



Indigenous radicalism today

THE ARTICLES AND INTERVIEWS ASSEMBLED FOR THIS SPECIAL edition on the struggles of indigenous peoples in North America demonstrate the myriad and multifaceted ways in which the original people of this continent are fighting against contemporary colonialism in all of its forms. The indigenous peoples of North America, in their cultural, political and intellectual struggles, are redefining what it means to be radical.

The catalyst for this publication was the 2006 Indigenous Leadership Forum that took place on June 5-16 at the University of Victoria. During that gathering, 31 participants committed to building Wasáse, a new radical indigenous movement. As we go to press, the Wasáse network has swelled to 79 people from 26 indigenous nations in North America. Nineteen settlers within the Canadian state have registered solidarity with the movement. All of the authors in this issue are either formal supporters or fellow travelers of the movement.

We have joined forces with New Socialist in collecting these voices of the Wasáse movement because we share in common the belief that an essential challenge of indigenous self-determination is the question of how to stop, roll back and dismantle capitalism. Being land-based societies, indigenous peoples have always been the prime targets of capitalist expansion and imperialist objectives. Today they remain at the forefront of contemporary radicalism and the struggle to live with dignity and in harmony with others and the natural environment.

Indigenous peoples are also redefining what it means to resist empire. Contemporary colonialism rarely maintains itself solely through the blunt forces of capitalist exploitation and dispossession. Indeed, in order to achieve so much political control and physical destruction, colonialism has had to solidify its gains by normalizing the injustices it has perpetrated against indigenous people.

This means that resistance must confront not only the illegitimate exercise of state and corporate power, but also the colonial ideas, values and beliefs that have seeped into our cultures and psyches. Our freedom is not only constrained by the overtly structural relations of power that we face on a daily basis – such as capitalism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, state domination and environmental destruction; it is also subverted by the reproduction of these forms of power by and within our communities.

These aspects of empire impede our freedom, sabotage our health and destroy the well-being of our communities. Today's indigenous warriors understand and practice resistance as a means of transcending these forces. In this sense, "resistance" is no longer a sufficient term to describe what is happening among our people; personalities are being reconstructed, lives re-made and communities re-formed in a process more akin to "regeneration."

Our aim is twofold: to illustrate the elements and dynamics of this movement among indigenous peoples; and to enliven the struggle of all peoples who are confronting capitalism and imperialism by showing the connections that exist between our movements. To this end we have also sought out contributions from non-indigenous allies.

Indigenous peoples are cognizant that we cannot defeat colonial aggression alone. A winning strategy requires that we actively promote solidarity and cooperative action with those who share similar ethical and political commitments. But solidarity is hard work. It requires a great deal of critical self-reflection and commitment to action on the part of the settler population. Coming to grips with colonial privilege by acknowledging the role that settlers play in the maintenance of empire must be seen as a necessary aspect of the struggle to decolonize.

Indigenous peoples today are articulating a new vision of a human existence for the 21st century. We are critically rethinking and refashioning the basis of our social and political lives toward the realization of our freedom as the original peoples of this land. We invite readers of this magazine to help build the movement. ★

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THE ONGOING CONFRONTATION AND OVERT RACISM AT SIX Nations is an ugly reminder that the theft of indigenous lands and oppression of indigenous peoples is a cornerstone of the Canadian state and economy. Solidarity with indigenous movements for self-determination is a critical aspect of socialist organising in Canada. This collaboration with members and supporters of Wasáse sheds light on what solidarity and self-determination mean in theory and practice. Many thanks to Taiaiake Alfred, Glen Coulthard, and our other contributors for initiating this important dialogue. ★

Deborah Simmons (Settler), Guest Editor

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★ THEORY AND PRACTICE ★

What are warrior societies?	Taiiaki Alfred and Lana Lowe	4
Final communique of the West Coast Warrior Society		8
Indigenous peoples and the politics of recognition	Glen Coulthard	9
Socialism from below and Indigenous peoples	Deborah Simmons	13
Indigenous feminism without apology	Andrea Smith	16
Canadian capitalism and dispossession of Indigenous peoples	Todd Gordon	18

★ THE WASÁSE MOVEMENT: RETHINKING STRUGGLE ★

Wasase statement of principles		20
Voices From the Indigenous leadership forum		21

★ HOMEFRONT ★

A young warrior's perspective on the conflict at Six Nations .	Taiiaki Alfred	23
Anarchist-Indigenous solidarity at Six Nations .	Richard Day & Sean Haberle	26
Labour-Indigenous solidarity at Six Nations	Rolf Gerstenberger	28
Nuu-chah-nulth struggles against sexual violence.	Interview with Na'cha'uaht & Chiinuks	29
Indigenous labour organizing in Saskatchewan	Brock Pitawanakwat	32
Nunavut: the party's over	Jackie Price	34

★ INTERNATIONAL ★

To be ungovernable	Jeff Corntassel	35
Why are Indigenous soldiers serving in Iraq?	Michael Yellow Bird	38
Barred From the "socialist" paradise	Teiowí:sonte Thomas Deer	39

★ CULTURE AND REVIEWS ★

Howard Adam's <i>OTAPAWY</i>	Deborah Simmons	40
Alan Cairn's First Nations and the Canadian state.	Adam Barker & Taiiaki Alfred	41
Basics of Wasase Essentials List.		42

★ TIME TO ORGANIZE ★		43
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What are warrior societies?

BY TAIAlAKE ALFRED AND LANA LOWE

The history of indigenous peoples in the modern era is, fundamentally, a story of struggle to overcome the effects of colonization. And it is a story of the Canadian government's manipulation of vulnerabilities that have been created through the process of dispossession. The indigenous struggle has expressed itself in efforts to gain intellectual and cultural self-determination, economic self-sufficiency, spiritual freedom, health and healing, and recognition of political autonomy and rights to use and occupy un-surrendered lands. The re-emergence of warrior societies in the modern era is one element of a larger struggle of indigenous peoples to survive.

Contemporary warrior societies emerged in the late 1960s, with the rise of the Mohawk Warrior Society at Akwesasne and Kahnawake. The Mohawk Warrior Society was established by a group of young people committed to reviving traditional Kanien'kehaka teachings, language and structures in Kanien'kehaka territories. Accordingly, the strategy and tactics employed by the Mohawk Warrior Society are community and/or land based. The overall strategy was to repossess and protect Kanien'kehaka territories according to the Kaienerekoawa, the Great Law of Peace. The tactics employed by the Mohawk Warrior Society included barricades and roadblocks (to prevent Canadian and U.S. authorities from entering Kanien'kehaka territories), evictions (of unwanted people living in Kanien'kehaka reserve lands) and occupations (repossession of lands within Kanien'kehaka territory).

1970S: RED POWER ALLIANCES

The emergence of the Mohawk Warrior Society coincided with the emergence of what was termed the Red Power movement, an urban-based movement established in the United States to resist oppression and discrimination against indigenous people in all of North America. The overall strategy of the Red Power movement was to raise political, spiritual and cultural awareness among indigenous people and to

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advocate for what at the time were called "Indian rights." This political awareness was grounded in the philosophy and tactics of the American civil rights movement: sit-ins, rallies and marches to pressure the US and Canadian governments to treat indigenous people fairly and to honour treaties. It is worth noting that contrary to the Mohawk Warrior Society's strong roots in Kanien'kehaka cultural and spiritual traditions, the Red Power movement reflected the diverse racial and national backgrounds of its urban membership. It was grounded in a pan-indigenous culture and spirituality that was not reflective of a single nation exclusively.

There were other fundamental differences between warrior societies and the Red Power movement. Warrior societies emerged from within (and remain a part of) indigenous communities. Like the Mohawk Warrior Society, they are grounded in the indigenous traditions of their own communities, and are accountable to traditional leadership bodies. Red Power organizations emerged from within urban centres, were highly mobile and often formed a loose network of "chapters." They focused their activities in urban centres

unless called upon by people in indigenous communities during times of crisis. Once in a community, a Red Power organization was held accountable to its hosts and adjusted its approach accordingly. Whatever the differences between them though, warrior societies and Red Power organizations did draw on the same spirit of discontent among young indigenous people and focused on the same fundamental problems; thus warrior societies and Red Power organizations naturally formed alliances in conflict situations.

Warrior societies and the Red Power movement expanded throughout the 1970s, often working together during episodes of crisis and mobilization. In 1973, the Mohawk Warrior Society stood in armed resistance against the Quebec Provincial Police at Kahnawake. The prominent Red Power organization, the American Indian Movement (AIM), formed an alliance with the Mohawk Warrior Society during this time. Later that year, AIM adopted the term “warrior society” for its promotional poster, A Red Man’s International Warrior Society, and attributed its imagery and words to the Kahnawake Mohawk Warrior Society leader, Louis Hall (Karoniaktajeh). The text of the AIM poster is illustrative of the spirit of the times and of that movement:

Pledged to fight White Man’s injustice to Indians, his oppression, persecution, discrimination and malfeasance in the handling of Indian Affairs. No area in North America is too remote when trouble impends for Indians. AIM shall be there to help the Native People regain human rights and achieve restitutions and restorations.

The promotional poster produced by AIM in 1973 depicts a Mohawk man (indicated by the three upright feathers of the Rotinoshonni style Gustoweh, or headdress) standing atop inverted United States and Canadian flags. This imagery gained prominence in 1974, when the Mohawk Warrior Society re-established the territory of Ganiienkeh after repossessing Kanien’kehaka lands that had been occupied privately in New York State.

Karoniaktajeh himself was instrumental in the repossession of Ganiienkeh territory, and it was there that he unfurled the “Indian Flag,” sometimes called the “Ganiienkeh Flag.” The flag symbolized a mighty Union of Indian Nations, depicting a generic indigenous man’s head with long hair and one feather (symbolizing, according to Karoniaktajeh, indigenous peoples being “all of one mind”). Since Ganiienkeh was envisioned as the staging ground for such a union, it was adopted there.

Later, Karoniaktajeh designed a flag for the Mohawk Warrior Society that depicted a Mohawk man’s head on the same background of the “Indian Flag”— a sun on a red background. However the printer made a mistake and printed one feather instead of three! This flag has since been mass-produced and can be found everywhere in the world (most recently it has been seen flying at the UN Conference on the Environment in South Africa) and has been adopted by many indigenous people in their defence of land and nationhood.



A warrior stares down a soldier at Oka.

The Ojibway Warrior Society gained prominence in 1974 when they occupied Anicinabe Park in Ontario. This Society was similar in ideological orientation to the other movements that emerged during that era. The Ojibway Warrior Society appears to have been a unique combination of the urban and “revolutionary” (in outlook and strategic objective) Red Power movement with the culturally and community rooted Mohawk Warrior Society. Tellingly, Louis Cameron, the Society’s leader, commented that the name “warrior society” was only chosen because of its growing currency at the time and in response to pressure from outside of the movement to label itself – it is quite evident that the Ojibway Warrior Society did not stem from an ideological struggle. Rather, ideology and the label of a warrior society was grafted onto a movement that developed within the Ojibway community and in North western Ontario in response to systemic and immediate injustices against indigenous peoples. In this basic way, the Ojibway Warrior Society joined AIM and the Mohawk Warrior Society on the list of organic movements expressing long-standing grievances in a vocabulary that reflected both traditional culture and contemporary political discourse.

Later that same year, in the fall of 1974, the Bonaparte Indian Band in the interior region of British Columbia set up an armed roadblock on the highway that passed through their reserve to demand better housing. Louis Cameron and members of AIM led a Native People’s Caravan to Parliament Hill in Ottawa, where they were met with barricades and riot police.

Through the 1970s and 1980s, the Kahnawake-based Mohawk Warrior Society expanded to the neighbouring community of Akwesasne and was instrumental in establishing a lucrative cigarette trade that generated revenue for both the Warrior Society and the traditional governments in the Kanien’kehaka communities. Meanwhile, AIM intensified its activities in British Columbia and Alberta, establishing chapters in major cities and attending the roadblocks, sit-ins and “fish-ins” that were springing up throughout western Canada

and the United States.

OKA AND AFTERMATH

By the end of the 1980s, the Mohawk Warrior Society had been embroiled in several armed conflicts with Canadian and United States authorities as a result of police invasion and raiding of reserve cigarette stores, casinos and bingo halls. And in 1988, the Mi'kmaq Warrior Society emerged out of the community of Big Cove, New Brunswick.

Meanwhile, AIM's influence had all but disintegrated. The nature of the organization as a transient, urban-cultured movement had prevented any lasting connection to indigenous communities, and it failed to gain widespread support from indigenous people. AIM members were subsequently harassed, arrested and incarcerated by United States and Canadian authorities. First Nation politicians and leaders of established political organizations publicly denounced the confrontational approach taken by the organization, hoping to curry favour with Canadian governments in order to gain access to negotiating processes. AIM was nowhere to be found during the mid-1980s, when several indigenous

Images of armed, masked men [at Oka] shook mainstream Canada and galvanized Indigenous people from coast to coast.

communities in the interior and northern part of British Columbia took direct action to defend their territories from ongoing unsanctioned and rapacious resource extraction.

In 1990, the Mohawk Warrior Society faced off with the Quebec Provincial Police and the Canadian Army to prevent the expansion of a municipal golf course in Kanesatake, another Kanien'kehaka territory. Images of armed, masked men dressed in army fatigues, defending their land and the people from the full force of the Canadian state, shook mainstream Canada and galvanized indigenous people from coast to coast. By the mid 1990s, warrior societies had emerged throughout Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Manitoba.

Many of the people who became involved in the warrior society movements on the east and west coasts have cited the 1990 Oka crisis as a turning point in their lives, and the watershed event of this generation's political life. Indeed, the Mohawk Warrior Society's actions in 1990 around Kanesatake, Kahnawake and Akwesasne have provided crucial inspiration and motivation for the militant assertion of indigenous nationhood.

Young indigenous people in communities across the land saw that it was indeed possible to defend oneself and one's community against state violence deployed by governments in support of a corporate agenda and racist local governments. Perhaps more importantly, young indigenous people recognized the honour in what the Mohawks had done in standing up to what eventually were proven to be unjust and illegal actions on the part of the local non-indigenous government. The Oka crisis led to an awakening and radicalization of indigenous consciousness, as well as a broadening of the spectrum of possible responses to injustice.

The Mi'kmaq Warrior Society had developed and maintained a presence in several Atlantic communities, including Big Cove, Listiguj and Esgenoopetitj. In 1994, the Mi'kmaq Warrior Society made headlines when they seized land once occupied by a residential school and demanded the land be returned to the Mi'kmaq people. A year later, the Mi'kmaq Warrior Society was called in to protect the community of Eel Ground as they conducted their traditional salmon fishery in the Miramichi River in defiance of Canadian regulations.

In 1995 in Vancouver, second-generation AIM activists established the Native Youth Movement (NYM), an urban-based youth organization grounded in Red Power traditions, philosophies and tactics. They too, wore camouflage and masks and carried the Mohawk warrior flag. For three years, NYM engaged in sit-ins, rallies and marches throughout British Columbia to protest the province's so-called Treaty Process.

In 1997, the Okijida Warrior Society formed in Manitoba as an alternative to urban youth gangs. The Okijida Warrior Society soon affiliated with AIM and worked to raise awareness about indigenous peoples' relationship with the Canadian government and encourage people to pressure Canada and the United States to treat indigenous people fairly. Since 2002, the Okijida Warrior Society has helped the Grassy Narrows community in Ontario maintain a blockade preventing logging trucks from entering their territory. The Grassy Narrows blockade continues to this day, and is actively supported by the people in the community. It is a highly visible and accessible site, both physically and psychologically, and indications from people involved are that the blockade has served a galvanizing purpose. It is enabling indigenous youth to learn from elders about the importance of land, spirituality, and the sustained connections to their heritage. Though situated within a conflict between the community and outside interests, the blockade has established a fundamentally positive and motivating environment for those involved at the community level.

DEFENDING INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES

In 1999, the Cheam First Nation recruited members of the NYM to assist them as they engaged in their Fraser River salmon fishery in defiance of Canadian regulations. In 2000, these same members formed the West Coast Warrior Society. Soon, they donned their fatigues and set up a three-



month roadblock to protect Cheam fishing camps. Later that year, the West Coast Warrior Society travelled to Esgehoopetitj to assist local indigenous communities in that region in their on-going conflict with local fishers and Canadian authorities over the conduct of traditional fisheries by the Mi'kmaq.

