month into the occupation of the mine, the members of San José del Progreso and neighbouring communities Maguey Largo and Magdalena, among several others, decided to shut down a federal highway between the capital city of Oaxaca and the coastal town of Puerto Ángel.

They entered the highway in

the early hours of April 20 and declared that they would not lift the blockade until the authorities responded to their demands.

The following day, at least nine trucks of riot police and one truck of soldiers arrived to oust blockaders. An agreement was reached to end the road blockades in exchange for negotiations with the state government, which have thus far not borne fruit.

Prior to the May 6 raid on the mine site, there were reports of harassment and threats by police against people resisting the mine. Cruz was among those threatened by police.

Fortuna Silver has responded with demands that the government protect their nearly \$30-million worth of investments in the mine.

The company, through its fully owned subsidiary Cuzcatlán, holds dozens of concessions that cover tens of thousands of hectares of land. (The average farmer in Ocotlán owns less than 5 hectares.)

Simon Ridgway, a Canadian citizen and the chairperson of Fortuna Silver, has also worked for

Glamis Gold and Radius Gold. Ridgway left Honduras in 2000 after the Special Prosecutor's Office on the Environment issued a warrant for his arrest, related to Glamis Gold's charges for crimes that included water usurpation, aggravated damages, forest crimes and disobedience to authority. The warrant against Ridgway was never executed.

In a press conference in late April, Canadian trade and environmental officials Paul Connors and Paula Caldwell St. Onge said the Canadian government embraces corporate social responsibility and that Canadian companies in Mexico respect that position. They also indicated that Trinidad Mine could be in production within a year.

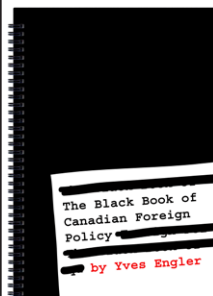
At the same press conference,

Mexican government officials went on to deny reports that the water around Trinidad is contaminated or that any animals have died as a result.

Protests that shut down the mine were dismissed as “a media stunt by people that are certainly trying to obtain benefits,” according to Joaquín Rodríguez Palacios, sub-secretary to Ulises Ruiz Ortiz, the controversial Governor of Oaxaca. “It's a small group, we all know it, who have a protagonistic attitude.”

When this article went to press, Trinidad Mine was still occupied by police forces and had yet to recommence operations.

Komala Ramachandra is a law student at Harvard who has been working in Oaxaca for the last seven months.



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Shantytown, USA

Nickelsville residents demand permanent land for the homeless

by Dawn Paley

NICKELSVILLE (RENTON), SEATTLE—"Thank God for Nickelsville." That's how two women living at the site summed up their feelings towards the "permanent homeless shantytown" currently set up in the side lot of the Bryn Mawr United Methodist Church in northeast Seattle, WA, USA.

Its existence has provided a safe place to people who would otherwise have nowhere to live, allowing residents to "provide for themselves a basic level of safety and sanitation when their government steadfastly refuses to do so for them," according to the Nickelsville website.

Nickelsville got its start on city property on September 22, 2008, in response to a lack of city action in response to growing of homelessness. Days later, the site was raided by police, and 22 people were arrested. Nickelsville has moved five times since it was founded.

Every so often, residents of Nickelsville, who call themselves Nickelodeons, have to pack up and move. The City of Seattle sets time limits for how long Nickelodeons are allowed to stay in one place. Nickelsville has been located in Renton since March 5, and residents will be forced to move on June 5.

Residents of Nickelsville are working to secure a permanent site where long-term housing for 1,000 people can be built.



The cooking area. Food donations are stored and managed communally. Residents keep additional rations of canned goods in their tents.



The entryway to Nickelsville. "[Seattle] Mayor Nickels' edict to systematically drive people out of their encampments and to destroy their property was the trigger for the present crisis," reads the Nickelsville website. "It is only befitting that our shantytown be named in honor of Mayor Nickels and his 'humane' treatment of the homeless."



Beavers wears an armband in support of the community. Locals and Seattle residents arrive at the site in a steady stream to drop off donations and offer words of solidarity.



An estimated 75 people live in Nickelsville, and new residents join on a steady basis. The women I spoke to mentioned there were no children in the community, but said that a family-oriented camp would be a good idea.



Bruce Beavers has been living in Nickelsville since September 25, 2008. Originally from Austin, TX, he was employed for 10 years as a manager. Beavers was laid off, and found other work, but couldn't make ends meet. He lost his home in 2008. "We don't want money from the city," he said. "We want permanent land."



An estimated 75 people live in Nickelsville, and new residents join on a steady basis. The women I spoke to mentioned there were no children in the community, but said that a family-oriented camp would be a good idea.



Nickelsville has been set up in the side yard of the United Methodist Church in Renton, Seattle, since March 5, 2009. It will remain there until June 5, when residents moved to a new location. For the latest information, check nickelsvilleseattle.org.

"In review," continued from page 3

odor, but were not informed by the company of what had happened. It is the second time in less than two years that Kinder Morgan has caused an oil spill in Burnaby. The company is currently planning to expand pipeline capacity to carry more crude oil from the Athabasca tar sands.

Indigenous people including Winona LaDuke, former Presidential candidate, along with former members of the American Indian Movement, declared that they are opposed to a series of new 458km pipelines proposed by Enbridge. The pipelines, which would run through 13 counties in Minnesota and Wisconsin, would carry oil from the Athabasca tar sands, and return an oil thinner to Alberta for reuse. Enbridge hopes to begin construction this summer.

The European Union signed an agreement with Azerbaijan, Egypt, Turkey and Georgia, for a new **natural gas pipeline**, expected to reduce Europe's reliance on Russia. Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and

Uzbekistan did not sign on to the proposed 3,300 km Nabucco pipeline.

Toxic sludge from Canadian miner **Barrick Gold's** North Mara mine in Tanzania spilled into River Thigithe which flows into the Mara River. According to Tanzanian journalist Evans Rubara, "When such toxic wastes flow into River Mara (Kirumi) then the whole of East Africa, parts of Central Africa and parts of Africa where River Nile flows also may stand some danger." Meanwhile, people are reportedly organizing to take samples of the water and dead fish for testing.

Mexican police raided a peaceful occupation of a Canadian-owned mine site in **Oaxaca**, Mexico. Villagers had been blockading the mine because they were not adequately consulted about exploration activities in the area, which are being carried out by Fortuna Silver.

A group of protestors made them-

selves visible at a Federal Environment Committee meeting held in **Calgary**, hoisting a large banner with helium balloons that read, "Water Is Life. Protect Inherent Treaty And Human Rights."

Evidence surfaced that US House Speaker **Nancy Pelosi** was among the first American officials briefed about "enhanced interrogation techniques" in 2002. Pelosi, a Democrat, had claimed that she did not know about torture used by the Bush administration.

US airstrikes in **Afghanistan** killed at least 149 people in Farah. An Afghan human rights organization accused the US of using phosphorus bombs, which the US denied.

US budget allocations for the war in **Afghanistan** surpassed those for the war in Iraq for the first time since Iraq was invaded in 2003.

The Senate of Illinois passed a resolution against the war in Afghanistan. "The Senate believes that it is not in the national

interest of the United States to deepen its military involvement in Afghanistan," reads part of the resolution.

Canadian forces withdrew from Mushan, west of **Kandahar**. "Canadian and Afghan soldiers did not bring peace into the area where we are living," a villager of Mushan told the Canwest News Service.

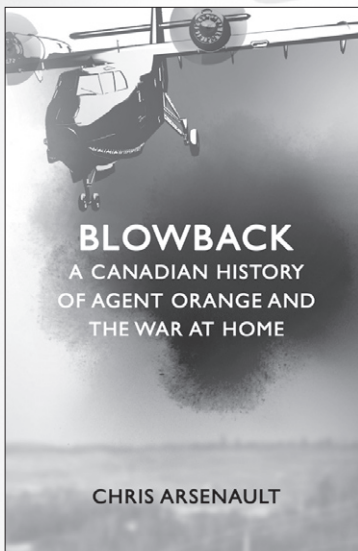
The Canadian forces also declared that they are prepared for **Swine Flu** in Afghanistan. According to the Canadian Press, "the only known pig in Afghanistan, a predominantly Muslim country, was quarantined recently at a zoo in Kabul."

Two hundred thousand people were displaced in **Pakistan** during an army assault on militants in the Swat Valley. "The army is now engaged in a full-scale operation to eliminate miscreants," said military spokesman Gen Athar Abbas. Over half a million people had previously been displaced

BLOWBACK

A Canadian History of Agent Orange and the War at Home

BY CHRIS ARSENAULT



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— Alex Khasnabish, Assistant Professor, Mount Saint Vincent University