Since 1999, the Mi'kmaq people of Esgehoopetitj had been asserting their treaty rights and conducting their own lobster fishery in defiance of Canadian regulations that were prejudiced against them. After the government refused to recognize the extreme disparity of access, the once uniformly cooperative indigenous community mobilized to demand fair treatment and the Canadian government's conformity with international and domestic law. This resulted in several clashes with Canadian authorities and citizenry.

By the fall of 2000, Esgehoopetitj was under siege and the waters of Miramichi Bay became the frontline. Warrior societies, activists, politicians and media descended on the community. Members of the Mi'kmaq, Mohawk, Okijida and West Coast Warrior Societies all joined the Esgehoopetitj and Listiguj Rangers in defence of Mi'kmaq communities and fisheries. When the fishing season was over, the warrior societies dispersed back to their home territories, with the commander of the East Coast Warrior Society (which had emerged in Esgehoopetitj during the fall of 2000) travelling to British Columbia to form an alliance with the West Coast Warrior Society.

In 2003, the West Coast Warrior Society was summoned to help five Saanich communities in protecting the viability of the Goldstream salmon run in Saanich Inlet from a commercial fishery opening proposed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). Large commercial fishery interests were demanding access to salmon runs that had been restored through the indigenous community's own habitat rehabilitation projects. The same inequity faced by the east coast communities and fishers was now facing these west coast indigenous communities: large fleets and corporate interests in

the commercial fishery were to be given access to fish for maximum commercial harvest while the indigenous communities would receive token access and benefit from the resource.

This was a direct threat to the salmon fishery, the basis for their cultures and survival, and the federal government again failed to intervene in a principled manner. On the invitation of the five Saanich communities and supported by the communities' band councils, the West Coast Warrior Society remained in the community for five weeks preparing to block the commercial fishery. In the end, the fishery was cancelled without physical confrontation and the West Coast Warrior Society left the communities.

DEFENDING INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

What has become clear through the history of the warrior society movement is the continuing and impressive patience of indigenous people in resolving political matters in principled, fair, and legal (via international and national conventions) ways. In every instance where conflict has arisen between warrior societies and Canadian authorities, violent interactions have been instigated by police or other government authorities, or by local non-indigenous interests opposed to indigenous people. Indigenous communities are comprised of normally cooperative and peaceful people. In all cases, it is only when an overwhelming injustice is perpetrated against them in the face of possible mutually beneficial alternatives that these people, who are yet struggling to survive, rise up to demand just treatment and fairer relations with the settler society.

The warrior society strategy gains credence among indigenous people during a crisis situation because there is a deep-rooted fear among all indigenous people that the Canadian government is seeking to annihilate their existence. Most indigenous people favour peaceful and non-confrontational methods of advancing their political agenda and of advancing the cause of justice. But at the same time, all indigenous people have direct experience with or second-generation memory of the genocidal intent and capacity of the Canadian state. All have direct experience with the virulent forms of racism that still exist in most rural parts of Canada. Indigenous people understand well how ordinary Canadians turn hostile and violent when indigenous peoples' demands for recognition of their land rights or political rights threatens white society's economic privilege on the land.

So, in a crisis situation, facing armed paramilitary force and the hostility of white society as a whole, in the context of impending violence capable of eliminating the very existence of their communities, the raw realities of the colonial relationship between indigenous peoples and the state are laid bare. In these situations, the warrior societies' analysis of Canadian society is proven correct. The legitimacy of the warrior society agenda and approach flows from this dynamic. People do recognize in very pragmatic terms the

necessity of defending the community in physical terms from outside aggression. The warrior societies provide a measure of national defence.

There is broad support among indigenous people everywhere for action, even militant action, against the continuing unjust process by which they are being dispossessed of their territories. The disagreement among indigenous peoples is about their capacity to effectively confront state authorities and to sustain a politic of contention, and whether or not the costs (violence, further deprivation, hostility of society, etc.) are worth the gains to be made in confronting the injustices facing indigenous communities. Thus, there is no need for a screening or filtering process whereby warrior societies would judge the merit of various conflicts and decide which ones are suitable engagements.

Engagement does not need to be rationalized. The operating assumption is that all indigenous communities are facing an injustice that needs to be confronted; the main factor influencing whether a warrior society is involved in a conflict is simply the existence of a conflict in a community where there is a warrior society with the capacity to respond. Simply put, warrior societies will become involved in conflicts between their nation and outside forces if the people call for their help, and if they possess the capacity to respond.

In this sense, indigenous people, through warrior societies, are acting on their basic right and responsibility to protect and defend their lands, their communities and their persons from unprovoked outside aggression. ★



For a chronology of the Warrior Society Movement since 1968, see www.newsocialist.org

Final Communiqué of the West Coast Warrior Society

COAST SALISH TERRITORY

AUGUST 2, 2005

The West Coast Warrior Society has disbanded.

As a result of the unlawful and unethical activities of Canadian police agencies in targeting our members and our organization, and the unfair branding of Indigenous activists as terrorists, we have concluded that it is no longer possible for us to be effective in carrying out our responsibility to defend Indigenous lands, communities, and rights as we have been doing. The police have used lies, misinformation, threats and intimidation by law and force to create a climate of fear surrounding our organization and have undermined our support.

It must be understood that we are first and foremost men who are committed to our families and

communities. This commitment is stronger than our adherence to an ideology or allegiance to an organization. We have talked with and listened to our elders, our women, and our children, and it is out of love and respect for them and concern for their well-being and security that we have decided to end our association and operations.

We have never advocated the use of violence to advance our cause. We reiterate that our actions in Burnt Church, Cheam, Esowista and Saanich, and in all of our other involvements, were acts of self-defense. They were legitimate and justified responses to the direct threat posed to Indigenous peoples by racist policies and overzealous law enforcement agencies. We restate our disavowal of the use of violent means to achieve the goal of Indigenous self-

determination. However, the police killings of Dudley George, J.J. Harper, Neil Stonechild, Anthony Dawson and thousands more of our people confirm the need for us to maintain the right to defend ourselves and protect our families from physical harm.

We restate our dedication to fight for the survival of our people and to protect our way of life. Our communities, cultures, and lands must be defended. We are disbanding as an organization dedicated to the physical defense of Indigenous communities and we are embarking on the path of strictly nonviolent political and social struggle. We are rededicating ourselves today as warriors and we are committing to advance Indigenous people's cultural and political and social resurgence. ★

Indigenous peoples and the 'politics of recognition'

BY GLEN COULTHARD

Over the last 30 years, the self-determination efforts and objectives of indigenous peoples in Canada have increasingly been cast in the language of "recognition." Consider, for example, the latest policy position on self-determination published by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) in the spring of 2005. According to the AFN document, "a consensus has emerged [...] around a vision of the relationship between First Nations and Canada which would lead to strengthening recognition and implementation of First Nations' governments."

This "vision," the AFN goes on to explain, expands on the core principles outlined in the 1996 *Report of Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*: recognition of the nation-to-nation relationship between First Nations and the Crown; recognition of the equal right of First Nations to self-determination; recognition of the Crown's fiduciary obligation to protect Aboriginal treaty rights; recognition of First Nation's inherent right to self-government; and recognition of the right of First Nations to benefit from the development of their lands and resources.

In this article I employ the work of anti-colonial revolutionary and psychiatrist Frantz Fanon to challenge the idea that the colonial relationship between indigenous peoples and the Canadian state can be transformed via a politics of recognition. I take "politics of recognition" to refer to the now expansive range of recognition-based models of liberal pluralism that seek to "reconcile" indigenous claims to nationhood with Crown sovereignty by accommodating indigenous identities in some form of renewed relationship with (and within) the Canadian state.

Although these models vary in both theory and practice, most tend to involve the delegation of land, capital and political power from the state to indigenous communities through land claims, economic development and self-government processes. Against this vision, I argue that instead of ushering in an era of peaceful coexistence grounded on the ideal of mutuality, the politics of recognition in its contemporary form promises to reproduce the very configurations of colonial power that indigenous peoples have historically sought to transcend.

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"I subjected myself to an objective examination, I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics; and I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, [and] racial defects."

Frantz Fanon

RECOGNITION AND FREEDOM

The increase in recognition demands made by indigenous and other marginalized minorities over the last three decades has prompted an explosion of intellectual work which has sought to unpack the ethical and political significance of these types of claims. To date this literature has tended to focus on the contested relationship between the recognition of cultural distinctiveness on the one hand, and the freedom and well-being of marginalized individuals and groups living in ethnically diverse states on the other.

At the centre of this debate has been the influential work of Canadian political philosopher, Charles Taylor. In his 1992 essay "The Politics of Recognition," Taylor argues that political communities such as Canada ought to provide recognition and protection for certain sub-state cultural and national communities because it is within and against the "horizon" of these communities that humans come to develop their identities, and thus the capacity to make sense of their lives and life choices.

Taylor's reasoning goes something like this: as culturally situated beings we do not develop our identities in "isolation" – rather we form them through complex "relations of recognition" with others. However, given that our identities are formed in this manner, it also follows that they can be significantly deformed when these processes run awry. In this sense, our identities are not only shaped by recognition, but also its absence, "often by the misrecognition of others."

Thus Taylor writes: “A person or a group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning one in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.” It is this idea that unequal relations of recognition can impede human freedom and flourishing that continues to serve as one of the main theoretical justifications for state policies geared toward the protection of indigenous cultural difference.

RECOGNITION IN COLONIAL CONTEXTS

Interestingly, in the second half of “The Politics of Recognition” Taylor identifies Frantz Fanon as one of the first people to clearly outline the role that misrecognition plays in propping up relations of colonial domination. I don’t dispute Taylor’s affirmation of Fanon’s work in theorizing the subjectivity of the oppressed. However, he is mistaken in invoking Fanon to suggest that by institutionalizing a liberal regime of mutual recognition we can somehow transcend the breadth of power at play in colonial systems of domination.

Fanon’s concern with the relationship between human freedom and equality in relations of recognition represents a central and reoccurring theme in much of his work. But his most concentrated examination of this relationship occurs in his 1952 text, *Black Skin, White Masks* (BSWM). There Fanon shows that a colonial system of governance that does not rely entirely on the execution of force must entice indigenous peoples to identify with the profoundly asymmetrical forms of recognition either imposed on or granted to them by the colonial-state and society.

In essence, Fanon argues that in contexts of domination (such as colonialism), the terms of recognition are usually determined by and in the interests of the oppressor. Moreover, over time oppressed populations tend to develop what he called “psycho-affective” attachments to these master-sanctioned forms of recognition, and that this attachment is essential in maintaining the economic and political structure of colonial relations themselves. For Fanon, then, colonialism can be said to operate on two levels: it includes “not only the interrelations of objective historical conditions but also human attitudes to these conditions.” Fanon argues that it is this interplay between the objective and subjective realms of colonialism that ensures its stability over time.

With respect to the subjective dimension, BSWM painstakingly outlines the multiple ways in which those “attitudes” conducive to colonial rule are cultivated amongst the colonized through the unequal exchange of institutionalized and interpersonal patterns of recognition between the colonial society and the indigenous population. Fanon’s work reveals how, over time, colonized populations tend to internalize the derogatory images imposed on them by their colonial “masters.” As a result of this process, these images, along with the structural relations with which they are entwined, come to be recognized or endured as more or less natural.



Frantz Fanon

This last point is made agonizingly clear in one of the most famous passages from BSWM, where Fanon shares an alienated encounter on the streets of Paris with a little white girl. “Look, a Negro!” Fanon recalls the girl saying, “Moma, see the Negro! I’m frightened! frightened!” At that moment the imposition of the child’s gaze “sealed” Fanon into a “crushing objecthood.” In his own words: “I subjected myself to an objective examination, I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics; and I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, [and] racial defects.” Instead of being acknowledged as a “man among men,” the child’s recognition reduced Fanon to “an object among other objects.”

Left as is, Fanon’s insights into the ultimately objectifying nature of colonial recognition appear to square nicely with the politics of recognition as it is conceived of and practiced in Canada today. For example, although Fanon never uses the word himself, he does seem to be describing the debilitating effects associated with misrecognition in the sense that Taylor and others use the term. In fact, BSWM is littered with passages that illustrate the innumerable ways in which the imposition of the settler’s gaze can inflict damage on indigenous society at both the individual and collective levels. However, a close reading of Fanon’s work renders problematic the liberal-recognition approach in several interrelated and crucial respects.

THE FANONIAN CRITIQUE

The first problem has to do with the liberal-recognition approach’s failure to adequately confront the dual structure of

colonialism itself. Fanon insists, for example, that in order to transform a colonial configuration of power one has to attack it at both levels of operation: the objective and the subjective. This point is made at the outset of BSWM and reverberates throughout all of Fanon's work.

A significant portion of BSWM is committed to diagnosing the "psychological" dimension of colonialism. But Fanon also emphasizes in his introduction that strategically, any "effective disalienation" of the colonized subject can only happen if one also addresses the "social and economic realities" of colonial rule. Fanon correctly situates "colonial-capitalist" exploitation alongside misrecognition and alienation as one of the foundational sources of imperial domination.

Of course, Fanon was enough of a Marxist to understand that capitalist economic relations play a foundational role in exacerbating asymmetrical relations of recognition. However, he was also much more perceptive than many Marxists in his insistence that the subjective realm of colonialism had to be the target of strategic transformation along with the socio-economic structure. The colonized person "must wage war on both levels," in Fanon's view. "Since historically they influence each other, any unilateral liberation is incomplete, and the gravest mistake would be to believe in their automatic interdependence." Attacking colonial power on one front, in other words, does not guarantee the subversion of its effects on the other.

Fanon's insights here immediately expose the limits of the politics of recognition for restructuring indigenous-state relations in Canada. This project has largely been conceived of in terms of reformist state redistribution schemes like granting certain "cultural rights" and concessions to indigenous communities through self-government and land claims processes. Although this approach may alter some of the effects of colonial-capitalist exploitation and domination, it does little to address their generative structures — in this case the racist capitalist economy and the colonial state. Seen from this angle, the contemporary politics of recognition simply leaves one of the two operative levels of colonial power identified by Fanon untouched.

The second key problem with the politics of recognition's proposed remedy for colonial injustice has to do with the subjective realm of colonial power. Here it is important to note that most recognition-based proposals — whether we're talking about the recommendations of Charles Taylor or the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* — rests on the assumption that the flourishing of indigenous peoples as distinct and self-determining agents is dependent on their being granted recognition and institutional accommodation by and within the settler-state apparatus. As sociologist Richard Day has put it, under these models, recognition is conceived of as a "gift" bestowed from a superior identity to an inferior one.

For Fanon, there are at least two problems underlying the idea that freedom and independence can be achieved via a gift of recognition. The first involves the relationship that he draws between struggle and the disalienation of the colonized

individual. Simply stated, for Fanon it is through struggle and conflict (and for the later Fanon, violent struggle and conflict) that the colonized come to be rid of the "arsenal of complexes" driven into the core of their being through the colonial process.

Struggle, in other words, serves as a mediating force through which the colonized come to shed their colonial identities, thus restoring them to their "proper place." In contexts where recognition is conferred without struggle, this fundamental self-transformation cannot occur, and as a result authentic freedom is denied. Although the formal political structure of domination may change in this process (the colonized are afforded "rights," for example), the subjectivity of the Native remains the same — they remain colonized at the level of their being.

However, when Fanon speaks of a lack of struggle in the decolonization movements of his day he doesn't mean to suggest that the colonized in these contexts simply remained passive recipients of colonial practices. He readily admits, for example, that the colonized may indeed fight "for Liberty and Justice." However, when this fight is carried out in a manner that does not pose a foundational challenge to colo-

"Those of us struggling against colonialism must 'turn away' from the assimilative lure of the politics of recognition and begin to direct our struggles toward our own on-the-ground strategies of freedom."

onial power as such — which, for Fanon, will always involve struggle and conflict — then the best the colonized can hope for is "white liberty and white justice; that is, values secreted by [their] masters."

This brings us to the second major problem identified by Fanon: without conflict and struggle constituting a central feature of the decolonization movement (a) the terms of recognition tend to remain the property of those in power to grant to their inferiors in ways that they deem appropriate, and (b) under these conditions, the indigenous population often comes to see the limited and constrained terms of recognition conferred to them by their colonial masters as their own. In effect, the colonized come to identify with "white liberty and white justice." Either way, for Fanon, the colonized will have failed to re-establish themselves as truly

self-determining, that is, as creators of the terms of their own recognition and in accordance with their own values.

FANON'S INSIGHTS TODAY

Anyone familiar with the power dynamics that structure the Aboriginal rights movement in Canada should immediately see the applicability of Fanon's insights here. We needn't expend much effort to elicit the countless ways in which the liberal discourse of recognition has been limited and constrained by the state, politicians, corporations and the courts in ways that pose no fundamental challenge to the colonial relationship.

Indeed, over the last 30 years the Supreme Court of Canada has consistently refused to recognize indigenous peoples' equal and self-determining status. This is based on the court's adherence to legal precedent founded on the white supremacist myth that indigenous societies were too primitive to bear fundamental political rights when they first encountered European powers. Even though the Court has secured an unprecedented degree of recognition for certain "cultural" practices within the state, it has nonetheless failed to challenge the racist origin of Canada's assumed authority over indigenous peoples and their territories.

The political and economic ramifications of this legal move are clear-cut. In *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*, for example, it was declared that any residual Aboriginal rights that may have survived the unilateral assertion of Crown sovereignty could be infringed upon by the federal and provincial governments so long as this action could be shown to further a "compelling and substantial legislative objective" consistent with the "fiduciary relationship" between the state and Aboriginal peoples.

What "substantial objectives" might justify infringement? According to the Court, virtually any profitable economic venture, including the "development of agriculture, forestry, mining, and hydroelectric power, the general economic development of the interior of British Columbia, protection of the environment or endangered species and the building of infrastructure and the settlement of foreign populations to support those aims." So today it appears, as much as it did in Fanon's day, that colonial powers will only recognize the collective rights and identities of indigenous peoples insofar as this recognition does not obstruct the imperatives of state and capital.

But the above examples confirm only one aspect of Fanon's insight into the problem of recognition when applied to the colonial setting: namely, the limitations that it runs up against when pitted against these overtly structural expressions of colonial power. Can the same be said for the subjective dimension of colonial power relations?

With respect to the forms of racist recognition pounded into the psyches of indigenous peoples through the institutions of the state, church, schools, media, and by racists within the dominant society, the answer is surely yes. Countless studies, novels and autobiographical narratives have outlined, in painful detail, how these expressions of

recognition have saddled indigenous people with low self-esteem, depression, alcohol and drug abuse, and violent behaviours directed both inward against the self and outwards toward others.

Similarly convincing arguments have also been made about the types of recognition offered to indigenous communities through the law, self-government packages, land claims and economic development programs. The recent work of Taiaiake Alfred, for example, has shown how the power relations within and against which indigenous demands for recognition are made can subtly shape the subjectivities and worldviews of the indigenous claimants involved.

The core problem, of course, is that the structural and discursive settings within which recognition claims are articulated and assessed are by no means neutral: they are profoundly power-laden, and almost always to the detriment of indigenous claimants. As such they have the ability to mould how indigenous people think and act, not only in relation to the topic at hand (the recognition claim) but also in relation to themselves and others.

This is what Alfred means when he suggests that, over time, legal approaches tend to produce Aboriginal "citizens" whose rights and identities become defined by the colonial state. Similarly, economic development approaches produce Aboriginal capitalists whose thirst for profit come to outweigh their ancestral obligations to the land and to others. And land claims processes produce Aboriginal property owners whose territories, and thus whose very identities, become subject to expropriation and alienation. These processes signify the erosion of the most traditionally egalitarian aspects of indigenous ethical systems, ways of life and forms of social organization.

TOWARD A POLITICS OF DOING

I have argued here that Fanon's insights into the subjectifying nature of colonial recognition are as applicable today to the liberal "politics of recognition" as they were fifty years ago, when he first formulated his ideas on the matter. Fanon's dual-structured conception of colonial power still captures the subtle (and not so subtle) ways in which a system of imperial domination that does not sustain itself exclusively by force is reproduced over time.

But if colonial power is dispersed much more diffusely today, how do we go about resisting it? Fanon suggests that those of us struggling against colonialism must "turn away" from the assimilative lure of the politics of recognition and begin to direct our struggles toward our own on-the-ground strategies of freedom. Today this process will (and must) continue to involve some form of critical individual and collective self-recognition on the part of indigenous peoples. In my mind, this self-affirmative process must be carried out for everyone's sake, because indigenous societies have truths to teach the Western world about the establishment and preservation of relationships between peoples and the natural world that are profoundly non-imperialist. ★

Socialism from below and indigenous resurgence

RECLAIMING TRADITIONS

BY DEBORAH SIMMONS

During the peak of the Red Power movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, many newly radicalizing indigenous people became interested in exploring various theories of revolution and socialist organisation. By the mid 1970s, many of these same activists had become hostile to socialism, advocating a separate path to liberation rooted in indigenous traditions. This mirrored trends in other movements against oppression – the Left quite simply lost credibility.

Much has been written in the pages of this magazine and elsewhere to expose the critical weaknesses of the Left during that period in addressing the experiences and aspirations of people who are oppressed because of their gender, sexuality, or race. But we have not adequately accounted the specific intersection of indigenous struggles with socialist theories of revolutionary change. The new Wasáse movement has begun to address the contradictions of a traditionalism that is linked to official aboriginal organisations sanctioned and funded by the Canadian state. Wasáse activists are critically reconstructing the radical anti-capitalist ethics underlying many indigenous traditions. The challenge now for socialists is to build strong bonds of solidarity with this movement which is now at the cutting edge of radical organising in Canada. This requires that we critically reconstruct our own traditions of socialism from below, whose heart and soul is the belief that a revolutionary and democratic transformation of society

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can only be achieved by the self-organized mass struggles of workers and oppressed peoples. In our work with indigenous peoples, we bear responsibility for demolishing in theory and practice the corruption of socialist ideas that followed the defeat of the Russian revolution by Stalinism.

This is no easy task. We must take on nearly a century of cumulative theoretical justifications of Stalinist, social democratic and Third World nationalist strategies. We must engage in a rigorous critique of so-called “models” of “social-

Building solidarity with indigenous movements requires that we critically reconstruct our own traditions of socialism from below.

ism” from the past and present – from the former USSR, to the tradition of the NDP, to the “Communist” dictatorship of Fidel Castro and the reformist governments of Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales.

Equally as important, we must confront the legacies of Stalinist and social democratic strategies in Canada that have destroyed the credibility of socialism among radical indigenous activists. In reclaiming our own traditions, we must recognize that we have a lot to learn from those indigenous activists who have been forging alternatives to the anti-democratic travesties that have for so long been the publicly recognized face of socialism.

In fact, during this grim quiescent period in which the neo-conservative

agenda seems to be undefeatable, indigenous actions such as the reclamation of Six Nations territory at Caledonia are crucial evidence for socialists that movements from below are the central force for social change. Capitalism cannot be defeated by any minority claiming to act on behalf of the exploited and oppressed.

RADICALISATION AND DISILLUSIONMENT

The bitter disillusionment of indigenous activists in socialist politics by the mid-1970s is documented in several books published about the period by writers including Lee Maracle (Sto:loh), Jeannette Armstrong (Okanagan), and Vern Harper (Cree). In each text, the same cycle of radicalization and disillusionment is repeated. Indigenous hostility to socialism in general and Marxism in particular is distilled in the collection edited by Ward Churchill, *Marxism and Native Americans* (1983).

The experience of betrayal cannot be dismissed as irrelevant or misguided by socialists who want to learn from the past in order to build solidarity with indigenous peoples in the present. The socialist left that Red Power activists encountered was overwhelmingly dominated by socialism from above politics, in the form of English-Canadian left-nationalism, and pro-Russia and pro-China versions of Stalinist “Communism.” An honest reading of indigenous texts from that period can provide socialists with both an understanding of the enormous possibilities presented by moments of indigenous radicalisation, and the pitfalls of a politics that fails to account for the specific conditions of indigenous resurgence.

In his book *Prison of Grass* and the posthumous publication *Otapawyl*, the late Métis leader Howard Adams



recounts the story of his own radicalization through the campus Free Speech movement in Berkeley, California, and listening to a speech by Black Power leader Malcolm X. He concludes in *Prison of Grass* (1975) that although objectively from a socialist perspective indigenous peoples may have a common interest with the white working class in defeating capitalism, the rampant racism in Canadian society makes joint organising impossible for the foreseeable future. This reflects the indigenous experience of working class movements and the Left during the 1960s and 1970s.

Lee Maracle describes her own negative experience with socialism during that period in her testimonial *Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel* (1975). She had arrived in Vancouver, where indigenous activists were organising campaigns against poverty and police brutality, inspired by the Black Power movement in the United States. But she recalls political discussions among her comrades of the time as being highly abstract and formulaic, quite detached from the everyday struggles of the majority of indigenous people. She clearly came to resent the arrogance of those who were drawing on Maoist or Communist principles to bring revolution to the people.

WHO'S LEFT?

Unfortunately, the theories that informed the mistakes of socialist organisations in the past did not go the way of the dodo bird with the collapse of the Soviet Union. While it is no longer legitimate to openly celebrate Stalinism, the crude variants of orthodox Marxism that were promoted by Stalinist regimes and organisations remain perniciously present on the socialist Left. And social democratic strategies for using electoral politics

as a tool for social change remain remarkably resilient, despite numerous betrayals when social democratic governments have come to power – both internationally and within Canada.

Currently, it is an NDP government that is promoting the massive expansion of hydroelectric development on Cree territory in Manitoba, despite the disastrous social impacts of hydro dams historically in that province. And the newly elected NDP Member of Parliament for the Northwest Territories, Dennis Bevington, has gone on record as supporting the Mackenzie Gas Project, despite huge cumulative consequences for the indigenous inhabitants that have not been addressed by governments or industry.

Notwithstanding the long history of colonization and systematic oppression of indigenous peoples by every ruling party of the Canadian state, a small number of “socialists” persist in advocating the dogma that indigenous peoples can only be liberated through the intervention of that same state. This perspective was distilled during the first round of conflict over the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline in the 1970s. Left-nationalist academic Mel Watkins was the leading voice of a group of consultants for the Dene Nation that argued for a land claim agreement and government intervention to subsidize traditional harvesting. Land rights, funding and political recognition were seen as solutions for the marginalization of Dene people in the North.

We are now seeing the consequences in the North of reductive notions of what is required for indigenous self-determination. The establishment of “certainty” through land claims has facilitated an unprecedented rush for industrial development in the north. Government funding programs have supported the

crystallization of class structures in indigenous communities, effectively buying the unquestioning acquiescence of indigenous leaders in federal and territorial development policies.

More recently, Frances Widdowson and Albert Howard have used their brief experience working as bureaucrats for the government of the Northwest Territories to take aim at what they refer to as the aboriginal “problem.” Those of us who have been writing on indigenous oppression and self-determination cringe to see our works cited in the series of at least eleven articles and conference papers that Widdowson and Howard have produced since 1996, since invariably our ideas have been distorted, taken out of context, and at times used to support conclusions that are diametrically opposed to our own perspectives.

It is quite horrifying for self-respecting socialists to find themselves quoted in the company of right wing ideologues such as Mel Smith and Tom Flanagan, the latter being the policy advisor for the former Reform Party and the current Conservative government. And Karl Marx would once again be turning in his grave with Widdowson and Howard twisting his critique of political economy to suit their purposes.

Despite the numerous glaring problems in the so-called “scholarship” of this pair, it is instructive for socialists to take note of their work as a negative example of the logical consequences of socialism from above. Intent upon defending the orthodoxies of secular rationalism and science-based policy as the basis for state reform, Widdowson and Howard have launched a vicious attack on “tribalism” and “religion-based” policy that they claim dominates territorial and aboriginal governments alike.

Their first target was the use of tradi-

tional indigenous knowledge in scientific inquiry and government policy. This engendered a national debate that reached the pages of the *Globe and Mail* in 1997. Widdowson and Howard subsequently took aim at “tribalism” in the Nunavut and Territorial governments (1999); social “dysfunction” and “dependency” in indigenous communities (2003); indigenous nationalism as an “opportunistic” obstruction of legitimate Quebec claims to nationhood (2004); the inclusion of aboriginal perspectives in Canadian historiography (2005); and just this summer, a full circle return to the traditional knowledge debate.

The platforms for their perspective have been principally the pages of *Policy Options*, the supposedly “non-partisan” publication of the Institute for Research on Public Policy, and the conferences of the Canadian Political Science Association. The increasing proliferation of footnotes in their writing has had no noticeable affect on the logic of their argumentation over the past decade, which is indicative of the self-serving nature of their “research.”

In short, Widdowson and Howard have the temerity to argue that indigenous societies are a throwback to an anachronistic Neolithic stage of social history. In the face of rational modernisation, indigenous people are inherently inferior and constituted by lack: they are illiterate, dysfunctional, dependent and corrupt. The population explosion in their communities is causing serious problems.

Notwithstanding their expanding population, according to Widdowson and Howard they do not qualify for nationhood, dispersed as they are in small communities across the continent. Thus self-determination is not an option. The solution for all their “problems” is for indigenous people to submit to the evolutionary nature of history; to recognize the inherent superiority of scientific methods; to relocate from their traditional territories to urban centres; and to become “socialized” (ie. assimilated) into Canadian capitalism. Widdowson and Howard don’t hold out much hope for this solution to be workable in the near term, given “tribal” superstitions and resistance to progressive innovations. Clearly the only logical solution for the present is to cut funding for indigenous

organisations and continue what they describe in positive terms as the “warehousing” of indigenous peoples on the margins of Canadian society.

SOCIALISM FROM ABOVE

Though this perspective seems too similar to racist and genocidal colonial policies to be even remotely identified with socialist politics, in fact the methods harnessed by Widdowson and Howard are quite consistent with the orthodoxies of socialism from above – the same brand of socialism that was the basis for Stalin’s pact with Hitler in 1939. The theory is that history goes through a fixed series of Darwinian evolutionary stages; that capitalism is a progressive force leading inevitably to socialist revolution; and that scientific state planning is the principle tool for achieving human liberation. The method is to develop an abstract theoretical formula to be imposed on all social realities regardless of people’s specific historical experiences or subjective understandings of their conditions.

The flaws in this brand of socialism are fatal. In their unwavering defence of scientific rationalism, Widdowson and Howard fail to account for the systematic complicities between global capitalism and the state, and between capitalist interests and scientific knowledge. They seem to be completely unaware of the countless social and environmental disasters that have been engendered with the aid of “scientific” planning.

In negating traditional indigenous ways of life and nationhood, Widdowson and Howard fail to recognize the ways in which radical indigenous resurgence can pose significant obstacles to capitalist expansion in renewing traditional modes of taking care of the land. In quoting translated fragments of indigenous elders drawn from the transcripts of bureaucratic meetings as proof of the “vagueness” and “contradictory” nature of their knowledge, they fail to comprehend the specific context of indigenous land-based knowledge.

In deriding indigenous spirituality as a “religion,” they ignore the qualitative

gulf between institutionalized religion and beliefs that allow for precisely the unalienated way of being in the world that Marx dreamed of when he looked to “primitive communism” as a prefiguration of a post-revolutionary socialist society. In insisting that indigenous peoples must assimilate into the capitalist labour market, they fail to account for the competitive structures, including systematic discrimination on the basis of race, gender and sexuality, that have for so long divided and conquered the labour movement.

Karl Marx was his own best critic. In the final decade of his life he studied pre-capitalist peasant communes in Russia to understand what role they could play in a future revolution that might take place before capitalism had fully developed in that country – a possibility denied by many of his followers. Today, socialists should take this as inspiration to confront forms of politics that have pushed indigenous peoples to the side as agents of their own liberation.

The consequence of this critical perspective is not a rejection of socialism. On the contrary, it can lead to a renewal of socialist ideas and practice. Socialism from below politics can provide tools for learning from the specific experiences of indigenous movements, and for demonstrating the intersecting interests of indigenous peoples and non-indigenous workers.

In learning about indigenous movements and recognizing their autonomy, socialists can help build the strong and lasting bonds of solidarity necessary to fight the capitalist system and win ★

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Indigenous feminism without apology

BY ANDREA SMITH

We often hear the mantra in indigenous communities that Native women aren't feminists. Supposedly, feminism is not needed because Native women were treated with respect prior to colonization. Thus, any Native woman who calls herself a feminist is often condemned as being "white."

However, when I started interviewing Native women organizers as part of a research project, I was surprised by how many community-based activists were describing themselves as "feminists without apology." They were arguing that feminism is actually an indigenous concept that has been co-opted by white women.

The fact that Native societies were egalitarian 500 years ago is not stopping women from being hit or abused now. For instance, in my years of anti-violence organizing, I would hear, "We can't worry about domestic violence; we must worry about survival issues first." But since Native women are the women most likely to be killed by domestic violence, they are clearly not surviving. So when we talk about survival of our nations, who are we including?