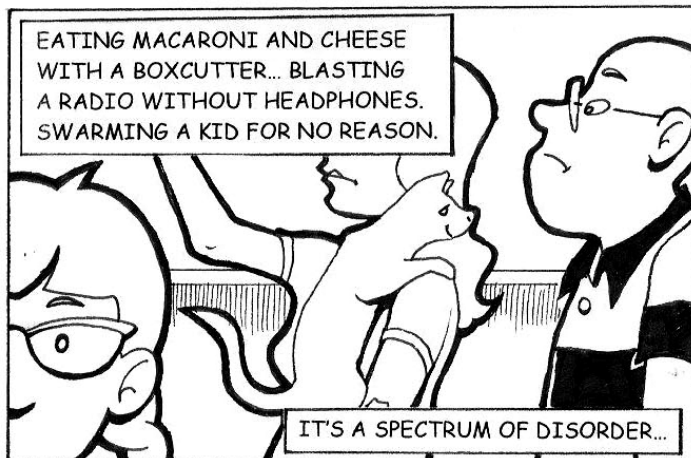
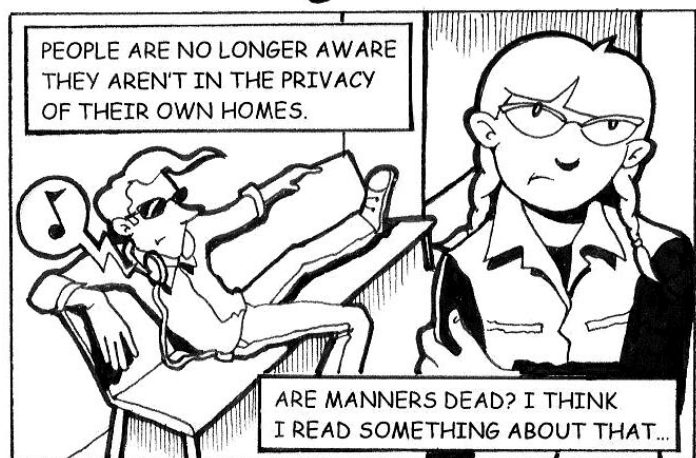
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underground June 09



from the region, which is close to the border with Afghanistan.

Eleven people were arrested near Fort Lewis in Washington as they blockaded armored personnel carriers from traveling to the Port of Tacoma, from where they would eventually deploy to Afghanistan. "Our goal is to raise the economic cost of these military shipments, to the point where no port is willing to take them," said Shyam Khanna, an activist with Port Militarization Resistance.

Hundreds of laid-off Belgian and French workers stormed Arcelor-Mittal's annual general meeting in Luxembourg. The steel company announced that they will lay off over a thousand workers in the US.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez announced that firms that provide services to the country's oil industry will be nationalized.

The BBC estimates that the nationalizations will affect 300 boats, several ports and approximately 8,000 oil workers.

A prominent Guatemalan lawyer posthumously accused Guatemalan president Alvaro Colom of his murder on a videotape. The lawyer, Rodrigo Rosenberg, was shot while riding his bicycle. Colom has called for an investigation of the murder by the UN and the FBI. According to the Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA), rumours of a coup d'état circulate as the potential for violence between the president's supporters and opposition grows.

Indigenous communities in Ixcán, Quiché, in Guatemala, celebrated the second anniversary of their consulta (referendum) regarding natural resource use with a sacred morning ceremony at the site of

the planned Xalalá dam.

The government of Cuba unexpectedly pulled the plug on an official Canadian diplomatic mission led by junior foreign minister Peter Kent. The reason the visit was canceled is unknown.

The Bilderberg group met in Vouliagmeni, Greece. The Bilderberg group consists of about 140 rich and powerful people who hold secret meetings annually.

Documents emerged which proved that Trafigura, a British oil company, dumped nearly two tonnes of toxic waste in the Ivory Coast. A class action lawsuit against the company in Britain is ongoing, brought by more than 30,000 people from the Ivory Coast. (Given the current federal legal framework, this type of legal action would not be possible against a Canadian company

today.

BC voters went to the polls in record low numbers, electing Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals to their third four-year term. Half of eligible voters cast their votes, leading to speculation that fixed election date voting during the Stanley Cup Playoffs was responsible for the low turnout. A referendum on changing the first past the post voting system to a Single Transferable Vote system failed to win a majority of votes.

Vancouver City Council voted to convert one lane of car traffic to accommodate cyclists on the Burrard Street bridge. It was the first time that Mayor Gregor Robertson and the Vision Vancouver city council moved to take car space away from bicycles.

“Jaywalking,” continued from page 11

DTES is ‘cleansed’ of poor and homeless people in time for the tourists.”

She also says, “It is not a coincidence that all this is happening in the lead-up to the Olympic Games. It is likely that poor people who are unable to pay these hefty tickets will be jailed leading up to 2010 because the VPD Draft Business Plan indicates increased involvement in ensuring that court summons are served to those ‘chronic offenders’ of such ridiculous bylaws.”