These Native feminists are challenging not only patriarchy within Native communities, but also white supremacy and colonialism within mainstream white feminism. That is, they're challenging why it is that white women get to define what feminism is.



DECENTERING WHITE FEMINISM

The feminist movement is generally periodized into the so-called first, second and third waves of feminism. In the United States, the first wave is characterized by the suffragette movement; the second wave is characterized by the formation of the National Organization for Women, abortion rights politics, and the fight for the Equal Rights Amendments. Suddenly, during the third wave of feminism, women of colour make an appearance to transform feminism into a multicultural movement.

This periodization situates white middle-class women as the central historical agents to which women of colour attach themselves. However, if we were to recognize the agency of indigenous women in an account of feminist history, we might begin with 1492 when Native women collectively resisted colonization. This would allow us to see that there are multiple feminist histories emerging from multiple communities of colour which intersect at points and diverge in

others. This would not negate the contributions made by white feminists, but would de-center them from our historicizing and analysis.

Indigenous feminism thus centers anti-colonial practice within its organizing. This is critical today when you have mainstream feminist groups supporting, for example, the US bombing of Afghanistan with the claim that this bombing will free women from the Taliban (apparently bombing women somehow liberates them).

CHALLENGING THE STATE

Indigenous feminists are also challenging how we conceptualize indigenous sovereignty — it is not an add-on to the heteronormative and patriarchal nation-state. Rather it challenges the nation-state system itself.

Charles Colson, prominent Christian Right activist and founder of Prison Fellowship, explains quite clearly the relationship between heteronormativity and the nation-state. In his view, same-sex marriage leads directly to terrorism; the attack on the "natural moral order" of the heterosexual family "is like handing moral weapons of mass destruction to those who use America's decadence to

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recruit more snipers and hijackers and suicide bombers.”

Similarly, the Christian Right World magazine opined that feminism contributed to the Abu Ghraib scandal by promoting women in the military. When women do not know their assigned role in the gender hierarchy, they become disoriented and abuse prisoners.

Implicit in this is analysis the understanding that heteropatriarchy is essential for the building of US empire. Patriarchy is the logic that naturalizes social hierarchy. Just as men are supposed to naturally dominate women on the basis of biology, so too should the social elites of a society naturally rule everyone else through a nation-state form of governance that is constructed through domination, violence, and control.

As Ann Burlein argues in *Lift High the Cross*, it may be a mistake to argue that the goal of Christian Right politics is to create a theocracy in the US. Rather, Christian Right politics work through the private family (which is coded as white, patriarchal, and middle-class) to create a “Christian America.” She notes that the investment in the private family makes it difficult for people to invest in more public forms of social connection.

For example, more investment in the suburban private family means less funding for urban areas and Native reservations. The resulting social decay is then construed to be caused by deviance from the Christian family ideal rather than political and economic forces. As former head of the Christian Coalition Ralph Reed states: “The only true solution to crime is to restore the family,” and “Family break-up causes poverty.”

Unfortunately, as Navajo feminist scholar Jennifer Denetdale points out, the Native response to a heteronormative white, Christian America has often been an equally heteronormative Native nationalism. In her critique of the Navajo tribal council’s passage of a ban on same-sex marriage, Denetdale argues that Native nations are furthering a Christian Right agenda in the name of “Indian tradition.”

This trend is equally apparent within racial justice struggles in other communities of colour. As Cathy Cohen contends, heteronormative sovereignty or racial justice struggles will effectively maintain

rather than challenge colonialism and white supremacy because they are premised on a politics of secondary marginalization. The most elite class will further their aspirations on the backs of those most marginalized within the community.

Through this process of secondary marginalization, the national or racial justice struggle either implicitly or explicitly takes on a nation-state model as the end point of its struggle – a model in which the elites govern the rest through violence and domination, and exclude those who are not members of “the nation.”

NATIONAL LIBERATION

Grassroots Native women, along with Native scholars such as Taiaiake Alfred and Craig Womack, are developing other models of nationhood. These articulations counter the frequent accusations that nation-building projects necessarily lead to a narrow identity politics based on ethnic cleansing and intolerance. This requires that a clear distinction be drawn between the project of national liberation, and that of nation-state building.

Progressive activists and scholars, while prepared to make critiques of the US and Canadian governments, are often not prepared to question their legitimacy. A case in point is the strategy of many racial justice organizations in the US or Canada, who have rallied against the increase in hate crimes since 9/11 under the banner, “We’re American [or Canadian] too.”

This allegiance to “America” or “Canada” legitimizes the genocide and colonization of Native peoples upon which these nation-states are founded. By making anti-colonial struggle central to feminist politics, Native women place in question the appropriate form of governance for the world in general.

In questioning the nation-state, we can begin to imagine a world that we would actually want to live in. Such a political project is particularly important for colonized peoples seeking national liberation outside the nation-state.

Whereas nation-states are governed through domination and coercion, indigenous sovereignty and nationhood is predicated on interrelatedness and

responsibility.

As Sharon Venne explains, “Our spirituality and our responsibilities define our duties. We understand the concept of sovereignty as woven through a fabric that encompasses our spirituality and responsibility. This is a cyclical view of sovereignty, incorporating it into our traditional philosophy and view of our responsibilities. It differs greatly from the concept of Western sovereignty which is based upon absolute power. For us absolute power is in the Creator and the natural order of all living things; not only in human beings... Our sovereignty is related to our connections to the earth and is inherent.”

REVOLUTION

A Native feminist politics seeks to do more than simply elevate Native women’s status — it seeks to transform the world through indigenous forms of governance that can be beneficial to everyone.

At the 2005 World Liberation Theology Forum held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, indigenous peoples from Bolivia stated that they know another world is possible because they see that world whenever they do their ceremonies. Native ceremonies can be a place where the present, past and future become co-present. This is what Native Hawaiian scholar Manu Meyer calls a racial remembering of the future.

Prior to colonization, Native communities were not structured on the basis of hierarchy, oppression or patriarchy. We will not recreate these communities as they existed prior to colonization. Our understanding that a society without structures of oppression was possible in the past tells us that our current political and economic system is anything but natural and inevitable. If we lived differently before, we can live differently in the future.

Native feminism is not simply an insular or exclusivist “identity politics” as it is often accused of being. Rather, it is framework that understands indigenous women’s struggle as part of a global movement for liberation. As one activist stated: “You can’t win a revolution on your own. And we are about nothing short of a revolution. Anything else is simply not worth our time.” ★

Canadian capitalism and the dispossession of indigenous peoples

BY TODD GORDON

Neoliberal globalization has brought with it the intensification of what Marxist geographer David Harvey refers to as accumulation by dispossession. Harvey is referring to the often violent and predatory process by which multinational corporations, backed by capitalist states, expand their role and influence by dispossessing people of their land and livelihoods.

Dispossessed indigenous peoples, small farmers and peasants are forced to turn to the labour market in order to survive, creating a cheap pool of labour for corporate enterprises to exploit. At the same time, corporations can gain unhindered access to the resources on the now unoccupied land – agricultural land, minerals, lumber, real estate, oil, even commodified nature (parks, tourism). This is a central process by which capitalist imperialism operates.

The Canadian state's predatory historical relationship with indigenous peoples provides a sharp example of the dynamics of accumulation by dispossession. This involved a variety of brutal processes, including the military defeat of the Métis-led national liberation struggle in the then-Northwest Territories, the apartheid Indian Act and its Pass Laws, the attempted cultural genocide of the residential schools and the ongoing abrogation of First Nation treaty rights.

Land was taken for the development of capitalist industries, while indigenous people were "encouraged" by the Indian Act and residential schools to stop traditional subsistence and cultural practices

To the chagrin of the state and business, many indigenous people and communities continue to resist full absorption into capitalist relations.

in order to engage in the more "civilized" labour market.

NEOLIBERALISM

This agenda has intensified in the neoliberal period. Neoliberalism is the ruling class's response to the economic profitability crisis of the 1970s; it involves restructuring labour relations in favour of business, gutting the welfare state and privatizing public services.

The success of neoliberalism is in large measure contingent on the increased commodification of indigenous land and labour, turning it into something to be bought and sold on the market.

Nevertheless, large segments of the indigenous population have successfully resisted full integration into market relations in their territories. The frontier of capitalist expansion, in the eyes of the state and business leaders, still has significantly further to go in Canada.

In a context in which, on the one hand, corporations are aggressively pursuing a cheaper and more flexible labour force as part of its agenda of neoliberal restructuring, and, on the other, the non-Indigenous Canadian-born population's fertility rates remain low, indigenous labour has become highly valued. This is clearly expressed in policy documents produced by the Ministries of Indian and Northern Affairs, Industry and Natural

Resources.

Sociologists Vic Satzewich and Ron Laliberte note that reservations were originally organized as a pool of cheap labour to be drawn upon when needed, and are still viewed by government as such. As one recent Indian Affairs and Northern Development study stresses, "The Aboriginal workforce will grow at twice the rate of the total Canadian labour force in the next ten years."

But to the chagrin of the state and business, many indigenous people and communities continue to resist full absorption into capitalist relations. Government documents salaciously note the potential indigenous labour supply and the wealth of resources on indigenous land, but they also often reflect on the difficulties of getting indigenous people to sell their labour for a wage or willingly permit the penetration of their communities by resource companies.

MINING AND "DEVELOPMENT"

The mining industry provides a stark example of the intensifying pressures on indigenous lands and communities. Over the last decade, mining companies have been expanding their activities into regions of the country where capitalist development has hitherto been limited. Exploration has been increasing in northern and interior British Columbia, the northern prairies, Ontario and Quebec, the Yukon, Nunavut, and especially the Northwest Territories since diamond deposits were discovered there

Todd Gordon is an editor of New Socialist magazine and the author of Cops, Crime and Capitalism: The Law-and-Order Agenda in Canada. A longer version of this article appeared in Socialist Studies.

in the early 1990s.

The Mining Association of Canada notes that, “[m]ost mining activity occurs in northern and remote areas of the country, the principal areas of Aboriginal populations.” Natural Resources Canada reports, meanwhile, that approximately 1200 indigenous communities are located within 200 kilometers of an active mine, and this will only increase as exploration intensifies.

The location of the majority of mining operations is significant, because it brings the industry squarely into conflict with indigenous land rights. First Nations may claim title to much of the land mining companies seek to exploit, or oppose mining developments that will cause ecological damage to traditional territories and subsistence patterns.

But the location of mines is also very significant in a context in which, as industry and government studies indicate, mining is facing a labour shortage. Indigenous labour, in turn, is explicitly identified as central to the expansion of the industry. “Workforce diversity,” as one industry-wide study expresses it, with a healthy dose of liberal veneer, is a necessity for the future success of mining.

This is driving the growing conflicts between mining companies and First Nations like the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (Northern Ontario), Kwadacha (B.C.), Tlatzen (B.C) and Kanien'kehaka (Quebec) among many others. Indeed these are the tip of the iceberg, and battles like these will continue as mining companies intensify the expansion of their ecologically violent practices into indigenous territories, threatening ecosystems and the communities living in them.

STRATEGIES OF DISPOSSESSION

In response to indigenous peoples' general unwillingness to prostrate themselves to capitalism, the Canadian state is engaged in a sustained effort to dispossess them of their land. This ranges from legal manipulations to outright violence, as the pressures of capitalist expansion over the last two decades have intensified, indeed militarized, the colonial conflict between Canada and indigenous nations.

The formal land claims process, for example, facilitates the expansion of capitalist development onto indigenous

territories. It's extremely slow and bureaucratic, taking up to fifteen years after a claim is initially made before the process is commenced.

That's at least fifteen years more time for indigenous lands to be whittled away and/or poisoned. Or fifteen years for poverty and frustration in communities to grow, leading to out-migration and making the communities more vulnerable to one-sided deals with corporations.

Furthermore, the federal government has made the extinguishment of Aboriginal title a prerequisite of any land claims settlement they'll agree to. This involves relinquishing collective ownership over land and subsurface resources of large parts of traditional territories – as is the case with the James Bay and Nisga'a comprehensive agreements.

Extinguishment – a legal form of dispossession supported by Supreme Court decision and pursued zealously by the government – is a major barrier to the fair settlement of land disputes and reinforces the colonial status quo between the Canadian state and indigenous nations.

Even where treaties exist, they are repeatedly ignored and their terms are systematically broken by governments in the interest of economic development or national security. This is the reality underlying the events at Oka (where the local municipal government tried to appropriate land for a golf course), Ipperwash (where the military stole land and physically removed members of the Stony Point community in order to build an army base during the second World War), and today in Caledonia (where housing developers are trying to build on Six Nations' treaty land).

These are but three of the countless examples of state-sanctioned theft of treaty lands that have gained national attention because of indigenous resistance in the face of serious political and military pressure. In fact, in the Delgamuukw decision (derided by the Right and the business community as unambiguously pro-Indigenous) the Supreme Court actu-



DRAWING BY TANIA WILLARD, SEWPEMIC NATION

ally defends the government's right to appropriate indigenous land for economic reasons.

Of course, never too far removed from these strategies of dispossession is military force, which we have seen mobilized in recent years at Oka, Gustafsen Lake, Burnt Church and Ipperwash. It also remains a threat at the Six Nations stand-off in Caledonia. While the state may wish to pursue its colonial strategy in the tidier bourgeois legal realm, it will make recourse to military violence to enforce its agenda where necessary.

The lesson for the Sureté du Quebec after Oka and the RCMP after Gustafsen Lake was to invest more resources in military weaponry in preparation for future confrontations.

Canadian colonialism – like colonialism around the world – has always had its bloody side. If indigenous nations won't be compliant, capitalist expansion will be defended by violence.

The agenda of dispossession is not simply the misguided policy of short-sighted or self-interested business or political leaders. It is central to state and corporate relations with indigenous communities, driven by the demands of the capitalist economy and shaped by a deep-seated racist view of First Nations as uncivilized and unwilling or unable to economically develop their territories. This consideration must not be forgotten in the struggle against Canadian colonialism. ★

WASÁSE MOVEMENT

Statement of principles

ABOUT THE MOVEMENT

Wasáse is an intellectual and political movement whose ideology is rooted in sacred wisdom. It is motivated and guided by indigenous spiritual and ethical teachings, and dedicated to the transformation of indigenous people in the midst of the severe decline of our nations and the crises threatening our existence. It exists to enable indigenous people to live authentic, free and healthy lives in our homelands.

AIM

Wasáse promotes the learning and respecting of every aspect of our indigenous heritage, working together to govern ourselves using indigenous knowledge, and unifying to fight for our freedom and the return of our lands. It seeks to liberate indigenous people from euroamerican thoughts, laws and systems.

APPROACH

Wasáse is a resurgence of diverse actions. It works by awakening and reculturing individuals so that indigenous thoughts are restored to their proper place in the people's minds and their attachment to false identities is broken. Members of the movement are committed to the restoration of indigenous

traditions, ceremonies and knowledges; reconnecting to and loving the land; and, revitalizing indigenous languages.

Wasáse challenges indigenous people to reject the authority and legitimacy of the colonial system and to rebel against its institutions. Wasáse is not a political party or governmental organization, and its members do not seek or hold political office. The movement does not use violence to advance its aims. Its political struggle is conducted through intellectual



confrontation and mass communication; revealing the corruptions, frauds and abuses of colonizers and collaborators; and, supporting direct action in defense of indigenous communities, their rights, and the land.

AFFILIATION

Wasáse is a movement of Real People who have adopted its principles and are committed to applying indigenous teachings and values as our way of life. The

movement includes women and men regardless of gender, age, color, or nationality.

SUPPORT

Wasáse does not accept funding from colonial governments or corporations. The movement is funded by contributions from its members, and it seeks material support and alliances with individuals and organizations who share its principles and commitments.

CONTACT

Wasáse does not have an office, central location or staff. It is a network of mutual support and coordinated action that extends in all four directions across Turtle Island. We welcome and encourage contact for the purposes of information, affiliation or support.

The Wasáse Movement
P.O. Box 1431, Kahnawake
Mohawk Territory J0L 1B0
www.wasase.org
contact@wasase.org

Voices from the Indigenous Leadership Forum

THE 2006 INDIGENOUS leadership forum brought together young indigenous and settler community leaders and activists from across occupied Canada and beyond at the University of Victoria from June 5 to 16. The aim was to begin developing an authentic vision and workable alternatives for political organizing. Current state-sponsored institutions and approaches were rejected in favour of embracing true indigenous principles. The ILF is a small group of people who are committed to their homelands and local struggles, while at the same time working regionally and nationally in a coordinated effort to end colonialism in all its forms. On these pages, we include images from the 2006 event, and highlights from the discussions that took place.



Participants at the Indigenous Leadership Forum.

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT?

The Assembly of First Nations is just a lobby group for the band council chiefs, who are basically federal employees. These days, it's a rubber stamp for the feds. In fact, people don't realize it, but there is no democratic and legitimate Native government in all of this land.

FEASTING TRADITIONS

We wanted to develop ways of educating about healthy indigenous practices without shaming people. We decided to engage with the "West Coast Night" at the Vancouver Friendship Centre. We worked with people to learn about the traditions of feasting, and gathered all the traditional foods we could. We were able to come up with enough traditional food to feed 500 people.

CONTINUITY, UNITY

There is continuity to this movement. We are part of a history of resistance and defence of our people. The struggle is even more difficult and thus more honourable in urban spaces where there's no clearly defined boundary. Rural or urban, we have the potential to build a unified movement by coordinating spiritually and strategically.

CONFRONTING THE SYSTEM

It seems like a good idea to try to go "off the grid" of the capitalist economy. But the Haida Gwaii live on bountiful islands that supported them for many generations, but now the small population of only 3000 can't harvest enough food for subsistence because of sport fishing. At Akwesasne, people can't eat their traditional foods because of PCB contamination.



Taiaiake Alfred

People are forced to buy their food. So we can't just withdraw from the system, we need to build a movement that confronts it.

RESURGENCE

We have the elders, the olders and the youth in our communities. It is the olders that are the problem. The elders and the youth are the real force for building the indigenous resurgence.

RESPONSIBILITY

In our language, the word wit-waak, warrior, means 'no fear.' This means that we are responsible for creating a safe space for our people.

DIFFERENCE

We're all at different places in our development, and we need to accept that. Each community has different protocols and traditions. It's like bringing up babies!

RESPECT

We need to learn to respect each other, and build on those things that we have in common.

NO ALTERNATIVE

We're organising because we believe there's absolutely no alternative. We have to raise up our people and build unity.

RED POWER

I remember after the Trudeau government introduced the White Paper on Indian Policy, about sixteen angry university students gathered in a room. That gathering gave rise to the Red Paper, and the Red Power movement in Canada. This Indigenous Leadership Forum reminds me of that moment.

CREATING SPACE

Most people think of warriors as armed men wearing camouflage. But the indigenous warrior is not the same as a soldier. Soldiers serve the state; warriors serve their people. We have a social responsibility. Like the Zapatistas in Mexico, our job is to create the geographical and political space for our people to practice their way of life.

CONFLICT

The government is quite happy to support indigenous cultural activities such as the powwow industry. But when we exercise our traditional harvesting rights, or defend our traditional territory from commercial development, we end up in conflict situations.

ORGANISING LOCALLY

We can't go running off to other communities until we've addressed issues in our own community. This can be difficult. I've been confronted with physical violence just for speaking out in disagreement with the treaty process. Sexual assault is a reality for women. We need to be prepared for this.

HEALING

Our warriors protect the land and the people, especially the dancers. The warriors have been stifled, and they have to regain strength. We have to heal each other, and we have to protect our lands because they're part of that healing process.

CONFRONTING MACHISMO

There's been a lot of machismo and drinking in the warrior movement. We need to confront and deal with these kinds of issues in order to be able to work together.★



Participants at Indigenous Leadership Forum



Participants in Indigenous Leadership Forum

A young warrior's perspective on the conflict at Six Nations

In this interview, **TAIAIAKE ALFRED** speaks with a young man who participated in the Six Nations protest and occupation of the development on their lands at Douglas Creek. He was also at the centre of the physical confrontation between Six Nations people and the Ontario Provincial Police on April 20th, 2006. The young warrior reflects on his experiences confronting police violence, the meaning of indigenous leadership today, and on the long-term implication of the conflict for the Haudenosaunee peoples.

TA: What was your involvement in the April 20th confrontation with the police at Six Nations?

BY THE TIME I SHOWED UP, AROUND 7 IN the morning, the police had pushed everybody off the land completely and were formed in a line on the road. Some of us started walking up and down that line, just staring them down, getting mad. I just got sick of it, and I went and grabbed this log, and when I picked it up, these two cops jumped on me right away. So I started slamming and wrestling around with them.

Then a cop – some big black guy – came and took me right down, just like that! (laughs) He grabbed my head and just threw me right down. Nobody really helped me; I got mad 'cause nobody helped me at all. When somebody did try to jump in after a while, he got taken down too, and then that's when everybody started jumping in. That's when all the men finally stepped up.

They got me handcuffed and carried me away. The whole time I was just yelling and getting everybody all riled up. They took me over the hill, behind where everybody was and they started slamming me around and stomping me on my back, kicking me. There was about eight of

them. And then they brought in another old guy too, they had him all handcuffed up. And then they took the handcuffs off and put slip ties on, they tightened them real tight. I couldn't even feel my hands.

So I was sitting there, and I kept trying to hint to this guy, "Hey, that whole side's open..." I was gonna book it, book through the field with my hands tied. I was just about to get up, I just started to get up on one knee, I was about to take off, when the women came over. There were about three or four women, and they said to the cops, "Let him go, right now!" And when the cops said they couldn't do that, the women said, "Fucking let them go, right now!" and those cops just got scared, and they said "alright, alright..." They cut those ties off

me. I was walking around, looking at them, going "I'm gonna' get you back." I pointed right at this one guy who happened to be one of the guys I hit with the log later on!

When they let me go, the men had already pushed the cops back and we were following them along the road walking towards the highway. But then we looked across a field and we could see a whole bunch of cops in the distance, probably about a hundred of them. There weren't too many of our people over, so I started leading everybody towards that area. I got about forty men to follow me and we started running across the field over to where the cops were. We got over there and we pushed all those cops back again towards Highway 6.

CONFRONTING POLICE VIOLENCE

TA: When you say you "pushed them back" do you mean you had to physically fight them?

YEAH, WE HAD TO PUSH THEM AND SHOVE them. It was then that we saw Hazel Hill over in the distance get slammed by the cops, so we all went running to help her. We didn't notice right away, but there were about fifty or sixty more cops over there. There was like six cops on her, but

I've had it in my mind since I was six years old ... that we were going to show the white people who we are [and] what we can be, no matter how many times they push us or try to put us down.

we got her away. They backed off after that. And then I kept walking at one of the cops, the loud one, and he kept telling me to “step back.” I didn’t hear nothing, I was right in the zone, zeroed in on that cop. I didn’t really notice the gun pointed at me.

He kept yelling at me. Finally, he hit me. I looked at him, and then I looked back ‘cause I could hear something click and then all of a sudden I saw him shoot it. It was like in slow-motion; I could actually see it, it looked like a red ball coming at me right up that line. There’s a little line up right into the taser. I could see that it looked red, full of energy or something. And then I had a reaction; I just saw my arm go up and knock it right off of me... it was cool. It just pissed me right off though! Talk about “in the zone”! I’d never experienced that before.

I flipped right out and started screaming at those cops. “Is that all you fucking got?” stuff like that, being real loud. I hit a couple of them. Somebody had to pull me back because they probably would have shot me again! (laughs) I scared them after that, though. When they saw I didn’t go down after being hit, it really scared them. About three or four of them ran and jumped in their trucks – they really ran, too! They were scared. So that was pretty much it; we had pushed them back into Caledonia.

TA: How did you feel after all that was over and the barricade went back to normal?

EVERYBODY WAS JUST IN SHOCK. I remember going home later that day and just sitting there with everything starting to set in, everything slowly started to come back to me. I was thinking, “Holy shit, what the hell just happened?” Over that whole time that I just talked about, I didn’t even remember when it actually happened. It took a couple of days for it to actually set in.

It was a weird feeling. I’ve never felt that way before. It felt good, though. Me, I’ve had it in my mind since I was six years old, and I knew one day, and always waited for the time, that we were going to show the white people who we are, who we really are, what we can be, no matter how many times they push us or try to put us down. It really showed that day,

I saw clan mothers [at the barricade] every night. I never saw one Chief there, not once in the entire blockade, I never saw a Chief.

and it was awesome. After we pushed them all out I was just dazed, and I looked out in the field, there was just people, swarms, everywhere. It just straightened my back right up. I held my head up.

CONFUSION

TA: That’s awesome. But thinking back, was there anybody who would talk differently from you about it? Is there anybody in the community who opposed what you were doing?

I REMEMBER, IN THE FIRST WEEK OF THE protest, the Confederacy chiefs actually came there and said, “Take the blockades down. We don’t want them there at all.” The chiefs came there and the people said, “No, we’re not taking them down.” Even [Chief] Dave General and the band council chiefs came there too. He actually got smacked right in the face by one of the guys! (laughs) and he had to leave because everybody just got mad after a while. He came there calm, and he came there in a respectful manner, but the things he was saying were... ah, his plan was that he wanted to hand out pamphlets. I mean, by the time he did that, the land would’ve been developed.

TA: I really don’t think people give a damn about pamphlets anyway.

WE SAID, “NO, WE NEED ACTION NOW.” And he said “No, we can’t do that. They’re going to send in the army.” All our guys at the blockades said “bring it on.” They’re ready to stand for this, they’re not going to take it anymore. It really hurt me, though, to see our own band chiefs in there, actually coming there and saying that.

TA: Why do you think the chiefs would take that position?

YOU HEAR A LOT OF PEOPLE TALKING about deals they may have made over other conflicts in the past as a reason for the mistrust. Some people had heard that the MPs in the Hamilton area had drafted up an order in support of what was going on, but that Dave General told them, “Don’t listen to the Confederacy council.” They were going to get a bunch of people together to go right down to bust up Dave General and take over the band council – they were so pumped up, it was funny!

I was confused myself when it came to the Confederacy chiefs though. The Confederacy had a meeting, and they said that the secretary and the lawyer that the Confederacy always calls upon were the two telling the chiefs to put a stop to everything. The secretary, Tom, came down there and was telling everybody that the chiefs aren’t supporting what’s going on here now because, “we thought it would be peaceful but it’s kind of gone beyond what we agreed to support in the beginning, so we’re not supporting it.”

It was confusing to me. The whole point of doing all of this is to reclaim what is rightfully ours. So why would anybody not support it, especially our traditional council? People involved were all pretty much thinking, “Screw the Confederacy council if they don’t want to support us.” The clan mothers there were still supporting us though. For a couple of days, I was really confused. We don’t want to follow the elected system, but then our Confederacy system is telling us to walk away.

TA: What about the clan mothers? It seems like they are more involved and supportive of the land reclamation blockade.

I SAW CLAN MOTHERS THERE EVERY night. I never saw one Chief there, not once in the entire blockade, I never saw a Chief. But there were clan mothers there sitting with the people, talking with us and supporting us any way they could. Giving us coffee, staying up with us all night, not until three or four in the morning would they go home. It’s the old women, seventy-year-olds, doing that for us. Not one chief there. And these chiefs are young.



Indigenous women leading the struggle. Art by Tania Willard, Secwepemc Nation

LEADERSHIP

TA: So what do you think has been the impact of all this?

I SAW SOMETHING FOR THE FIRST TIME that I thought I would never see. I saw our people rise. But then we saw our traditional government fall. That's how I see it. The power of the people is strong. But we just need strong leaders; that's the thing.

TA: What are your thoughts on leadership in our communities now?

THAT BAND COUNCIL BROUGHT WAY more support than our traditional system! Yeah, there was that one guy, the main chief Dave General, and a group in there that totally denounced us, but there were some councilors, they were with us every day. I don't know how many times the councilors were there, eating with us and sharing food on an individual basis. They just came as community support-

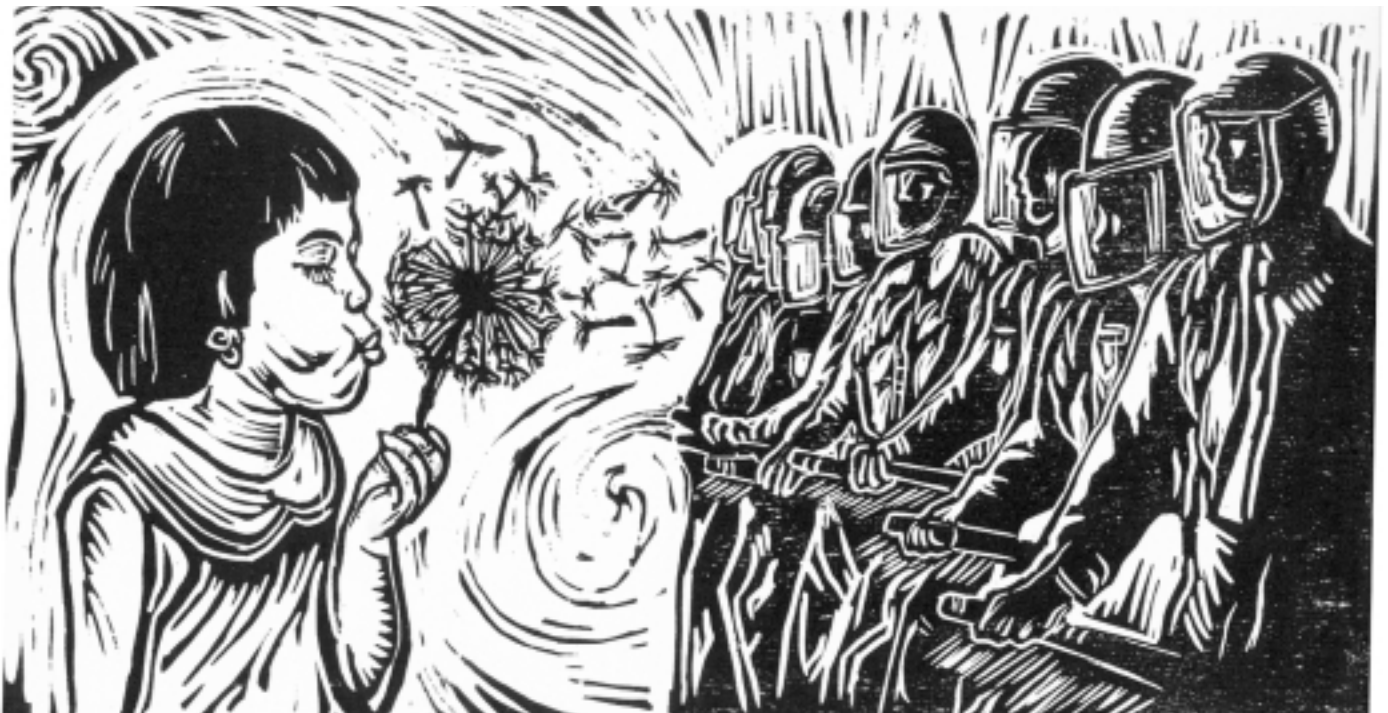
ers. They were there, they supported us strongly. My view on the band council has shifted lately... I'd get called down at home by some of the old people if I said that. I'd probably get slapped in the head (laughs).

We just need a strong leader, and that's all it's going to take. That's the role of a leader: to start a vision in the people and give them hope. That's all it is, just show them a new way of hope, a new way of thinking. ★

Anarchist-Indigenous solidarity at the Six Nations' barricade

BY RICHARD DAY
AND SEAN HABERLE

ART BY TANIA WILLARD, SECWEPÉMIC NATION.



Indigenous peoples and settler societies have a long and complex history of interaction in the Americas. While unequal colonial relationships have always been — and continue to be — the norm, there have also been situations in which settlers and indigenous people have worked together to resist state domination, corporate exploitation, racism, patriarchy and wanton destruction of the land. Anarchists in particular, since at least the time of Kropotkin, have noted commonalities between their values and practices and those of some indigenous communities and nations. They have found common ground in the rejection of arbitrary authority, a preference for

direct action and local, consensus-based decision-making processes, and the use of non-statist federations to link communities and nations.

In recent years these commonalities have begun to be explored more deeply, self-consciously and critically from both directions. They are apparent in the anarcho-indigenist politics of certain Haudenoshonee, Dene and Nuu-chah-nulth writers and activists, in the struggles of the Magonist Popular Coordinating Committee (COMPA) in Oaxaca, and in formations such as No One is Illegal and Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement. In this article, we

are interested in these burgeoning efforts to create solid and lasting political alliances between anarchists and indigenous peoples, and in the questions that arise when these disparate identities find themselves working together in solidarity and support. We feel that there is something new going on, something perhaps historic, but of course also very tenuous and fragile.