Asked why the VPD was targeting the DTES at this time and if the sudden rise in bylaw tickets had anything to do with the Olympics, spokesperson McGuinness refused to comment.

Multiple Canadian government officials could be learning from Atlanta, which used the

same strategy for sweeping the streets of homeless people during their Olympic Games in 1996. The Weicker Report, issued in 2002 to a special Vancouver-based committee with members from the federal, provincial and municipal governments, looked at the impact of the Games on “Vancouver’s Inner City Neighbourhood.” It noted the use of jaywalking tickets in Atlanta to lock up the homeless populations.

By 2006, a flurry of local laws were being implemented under Project Civil City to make it easier to ticket people, summon them to court and subject them to a term of incarceration.

One of the changes was the introduction of a pilot project called the Municipal Ticket Information system (MTI). Under old methods of ticketing, a bylaw

offender would be issued a notice asking them to pay a fine. If they did not pay, then a summons to court would be issued and served personally to the offender, who could then be acquitted, fined or restricted from areas of the city.

Under the new MTI process, a person given a ticket has 14 days to file a dispute. If they do not, a conviction and imposition of a fine is automatic. City documents point out that the MTI project has added to the number of convictions and fines.

The fear of homeless advocates is that warrants for unpaid tickets and similar offenses will suddenly appear en masse.

“That’s what people are the most afraid of in the neighbourhood; that they will keep issuing tickets at everyone. Then, at any time, people can get warranted,”

says King. “They are obviously targeting specific people.”

In a February 2008 submission to city council, Geoff Plant, Civil City Project Commissioner, put forth a series of “immediate requests” for changes to provincial legislation. He requested that the B.C. government make it easier to get bylaw offenders in court and to incarcerate people who are unable to pay fines.

Plant has been pushing for these legislative changes since last year but the cancellation of the B.C. Fall legislature session in 2008 meant that these changes have not yet been put into effect.

Gwalgen Geordie Dent is a contributing member of Medicoop.ca-Toronto. He is a former health worker in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside.

“Propagandhi,” continued from page 4

to care, their team of health professionals, scholars, and activists will do whatever it takes to make them well – just as one would do if a member of one’s own family were ill. They stand with their patients, some of the poorest and sickest victims of poverty and violence, in their struggle for equity and social justice.

People for the ethical treatment of animals is probably best known as the most frequently criticized and denounced activist organization on the planet. Some of the criticisms are legitimate, like those that lament campaigns that play on and foster or perpetuate sexist stereotypes in the service of drawing attention to the mundane terrors visited upon animals in human societies. Still, Peta2 (the youth wing of its parent organization) is currently the most effective potential gateway drug to an abolitionist animal liberation

perspective that is not merely anti-animal exploitation, but anti-capitalist, anti-sexist and connects human affairs with non-human animal affairs.

Less than one percent of the planet’s living creatures live on land, so you’ll have to excuse Captain Paul Watson of the Sea Shepherd Society for his bluntness when declaring the Sea Shepherds Society’s “single-mindedness” for defending the oceans from human encroachment and exploitation. We humans constitute less than 0.1% of life on earth and act like we are entitled to the rest of it. Humans continue to terrorize and destroy the largest-brained sentient mammals in the history of earth and enlist the services of PR firms to cloak the brutality in vestments of scientific research. The Sea Shepherd intends to stop such stupidity.

Do you ever feel awkward about speaking on behalf of groups you are not a part of, such as Aboriginals, refugees or women? With an influential band, is there a danger of overshadowing the voices of those you are trying to help?

Not if you’re a good listener. My obligation as I see it is to take the information that marginalized groups have articulated to me about the realities they face in a fucked up system and relay it to my people in a way that has resonance. And what can I say? My people happen to be largely white guys in NHL starter caps. Hey, we need information too, eh!

When are you playing Vancouver?

I refuse to answer such a politically-loaded question!

“In review,” from previous page

Hundreds of people converged at the Federal Liberal Convention in Vancouver to protest the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement. “If [the Liberals] allow this deal to pass, it’ll be even harder to tell them apart from the Conservatives,” said Micheál Ó Tuathail, member of Vancouver-based Colombia solidarity group La Chiva.

The Obama administration announced they are planning to pass a Free Trade Agreement between the US and Panama. The deal was negotiated during the Bush Administration, and in addition to being a NAFTA-style deal, has been criticized due to Panama’s status as a tax shelter.

Canwest Global Communications Corp, one of Canada’s largest media corporations, received a two week extension from their lender on a \$30.4 million interest payment. Canwest is currently carrying a debt of \$3.9 billion. The company announced that the Monday edition of their flagship paper, The National Post, would not be printed for nine weeks during the summer.