To keep the discussion grounded, we will base it on the ongoing efforts of anarchist activists to work in solidarity with the Six Nations people, who are fighting to defend their territory against capitalist development. One of the authors spent a few days behind the lines; the other worked on raising local awareness in Kingston; and we include a third voice, that of an anarchist activist named “Wil,” a non-indigenous supporter who was on

Richard Day is an anarchist activist and scholar based in Kingston, Ontario. He teaches at Queen's University and is associated with the Marble Rock Cooperative Centre for Rural Living and Education. Sean Haberle is an anarchist activist and graduate student at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

the reserve for about three weeks.

We have very few answers to the questions we raise, since at this point – or perhaps at any point – the process of questioning seems more important. We are also aware that this is an evolving situation, which we discuss primarily in terms of events that occurred up to around April of 2006.

WHAT IS SOLIDARITY?

The pathways that exist between anarchist and indigenous nations and communities are by no means easy to find or to follow. They are strewn with obstacles, some which are remnants of colonial relations of power, and some that are being created even as we work towards a truly postcolonial way of coexisting. For example, the wording we are using here shows signs of tension: anarchists tend not to identify with nations, while many indigenous peoples do. Also, as a predominantly western tradition (though that is changing), anarchist conceptions of relations between communities/nations and individuals are quite different from those that are prevalent among indigenous peoples.

It is easy to say that dealing with these obstacles, of which we have named only two among many, presents a complex set of problems of solidarity. But what is solidarity, exactly? We find the definition used by anti-racist feminist Chandra Mohanty to be compelling: solidarity means that I stand with you, against another. On this definition, it is very important to note, relations of solidarity can only exist between disparate identities — if I am you, I cannot be in solidarity with you. This point is important because it helps us to highlight one of the dangers of this kind of work — that of excessively identifying with the other, of thinking that one somehow is the other, which, especially in colonial contexts, can lead to the perpetuation of unequal relations of power.

On the other hand, there are also dangers associated with taking too much distance. Again, especially in a context of hundreds of years of colonialism and a racist, apartheid state, it is all too easy to let oneself off the hook by refusing to make any effort at all to know the “other,” on the pretense that this is not what he or she desires. It just seems too

difficult, too risky, to put oneself on the line as a person, that is, as one individual coming out to be met by another.

ON THE BARRICADES AT SIX NATIONS

Both of these dangers were lurking behind the Six Nations barricade. This was evident to Wil, a self-identified anarchist, when he answered a call-out for support from one of the clan mothers and went to Caledonia in early March. His reflections on his experience show that while there was an earnest attempt at support and a will to learn on both sides at Caledonia, there were also many disconnects.

As the only non-indigenous person present for much of the time he was there, Wil encountered both curiosity and mistrust about why he had come. “Trust is something that really it takes a little while to gain with anyone... It must have taken about a week before they really started opening up to me, and that was after I was arrested with them. That showed that I wasn’t going to just piss off at the first sign of danger, because that is always a question, it is fine to sit around and eat the hamburgers and shoot the shit, but what happens when you really put yourself in danger, because talk is cheap.”

Many of the other settlers who came to act as support were not able to build this kind of relationship. “Usually when the other supporters were coming it was a couple at a time and it is not the kind of culture where people greet you with open arms... for a lot of non-natives they didn’t know how to start these conversations, they ended up just going into these jobs and working and building and cooking and then they’d sleep and then they get up and then they’d start building and cooking all day because I guess they wanted to earn their keep and they felt like they weren’t doing anything.”

There was also a difference between the European and non-European supporters. “It was actually white/European descent people who were more like into the working all the time and got caught up in that and were more awkward. I think that it was because there was a lot more tension between the indigenous people and those white people as well.”

These racialized tensions led to the reproduction of certain ways of relating

that are all too common: supporters working only with other supporters, tending to “take over” decision-making processes and feeling “left out” when they are unable to do so. As Wil points out: “There was no venue for non-natives to participate or to add anything to what was going on — there was no, ‘what do our non-native supporters think about this?’ But that would be a very touchy thing, because what you have to do is build relationships with people and maybe they’ll take your suggestions to the table, or maybe they won’t.”

Building personal relationships is crucial to building trust; and trust is crucial to solidarity. Apart from attempting to make a concrete difference in a short-term situation, this is probably the most important thing one can do in an action of this sort. For, after the barricades come down, it is only the social relationships that will remain, intangible but effective, productive and lasting.

LIVING THE POSTCOLONIAL

None of us are located in exactly the same way, no matter how much we might have in common. Therefore, in order to have a productive dialogue around difficult issues, we must have the courage to speak and listen respectfully and carefully. If we orient only, or primarily, to avoiding offense, we cannot really know ourselves or each other, and we cannot change. This, we would argue, is precisely the promise of solidarity: one person or group or nation, working with other people or groups or nations, to help each other achieve common goals, and perhaps to learn something along the way.

Unfortunately, the Canadian state and the capitalist corporations it nurtures are unlikely to change their ways in the near future. Thus there will be many opportunities to further explore the possibilities we have only begun to discuss here. It is an excellent sign of things to come that so many non-indigenous people have chosen to stand with the Six Nations, in so many different ways. We know that we are very far from realizing the promise of the Two-Row Wampum agreement; yet we are compelled to strive for the nearest approximation to it that we can imagine, and that we can realize here and now. ★

Indigenous-labour solidarity and the Six Nations land dispute

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROLF GERSTENBERGER

Rolf Gerstenberger is President of the United Steelworkers Union Local 1005 in Hamilton, Ontario. Members of his union local were some of the first non-natives to answer the call for support from Six Nations after the Ontario Provincial Police invaded the territory and attacked the peaceful occupation at Douglas Creek. He was interviewed on video at the barricade in May 2006.

Our local first came out here after a week of local media propaganda about how “something has to be done” about the stand taken by the Native people here at Douglas Creek. The local media were trying to whip up support for the police or the army to move in and clean them out. So we came the first day with our flags and about twenty of our members to lend support.

For us, supporting Native peoples’ hereditary rights and their land claims is a motherhood issue. It’s been 500 years of injustice done to the Native people; it’s never been resolved. They had been promised certain things and the Crown never upheld their promise. They had almost a million acres of land, and no sooner did the Crown promise it in 1784, they started taking it away. Today they have less than five percent of the land still available to them.

Our position was that you can’t solve this question with police attacks, or the army coming in, or shooting someone, or arresting someone, or making it a law-and-order issue. It’s a political question that has to be settled politically, through negotiations. So when the OPP riot police moved in and arrested 16 of the Native people, attacked them, beat them up, tazered them, had assault rifles out, and thought they could just clean up this small group of “trouble makers,” then, of course, the Native people took measures

to prevent that from happening again. They asked for people to come out to just be witnesses in case the police attack. So our members have been coming either as a group or just on their own just to be around and support the Native people in their just demands.

NO CHOICE

I got lots of calls from union members who live in this area. Basically, my argument to them was, first of all, they all have to agree that we don’t want to settle this through law and order, by beating someone, by beating the Native people up, or by shooting them, or arresting them. There was a general view that that shouldn’t happen.

It was interesting because every one of the callers said, “What the Native people are doing is illegal, this is an illegal occupation.” The more I discussed with them, as far as the history of it, it turns out that all the residents of Caledonia know that there’s a land dispute. Twenty or 30 years ago, the reason you could buy houses cheaply in

Caledonia was be-cause you weren’t really sure if you owned the land or not! So it turns out everyone in Caledonia knows that; they may not have liked it, but they know that this is... you know, the six miles on each side of the Grand River, is Native land. They knew that. And then they would say, “Well why didn’t the Native people raise this issue before?” And then we would tell them that the Natives did, but unfortunately the courts won’t listen to them and it isn’t until they take a stand that the government is forced to deal with it. And then of course when they do take a stand, like they did at Oka, and Ipperwash, and Gustafsen Lake, they’re attacked. So it’s not an easy thing for the Native people to take this step, but at the end of the day they have no choice.

It always comes down to whether you know the history or not. Hopefully this will be settled through negotiations. The problem is there are about 600 unresolved land claims in Canada right now, and that may open a can of worms. So this is what the government has to think about when they’re settling this problem. But it’s about time that these things are settled. Five hundred years is a long time to not settle a question as basic as this. ★



ART BY TANIA WILLARD, SECWEPENC NATION.

Nuu-chah-nulth struggles against sexual violence

On May 5th a small delegation of young Nuu-chah-nulth activists visited the community of Pacheedaht, marking the start of a 10-day journey through all 15 Nuu-chah-nulth communities on Vancouver Island. The Stop the Violence March was conceived to focus attention on the issue of domestic violence and to clearly state that it would no longer be tolerated. The intent of the march was to create space for Nuu-chah-nulth women and men to speak the truth about their experiences, space to begin a process of restoring dignity and balance to their communities by taking responsibility and action. In addition to creating space and awareness, the travelling delegation felt it was important to leave something positive in each community. Shawls were presented to a select number of female community members in the spirit of the ayts-tuu-thlaa, a coming of age ceremony meant to honour and hold up young Nuu-chah-nulth women.

INTERVIEW WITH CHIINUUKS (RUTH OGILVIE) AND NA'CHA'UAHT (CLIFF ATLEO JR)

Glen Coulthard (GC): *Let's start with a little background information about the Stop the Violence March that you both helped organize. What served as your motivation?*

Chiinuuks: The march began with the women of Tla-o-qui-aht, many of whom are my aunts and cousins. About a year ago, Tla-o-qui-aht held an ayts-tuu-thlaa [a coming of age ceremony] for a young woman and two weeks later she was brutally attacked by someone from our community. The Tla-o-qui-aht women were outraged and held a march to demand that the violence be stopped within Tla-o-qui-aht. David Dennis attended the march and was asked to carry the message to all the Nuu-chah-nulth territories.

A year later, Dave, Cliff and myself were having lunch together in Victoria and I expressed pain and anger over the fact that not one woman in my family has been unaffected by the violence that occurs regularly within our homes and communities. It disturbed all of us to realize the effect that internalized violence had within indigenous communities when compared to the rest of Canada.

I was also motivated by the gestures of our people once we started organizing the march itself. My older cousin stopped by my house for a visit and expressed his good feelings about us taking on this issue. He reminded us of our haa-huupah [teachings and stories] about the traditional role of women in Nuu-chah-

nulth society. Traditionally women were to be held up and respected, since they have the ability to give life. He told us the ayts-tuu-thlaa served to publicly acknowledge our young women by lifting them up and placing a beautiful shawl on their shoulders, displaying their family history or teachings. She would also be instructed by aunts, grandmothers and other family members on what it meant to be a young woman, how we need to carry ourselves and live respectfully rooted in our Nuu-chah-nulth ways.

Na'cha'uaht: To get things started, we set a date two months out and challenged ourselves to get all the organizing done quickly. We were all feeling a profound need to do something, anything, to start somewhere. For me it was almost a physical ache, an ongoing sense of urgency and feeling of illness that only some sort of action could alleviate. I couldn't help but ask myself how, as an indigenous man, I could stand by and not do something to stop this violence against our own people.

LOCAL COMMITMENT

GC: *How do you see the work you accomplished with the march relating to the previous tactics of decolonization taken on by the West Coast Warrior Society [WCWS]? Was the march meant to address issues that weren't being addressed within the Warrior movement?*

Chiinuuks: I think that one of the fundamental differences between the march and other WCWS tactics was that we realized, through the help of many good women and elders, that we couldn't simply "drop-in" to communities, expect to adequately address a problem, and then immediately move on to the next

Na'cha'uaht is from Ahousaht of the Nuu-chah-nulth nation on his father's side, and Kitselas of the Tsimshian nation on his mother's side. He is a former West Coast Warrior, aspiring Wii-uk, and political science student at the University of Victoria. Chiinuuks is from Tla-o-qui-aht and Checlesaht of the Nuu-chah-nulth nation. She is also a former member of the West Coast Warrior Society, an aspiring Wii-uk and currently in the Indigenous Governance Program at the University of Victoria.



Nuu-chah-nulth march against violence.

“issue” or community. Our intent was to both politicize and provide support in terms of broadening, and in some cases building from scratch, the ability for communities to defend themselves against all forms of violence and oppression.

We knew that in order to be effective we needed to ask ourselves what were the most pressing threats to our people. In doing so we realized that the internalization of violence within our homes and communities had reached staggering proportions. Although fully aware and equipped to defend ourselves against state violence, the WCWS had not addressed the issue of sexual violence occurring at this level.

So basically, I took up my responsibility as an indigenous woman to call a stop to the violence, and challenged the men to do something about it as well. We realized that in many communities and families, the subject of violence is so normalized that no one speaks about it. It then became clear that carrying the initial message of the Tla-o-qui-aht women ought to be one of our biggest initiatives.

STEPPING BACK

Na’cha’uaht: After the disbandment of the WCWS, I began to reflect a lot on the relative effectiveness of our actions. It didn’t take a lot to realize that our approaches were deeply flawed, albeit well intentioned for the most part. Although many of us understood that disbanding was the right thing to do, we also knew that our communities still needed people committed to taking action. So we spent a lot of time sitting with family members and community elders in order to better understand the roles and responsibilities of our Wit-waak [warriors].

Among other teachings, we learned that the primary responsibility of a Wiiuk [warrior] was to ensure the safety of the home and to protect the most vulnerable in our communities from any threat, wherever it may come from. Unfortunately, issues such as suicide and domestic violence top the list of actual threats in our communities. This tends to contrast with the more “sexy” or “glorious” issues of resource access or land protection, but we realized that we could-

n’t legitimately call ourselves warriors if our homes are in such a deplorable state.

So essentially the men in the warrior movement backed up and the women stepped forward, and we began to dialogue. It’s important to note, however, that we didn’t “allow” the women to step forward, but for the most part just shut up and vacated some space. It’s a constant struggle not to revert back to paternalistic or chauvinistic positions, but instead be quiet and listen and engage equally. The previous incarnation of the warrior movement mostly excluded or downplayed the roles of women. In retrospect, it’s not hard to see why previous initiatives ultimately failed to leave any kind of lasting legacy.

OUTSIDE THE SYSTEM

GC: *Could you speak to the importance of organizing outside the colonial-state system?*

Chiinuuks: I think it goes without saying that if I want to remain an authentic Kousa [human being, real person], organizing must always fall outside of the

colonial system. Everyone knows that the state has always sought to destroy indigenous ways of being in the world. The kind of organizing we began with in this march is rooted in our responsibility as indigenous peoples to our land, home and community. We organize on the basis of the threat of the day. Today this means neo-colonialism and its effects, which includes the systemic rage that has turned inward on ourselves. Since the colonial-state can't address these issues, we must find solutions that derive from our own communities.

Na'cha'uaht: For me, the colonial-state system was never meant to liberate us or allow us to be ourselves and craft our futures as we see fit. Well intentioned people and efforts get swallowed up by the band councils and government programs to a point where they, at best, simply prop up a corrupt social-safety net, or worse, fundamentally change who we are as indigenous people.

The benefit of organizing outside this system has been the opportunity to show people that we can achieve tangible results without relying on government funding or direction. It has been an awesome experience to see people realize that our ways, Nuu-chah-nulth ways and teachings, are still valid and can guide us in a way that could never be achieved within the colonial-state system.

Of course, this is not to say that there aren't challenges, which often relate to our own impatience and desire for immediate change. In rejecting government funding we have needed to be more creative in terms of organizing and fundraising. In the long-run, however, this will help us develop greater independence, which adds to our desire to do things right.

ABUSING TRADITION

GC: *What relationship do you see between traditionalism and the struggle against sexual violence in your communities? Do you ever see tradition being misused to justify gender violence?*

Chiinuks: The relationship between traditionalism and sexual violence is particularly difficult to confront because of the effect that colonialism has had in the minds and hearts of our people. It's a

daunting task to sort through the debris of colonialism and separate it from the spirit or ethics of our traditions. I guess that's what decolonizing from an indigenous perspective is all about.

One particularly tragic example has been the silencing of women in the name of tradition. For example, there are hereditary chiefs today who have violated and molested women and children. Often they don't face any consequences for their behaviour within the communities. This, as I understand it, is not our way. Any violation of women and children was met with severe consequences in previous times, and at the very least these men would be removed from their seat as

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leaders. My grandfather Cha-chin-sun-up met with some elders in Campbell River who are beginning to sort out some of this business. These elders are gravely concerned about what chiefs are getting away with and want to reinstate the ability to remove them from their positions if need be.

I've also experienced silencing in the name of tradition. Some so-called "traditionalists" continue to claim that women are not supposed to speak, because we're apparently too vulnerable to the power of politics [laughter]. However, even if this "tradition" were so, today our sheer lack of numbers requires that I take up my responsibility and pull my weight in terms of this struggle for our people.

Na'cha'auht: I agree; tradition gets misused all the time. This is a constant challenge for any young indigenous person seeking change by using authentic

indigenous principles. I find it important to acknowledge that we are struggling at a time when many of our traditional practices and teachings have been corrupted by colonial schools, churches and the whole imperial experience. Fortunately, however, in Nuu-chah-nulth territory, I believe we still have access to many of the important values and principles that can guide us in developing revised practices to meet our modern challenges.

NEXT STEPS

GC: *What's your next move? How do you hope to sustain the effect that you've had in your communities over the long haul?*

Na'cha'uaht: In each of the communities we visited we established solid connections with people who are equally committed to bringing about the changes we all desire. The mostly urban organizers will be gathering again, this time with our community contacts. We'll begin developing plans that can support locally driven initiatives. Additionally, many of us feel that we must address the same issues in cities, where more than 65% of Nuu-chah-nulth people actually live. Some preliminary discussions have taken place on the organizing of a similar tour through the urban areas.

Chiinuks: We've also been asked to make the march an annual event, and we intend to do that. We hope to gather the core people that we contacted in each community in order to help each other find solutions that suit the needs of each community. We don't want to prescribe a "one-size-fits-all" solution. Each community experiences different forms of violence and has their own feelings about what their specific needs are.

Na'cha'uaht: Hopefully, in addressing these immediate issues by employing time-tested Nuu-chah-nulth principles and teachings, we will be able to craft a future where our children will grow-up knowing their language and history and be able to lead us out of these dark neo-colonial times. I believe that we can all do something of significance, even if our ultimate goals are to be realized generations from now. ★

Red baiting and red herrings

BY BROCK PITAWANAKWAT

An indigenous woman and former employee with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) recently confided her frustration with the apathetic approach to collective organizing amongst her co-workers. When asking her colleagues why they did not want a union to represent them, a frequent reply was that it was “not our way.” In other words, organizing to protect workers’ rights is “un-indigenous.”

That these views have taken root among employees is indicative of the seductive sway that fixed notions of tradition hold on indigenous people. Many of us fear being accused of what the Plains Cree refer to as *moniyakaso*; that is, “acting or behaving as a white person.” This article explores these themes in the context of the highly publicized establishment and eventual elimination of a labour union at the Northern Lights Casino in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

NOT OUR WAY?

Is participating in a union or developing class awareness incompatible with being an indigenous person? This question underlies the rise and fall of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) Local 37, the only attempt to establish a labour union at a First Nations casino in Saskatchewan. Although the union at the Northern Lights Casino was certified in 1999, it faced almost immediate external and internal opposition despite securing a 30% raise in wages through the

Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board.

The external opposition was led by the FSIN. The FSIN is a provincial organization that represents the elected band council chiefs of member First Nations in Saskatchewan. The FSIN’s chiefs passed a motion in legislative assembly stating its concern that labour unions were foreign and would harm the “conciliatory manner of dealing with issues of concern.” FSIN Grand Chief Perry Bellegarde expressed their concerns as being a matter of self-determination, arguing that band councils should have the right to manage their own labour relations without provincial interference.

When the struggle to establish the union moved into the courtroom, the FSIN strategy shifted from self-determination to the recognition of labour rela-

tions as a constitutionally protected Aboriginal right under Section 35. When this strategy was unsuccessful, the FSIN lawyers also argued that provincial laws should not apply to Indian institutions because of the federal/provincial division of responsibilities under Section 91 and Section 92 of the Canadian constitution. Ultimately, the court challenges failed and the union was successfully certified.

Yet the most harmful opposition was not external but internal. This opposition culminated in a bitter fight that led to the union’s decertification in January 2003. A former casino employee and union supporter blamed the union’s decertification in part on vague notions that the union would in some way negatively “affect First Nations culture.” This leads us back to the FSIN employee’s assertion that labour unions “are not our way.” What is the source of these notions that labour unions are harmful to indigenous ways?

The FSIN chiefs propagated these notions and have used this false front of nationalism as a red herring to maintain their power over labour relations in



DRAWING BY GORD HILL, KWA KWAKA WAKW.

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indigenous institutions. This form of red-baiting is a classic divide-and-conquer technique to prevent marginalized people from organizing to confront their oppressors. Indian reserves in Canada are rife with oppression that replicates the colonial order, and band councils are a classic example of indirect colonial rule.

Indian band councils are a foreign imposition that replaced our traditional forms of governance. The FSIN chiefs' public opposition to labour unions as "foreign" is thus laughable when juxtaposed with its use of non-native lawyers to argue in non-native courts based on non-native law that the colonizer's constitution should reinforce the band councils' ability to deny their own workers the right to organize.

A second highly publicized labour dispute has emerged between the FSIN and another one of its institutions: First Nations University of Canada (FNUNIV – commonly referred to in the media as FNUC). The faculty of FNUNIV successfully fought FSIN opposition to joining the union representing faculty members at the University of Regina, the University of Regina Faculty Association (URFA).

Widespread fears persist among FNUNIV faculty and staff that the FSIN seeks to break this union. When the FSIN management conducted a recent shake-up at the FNUNIV, the resultant series of firings and resignations led to the filing of 31 grievances with their union. Although this dispute is ongoing, faculty have voiced their concerns and challenged management through URFA.

CULTURE OF RESISTANCE

The unique aspects of indigenous labour relations require some historical explanation. Centuries of forced assimilation policies by Canada, the United States and Britain have fostered a retaliatory culture of resistance among indigenous peoples. When the old ways were under external attack, it became crucial to hold on to them to prevent cultural markers from being swept away.

The long history of colonization has solidified the myth that indigenous lands and resources were surrendered to the Crown following an invented conquest.

Such an incomplete understanding is self-serving for the settlers who seek to ignore their own culpability in the ongoing theft of indigenous territories, and their own continued benefits from the exploitation of indigenous peoples.

Indigenous peoples negotiated treaties with colonial authorities to allow arriving settlers to share their lands. Although indigenous peoples were cognizant that the massive influx of foreigners was irreversible, they were determined to maintain their autonomy and expressed this condition repeatedly in Treaty negotiations. However, colonial authorities repeatedly violated this promise of autonomy.

In utter disregard for the spirit of the Treaties, an Anglo-European economic and spiritual model was forcibly applied through the destruction of the traditional economy. In its place, colonial agents offered a semi-feudal vision of a Christian-Indian peasant class to be created with reserves and residential schools. The reserve policy disrupted the traditional economy as indigenous peoples lost access to most of their lands and resources. The residential school policy was designed to take in indigenous children and produce compliant labourers for Canadian farms and factories. With the foundations of indigenous societies shaken so deeply, all forms of social organization were vulnerable to external influence.

The emerging capitalist class in indigenous communities has exploited ongoing and deep-seated fears of assimilation amongst our peoples. Indigenous organizations have used a nationalist and xenophobic propaganda campaign to oppose labour unions. Such "sell-out" slander has many forms that range from accusations of being an "apple" (red on the outside and white on the inside) to being called a "hang-around-the-fort Indian" (one who prefers non-native society to indigenous ways).

Increasing capitalist economic integration of indigenous communities produces growing economic disparity. A similar political process created a power disparity with the establishment of a comprador native elite by the British and later the Canadian governments. Traditional leadership was attacked and undermined to put in place a system of indirect rule that

created colonizing agents among indigenous people. These colonizing agents were entrenched and legitimated as the chief and council members of the Indian Act.

These social engineering attempts, although unsuccessful, have completely altered the indigenous world. Indigenous communities are no longer voluntary associations of free and independent people who control their own means of production. The Indian Act regulates rules of membership with a reified concept of community determined by one's association with an Indian Band and a reserve.

There is obvious hypocrisy in harkening back to tradition when adopting non-indigenous institutions such as gaming casinos and universities. However, these accusations have ramifications for indigenous employees seeking better wages and working conditions, as well as those who believe in the potential of indigenous-labour alliances to challenge neo-liberalism.

TOWARD A CRITICAL TRADITIONALISM

Indigenous labour relations are complicated by clashing notions of citizenship and class. Indeed, many indigenous people continue to maintain an ambivalent view of organized labour because unions have not always served the immediate interests of their communities. This has especially been the case in the resource extraction industry, which often pits the rights of non-native workers against indigenous nations whose lands continue to be stolen for capitalist development. Furthermore, class-based ideologies generally view any ethnic or national identity as a threat to class unity.

Although labour unions are no panacea for colonization, we need to ask ourselves whether their increased profile in native communities would empower indigenous employees and curb the exploitative practices occurring in our workplaces. In certain contexts this would undoubtedly be the case. Informing our perspectives on these issues with a critical traditionalism, rather than a naïve cultural nationalism, would go a long way towards ensuring that our self-determination efforts do not end up replicating the structures of domination that we seek to transform. ★

The party's over

By JACKIE PRICE

NUNAVUT



PHOTO COURTESY OF JACKIE PRICE

Iqaluit landscape

I AM GOING TO LET YOU IN ON A little secret: the party is over.

The party I am talking about is the celebration phase that came with the signing of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Inuit and Canadians alike have kept this party going for as long as politically feasible, and after seven years it's time to call it quits.

The "creation" of Nunavut was an internationally recognized event. Not only were people celebrating the new boundary on the Canadian map; oddly enough, people were celebrating the establishment of more government. People figured that a newly established government would increase Inuit access to government, which would increase the likelihood that government would learn from Inuit culture. People thought government would be different in Nunavut, and this got people excited.

All the hoopla is really over power and control. The popular hypothesis is that the Government of Nunavut empowers Inuit because it provides the necessary tools for Inuit to control their future. Government is understood as the site of power and control, so having a power site

based in Nunavut and supported by Inuit would ensure that Inuit were in control.

We in Nunavut believed this logic because right away, Nunavut and its government addressed the two big questions: who had the power? and where would the power rest? Although Inuit understood that they had other needs that would have to be supported in different ways, these needs were put aside in order to focus on the two questions of power.

TWO QUESTIONS

Politically, our wildest dreams came true with the creation of Nunavut. Wouldn't that mean Inuit could focus on addressing Inuit needs in the Inuit way? Unfortunately the manner and means of public debate in Nunavut have not changed. The two questions of power still provide the framework for addressing our issues.

For example, language and culture are important foundations for Inuit. Inuit have ideas on how to support these foundations, yet Nunavut politics determines the debate. For example, to support Inuktitut, the language of Inuit, the government focuses on the need for

language legislation. Or in discussions about preserving Inuit culture, a culture that is based on respect for diversity in practice and experience, the government debates where Nunavut's ten million dollar cultural centre will be located.

In our seven-year experience, we in Nunavut have not recognized that power and control function in a mindset that is not rooted in Inuit principles. Power and control involve management — management of money, buildings and people. Inuit culture, particularly Inuit governance, was never a tool for managing people; rather, it supports people who have the freedom and strength of mind to do what is best for them and their families.

Inuit governance also ensured that everyone's physical needs, particularly food and shelter, were collectively met. We have forgotten both these responsibilities because we have been too busy celebrating the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. We have been too busy celebrating power and control.

Inuit in Nunavut must move beyond this mindset. This will not be an easy task because Nunavut's political environment is racist and paternalistic, and the relationship Inuit have with the land and with each other has weakened. These realities are the result of colonialism. But they are also being exacerbated by the priorities set by the Government of Nunavut, like the focus on government housing over public housing; or the emphasis on a cultural centre and language legislation over support systems for communities in securing healthy, quality food in an affordable manner.

To move beyond this reality, Inuit will have to think strategically. Strength comes from strong minds, disciplined emotions and an internal logic based on intellect, personal experience and collective teachings. Inuit focus must be directed to supporting strong Inuit families and communities, not power and control. ★

Jackie Price is Inuk from Nunavut, and considers both Rankin Inlet and Iqaluit her home. Jackie is finishing up her Master's degree with the Indigenous Governance Programs at the University of Victoria. She currently lives in Ottawa where she works with young Inuit interested in learning about their political and cultural history.



To be ungovernable

BY JEFF CORNTASSEL

In 1998, Ecuador's president, Abdalá Bucaram, was overthrown by a movement led by the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (CONAIE), which represents 80 percent of the indigenous peoples in Ecuador. To his detriment, Ecuador's subsequent president, Jamil Mahuad, ignored CONAIE's demands for political reform and the return of indigenous homelands. Within two years, CONAIE mobilized again to topple Mahuad's government, which was widely viewed as corrupt.

After the second CONAIE presidential ouster, policy experts and government officials proclaimed Ecuador to be ungovernable. After all, Ecuador had had seven presidents in ten years. This rapid leadership turnover signals instability to some. But in fact, this form of "ungovernability" is what indigenous peoples should be striving to achieve. Instability and ungovernability on this level is a result of indigenous responses to the illegitimate occupation and encroachment of the state on indigenous homelands.

After demonstrating their incompatibility with the state system in 1998 and again in 2000, CONAIE changed tactics, but soon learned a harsh lesson. In 2002, they formed a political party named Pachakutik, in alliance with the Sociedad Patriótica (SP) party, and helped elect former army colonel Lucio Gutiérrez as president. Once elected, President Gutiérrez made it his mission to dismantle and co-opt CONAIE.

Jeff Corntassel is a member of the Cherokee Nation (Wolf Clan) and a professor in the Indigenous Governance Programs at the University of Victoria.

While CONAIE had withdrawn their support from the Gutiérrez government by July 2003, the damage to their political movement had already been done. By entrenching themselves in Ecuador's political system, CONAIE's power as a movement had been substantially weakened. They were now governable. One CONAIE leader responded to their co-optation with a question: "Why bite into a rotten apple?"

INDIGENOUS-SETTLER INCOMPATIBILITIES

Invoking our indigenous languages exposes some of the incompatibilities between settler and indigenous cultures and values. Most indigenous peoples around the world have words in their languages that refer to themselves as the

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participation in
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real, original or principal people of their homelands, such as Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) or Onkwehonwe (Mohawk). Cherokees use the term Ani-yun-wiya, which means real or principal people. Ungovernability means embracing the principles of Ani-yun-wiya and discarding state offerings of rotten apples.

Co-optation via participation in state

governmental institutions offers indigenous peoples the illusion of inclusion. What is needed today is a de-occupation of settler institutions and values from indigenous homelands. According to Kanien'kehaka (Mohawk) scholar Taiaiake Alfred, "Delegitimizing the regime is the most fundamentally radical act one can perform."

As Ani-yun-wiya, our values and responsibilities, not settler institutions, govern us. Gadugi is one of these core principles, and serves as a process for indigenous resurgence. At the heart of this principle is a built-in spirit of community comradery. This means that whatever issues/concerns arising in collective living have to be addressed in a unitary way and that no one is left alone to climb out of a life endeavour; it reflects a collective community base.

Adherence to the principles and actions of Gadugi makes indigenous peoples ungovernable in the eyes of Settlers. Ani-yun-wiya are governed by a continuous renewal of our shared responsibilities and relationships.

Indigenous values clash with those of settlers in terms of the way authority is exercised. What are the specific values that settlers hold? The answers are in our indigenous languages and the stories indigenous peoples tell of first contact with settlers. For example, the word Canada is derived from a Mohawk term, Kanatiens, which means "they sit in our village." A contemporary translation of this term would be "squatter." Other examples below provide further insights into settler values as seen through the eyes of our ancestors:

Yonega is a Tsalagi (Cherokee) term for white settlers, which connotes "foam of

the water; moved by wind and without its own direction; clings to everything that's solid."

Moniyawak is a Cree term for settlers, which literally means "worship of money," soniyas or soniyaw.

Wasicu is a Dakota term for settlers, which means "taker of fat." The first Wasicus encountered were French trappers who came into a Dakota camp during winter and helped themselves to the fatty parts of a soup boiling on the fire — hence, "fat takers."

Ve'ho'e is a Cheyenne term for settlers, and it means "spider," which is a trickster figure. Settlers are viewed this way because they have hair like a spider, divide the land like the web of a spider, communicate through power lines like strands of a spider, and wrap their prey to devour it, such as the indigenous peoples who were wrapped in blankets during the small pox and cholera epidemics.

Based on over 500 years of experience with settlers, our ancestors provide us with valuable insights into a different value system: directionless, money-worshipping, fat-taking squatters that divide the land, devour their prey and cling to everything that's solid. Perhaps as much as skin pigment, terms like white or settler describe a mindset or belief system. Clearly these are not principles for Ani-yun-wiya to emulate or mimic. How would our ancestors recognize us today? As Ani-yun-wiya or Yonega?

Indigenous governance is an ongoing process of honouring and renewing our individual and collective relationships and responsibilities. And settlers are not off the hook either — they will have to decide how they can relate to indigenous struggles. Will they make the necessary sacrifices to decolonize and make amends now?

Additionally, some of our would-be settler allies suffer from a debilitating "Free Tibet Syndrome," which causes them to cast their decolonizing gaze to faraway places while ignoring local indigenous struggles. The further away the exotic overseas "Other" is from their present geographic location, the greater the intensity of their fundraising and self-determination proselytizing activities. Yet when it comes to promoting freedom and justice for indigenous peoples closer to "home," the response of those suffering

Women of the EZLN.



from Free Tibet Syndrome is simple and predictable: not in my backyard.

CONFRONTING COLONIAL SHAPE-SHIFTERS

Through indigenous eyes, globalization reflects a deepening, hastening and stretching of an already-existing empire; it is merely the latest permutation of imperialism. Shape-shifting colonial powers continue to invent new methods of domination in order to erase indigenous histories and senses of place.

Amidst an era of interconnected imperialisms, indigenous peoples exhibit their ungovernability by withdrawing their support and involvement from the global political economy. A conversation held in 1887 between U.S. Cavalry Captain E. L. Huggins, and Smohalla or Yu'yunipi't-qana, The Shouting Mountain (Wanapum Nation) demonstrates that we are not the first generation of indigenous peoples to confront the dilemmas of participating in the political economy:

Q: Why don't you follow the example of other Indians who have practiced the white man's ways?

S: No one has any respect for these book Indians. Even the white men like me better and treat me better than they do the book Indians. My young men shall never work. Men who work cannot dream, and wisdom comes to us in dreams.

Q: But white people work and know more than Indians...

S: Each one must learn for himself the highest wisdom. It cannot be taught. You have the wisdom of your race. Be content.

Q: Don't Indians have to work hard during the fishing season to get food for winter?

S: This work lasts only for a few weeks. Besides it is natural work and does them no harm. But the work of the white man hardens soul and body. Nor is it right to tear up and mutilate the earth as white men do.

Q: But Indians also dig into the earth for kamas roots — isn't that harmful to the earth?

S: We simply take the gifts that are freely offered. We no more harm the earth than would an infant's fingers harm its mother's breast. But the white man tears up large tracts of land, runs deep ditches, cuts down forests, and changes the whole face of the earth. You know very well this is not right. Every honest man knows in his heart that this is all wrong. But the white men are so greedy they do not consider these things.

Fortunately, the spirit of Smohalla is alive in other indigenous movements today. A brief survey of active indigenous movements around the world illustrates

that indigenous communities remain ungovernable:

Between 1997-2002, U'wa peoples blockaded highways in Colombia to protest the building of an oil pipeline on their homelands. They ultimately forced Occidental Petroleum to vacate their territory but their struggle for homeland security is ongoing as the Colombian corporation, ECOPEPETROL, seeks to continue development of the oil pipeline project.

Newly elected President Evo Morales (Aymara-Quechua) of Bolivia launched an "Agrarian Revolution" in 2006 by outlining a process to return approximately 9,600 square miles of state-owned territory to indigenous peoples.

The indigenous-run Forum for Cultural and Biological Diversity continues to host annual seed exchanges in Honduras where indigenous and non-indigenous farmers trade for non-genetically modified corn and other seeds.

Since rising up against NAFTA and Mexico's ejido reforms in 1994, the indigenous people who comprise Ejercito Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) have established five autonomous zones in Chiapas and recently initiated "La otra campaña," a large-scale movement challenging neoliberal policies.

In 2006, Six Nations clan mothers and warriors reclaimed 40 hectares of their traditional territory in Ontario, Canada. Indigenous peoples took back their territory along the Grand River in order to prevent housing developer, Henco Industries Ltd, from constructing a new sub-division on their homelands.

Kanaka Maoli (native Hawai'ian) activists continue to challenge the patenting of three varieties of taro, Palehua, Paakala and Pauakea, by the University of Hawai'i. Kalo (taro) is a sacred plant for Kanaka Maoli people and is integral to their oral histories and ceremonial cycles.

The above-mentioned examples illustrate indigenous alternatives to neoliberalism. The approximately 5,000 indigenous nations trapped in 70 settler states around the world offer us 5,000 different versions of ungovernability. In the words of Ani-yun-wiya War Chief Tsi'yu-gunsini or Dragging Canoe, "You have bought a fair land, but you will find its settlement dark and bloody." Ani-yun-wiya are patient

people and will live to see our homelands de-occupied by settler values. Until that time comes, settlers are illegally occupying indigenous homelands.

Our pipe carriers and clan mothers represent us.

Ani-yun-wiya are spiritual beings, as embodied by our clan systems, languages, ceremonies, sacred histories and relationships to the land. Our powers reside in our languages, cultures and communities – not in political/legal authority structures. An indigenous spiritual regeneration is necessary to facilitate the de-occupation of settler values from our homelands. In these times of spiritual and physical warfare, our pipe carriers and clan mothers (not band councillors or lawyers) are the true voices of our struggles.

Traveling to other indigenous and settler communities to seek out allies can be a useful antidote to colonialism. Along these lines, global forums can be useful for exposing the contradictions of neoliberalism and artificiality of state sovereignty. However, there are serious limits to what state-centric forums, such as the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, can do to promote indigenous resurgences. With a cadre of professionalized indigenous delegates in place who demonstrate more allegiance to the UN system than to their own communities, the Permanent Forum today more closely resembles an internationalized band council system.

It is time to again represent ourselves on our own terms. One way to promote indigenous unity and strength is to encourage renewed treaty making between indigenous communities. Such a revitalized treaty process would follow the protocols of pipe ceremonies, not the paper diplomacy of settlers. Since host states have not honoured indigenous treaties for the most part, it is time for indigenous peoples to lead by example and demonstrate once again their communities' approaches to principles of respect and diplomacy.

Treaties of peace and friendship entail making sacred compacts that should be renewed ceremonially on an annual basis with all participating indigenous peoples. New inter-indigenous treaties might include those that affirm alliances, and promote trade arrangements and protection for crossing borders. This further

illustrates the wide spectrum of indigenous powers of Gadugi.

Future indigenous mobilization efforts should be directed towards engagement and activism in indigenous forums – not UN or regional settler institutional structures. The World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) formed in 1975 in Port Alberni, British Columbia (Canada), provides a possible model for the creation of a new indigenous organization that functions according to indigenous values. The WCIP requires states and NGOs to apply for observer status. Under the leadership of Shushwap Chief George Manuel, a declaration of WCIP principles was adopted at the first meeting – the selected passages outline some of the original goals of the WCIP for unity and mobilization and express the need to represent ourselves on our own terms:

...Rising up after centuries of oppression, evoking the greatness of our ancestors, in the memory of our indigenous martyrs, and in homage to the counsel of our wise elders: We vow to control again our own destiny and recover our complete humanity and pride in being Indigenous People.

When recovering "our complete humanity," Ani-yun-wiya warriors must ready themselves for physical and spiritual warfare. Let us remember that a process of regeneration takes time. The Zapatistas trained for over ten years in the Lacandon Jungle prior to their 1994 uprising in Chiapas. Also, we should not forget that indigenous women won the first Zapatista uprising in 1993 with the EZLN's adoption of the Revolutionary Law for Women.

Fortunately, there are cures for Free Tibet Syndrome – settler populations can begin by decolonizing their thinking, engaging in insurgent education, making amends to local indigenous peoples and seeking out indigenous-led alliances. In the words of George Manuel, "We will steer our own canoe, but we will invite others to help with the paddling."

As ancient nations, we have proven to be persistent and "ungovernable" – we are nations that predate the state and will outlast it. Ani-yun-wiya power arises from Gadugi, and responsibilities to our territories and families. Ultimately, only indigenous laws can flourish on indigenous homelands. ★

Why are indigenous soldiers serving in Iraq?

BY MICHAEL YELLOW BIRD

The United States has abused our trust and has coerced us to fight its illegal, immoral wars long enough.



Our history tells us that because war was so destructive on many different levels, our nations — before committing to war — consulted our elders, peacemakers, women, youth, philosophers, intellectuals, spiritual leaders, children, warriors and veterans to weigh the costs of war. This is something that many of our nations have not done for some time. Many of us have “outsourced” our thinking to the United States with respect to when and why we should or should not go to war.

We are sovereign nations of intelligent and moral people who do not need to rely on the US to interpret for us the meaning and the costs that war will bring to our communities. Most of us already know the answer to this. And we know that we should decide for ourselves, after careful, deliberate and intelligent discus-

sions, whether we must commit our people and resources to the wars of the United States.

As with the US invasion of the lands of our own nations, the last two major conflicts of the United States, Vietnam and now Iraq, were based on lies created by the US government. This track record makes it even more imperative that we rely upon our own thinking, experiences and morality when we enter into discussions about why our tribal nations should compel our people to go to war. Discussions about this war must certainly address the following:

- ★ All people and beings are related to us, so we are being asked to make war on our relatives.
- ★ We value all life, so war truly must be a last resort.
- ★ We value Mother Earth as a living being, and the United States military is contaminating the lands, waters, trees, plants and people in Iraq through the use of biowarfare, landmines and depleted uranium.
- ★ We believe in the great circle of life,

and we are doing to the Iraqi people what the US did to our ancestors.

★ All of the killing, maiming, poisoning, and torturing will have drastic effects upon our people, especially on the psychic and cosmological levels.

The US has mistreated us in the past and the present, and it has conscripted our minds and hearts so that we are participating in their oppressive behaviour towards another race of humans.

It is time for us to demand that our indigenous governments engage in critical and independent discussions about these issues. We need to tell the United States to immediately call for withdrawal of its military forces from Iraq. Most importantly – and independently of their decision or indecision – we must immediately pull our people out of this quagmire. Countries such as Japan, Honduras, Tonga, Nicaragua, Spain, Dominican Republic, Philippines, Thailand, New Zealand, Portugal and Moldova already have pulled out their troops, and many other nations are planning to reduce their troop commitment in the near future. So why are we still in Iraq fighting the US’s illegal war?

It is also time for our leaders and communities to impose a moratorium upon any further enlistments of our young men and women into the US military. The United States has abused our trust and has coerced us to fight its illegal, immoral wars long enough. ★

Michael Yellow Bird is a citizen of the Sahnish (Arikara) and Hidatsa First Nations. He is Director of the Center for Indigenous Nations Studies and Associate Professor of American Studies at the University of Kansas.

Barred from socialist paradise

BY TEIOWÍ:SONTE
THOMAS DEER

For many years, I had desired to visit what many people refer to as Castro's Socialist Paradise, Cuba. Long had I poured over books on Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolutionary War, fascinated with the romantic struggle between the poor band of freedom fighters and Batista's imperialist regime, hoping that someday I could visit the Sierra Maestra and follow the footsteps of Cuba's revolutionary heroes.

After years of intrigue, my girlfriend and I found some common vacation time and scraped up some funds to finally do it. But on the morning of March 7, 2005, my girlfriend and I tried to enter Cuba using Haudenosaunee Passports and after hours of confusion and rude treatment, we were denied entry and deported back to Canada.

THE ORIGINAL SOCIALIST PARADISE

In our language, we call ourselves Haudenosaunee, which means People of the Long House; symbolizing the political union of five (later six) primordial nations. The Haudenosaunee are a participatory constitutional democracy based upon socialist principles.

Both Karl Marx and Frederic Engels were fascinated by the political and economic organization of the Haudenosaunee. In fact, Marx wrote extensive notes on his study of Lewis H. Morgan's treatment of the Haudenosaunee in *Ancient Society* (1877) and *League of the Iroquois* (1852), interested particularly in the Haudenosaunee's democratic organization in relation to its

Teiowí:sonte Thomas Deer is the artistic talent behind Revolutionary Creations www.revolutionarycreations.com, based in Kahnawake Mohawk Territory. He aims to break into the realm of comic books, the graphic art that has always tantalized and inspired him.

economic structure.

After Marx, Engels wrote *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), which directly examined the political organization of the Haudenosaunee. In this sense, it can be suggested that the Haudenosaunee pioneered modern socialism, and that our society was in fact the original Socialist Paradise.

THE HAUDENOSAUNEE PASSPORT

The Haudenosaunee have never abandoned their identity or citizenship as sovereign peoples. As a means to exercise and express our sovereignty we Haudenosaunee developed our passports in 1977 when sending a delegation on a diplomatic mission to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. The Haudenosaunee passport came to be accepted by over 120 countries, despite

It seems now that Cuba has given up its position as a strong defender of the rights of indigenous peoples.

efforts by the governments of Canada and the United States to discourage its usage internationally. However, since 9/11 only a handful of countries continue to allow its usage, Cuba being one of them – until last year.

As citizens of the Haudenosaunee, my girlfriend and I chose to use our own passports to travel to Cuba. I had contacted the Embassy of Cuba in Ottawa to confirm Cuba's recognition of the Haudenosaunee Passport. On December 7th an official at the embassy emailed me stating that Haudenosaunee passports are "respected and accepted by Cuban authorities so you can go to Cuba."

DISILLUSIONED

We departed by air from Montreal brandishing our Haudenosaunee pass-

ports and were permitted to leave Canada without hindrance. We arrived at the airport in Holguin later on the same morning and were immediately met by Cuban immigration, who asked to see our passports.

As suggested by the Embassy of Cuba in Ottawa, we showed the immigration officers the e-mail confirming Cuba's recognition of our passports, as well as a photocopy of a friend's Haudenosaunee passport endorsed for entry to Cuba by immigration officials two years earlier.

Finally, after hours of waiting and insulting treatment, we were simply ordered to board a plane and leave Cuba. We were expelled. We were denied admission and considered illegal in the Socialist Paradise. We were left disillusioned and robbed of our hard earned money.

DENIED

Understandably, we were still quite angry and refused to relent on the issue. I wrote letters to the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tourism, and the Cuban Communist Party outlining the chronology of our experience, a history of Cuba/Haudenosaunee relations, and a demand for justice.

I was contacted by the Cuban Consulate in Montreal and later had a very positive meeting with the Consular General – we seemingly made progress towards resolution of the problem. Unfortunately, in October 2005 I was informed by letter that the Government of Cuba could not admit anyone using the Haudenosaunee Passport, since the United Nations officially recognizes only one passport for all the territory known as Canada.

This final communiqué from the government of Cuba was a terrible disappointment to me as a Haudenosaunee and a socialist. It seems now that Cuba has given up its position as a strong defender of the rights of indigenous peoples in the international arena, and in a sense, it has followed the imperialists in initiating its own embargo, against the Haudenosaunee. ★

BOOK REVIEW



PHOTO COURTESY MARGE ADAMS

Howard Adams. 1991.

September 8 of this year will mark half a decade since Dr. Howard Adams passed away. Adams was a truly radical Métis leader who understood that liberation would require a battle against capitalism and its agents, including both settler and indigenous capitalists and politicians.

Adams's books *Prison of Grass* (1975), and *A Tortured People* constituted a major breakthrough in analysing the specific social and psychological impacts of colonisation on indigenous individuals and communities. His was not a simplistic perspective. He showed that the very forces of colonization give rise to nationalist movements, which themselves are contradictory in nature.

Perhaps because of his eventual isolation from radical indigenous movements, Adams became increasingly preoccupied with the devastating impacts of colonial consciousness, and the challenge of breaking through to political awakening and radical action. He renewed his exploration of these questions in a mixture of fictional and autobiographical writings. By the time of his death in 2001, this had grown to about six hundred disarranged pages.

Deborah Simmons has recently returned to live and work in the Northwest Territories. She is a member of the New Socialist Group.

OTAPAWY! THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A MÉTIS LEADER IN HIS OWN WORDS AND IN THOSE OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES

BY HOWARD ADAMS

HARTMUT LUTZ, MURRAY HAMILTON AND DONNA HEIMBECKER, EDITORS; SASKATOON: GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE, 2005

REVIEWED BY DEBORAH SIMMONS

Otapawy! (acronym for the phrase from a Saskatchewan Métis story, "Our Thoughts and Prayers Are With You") is a gathering of these writings, what editor Hartmut Lutz describes as a "Métis sash" interweaving the story of Howard Adams with tales of the fictional characters "Tony" and "Almighty." This sash maps a journey from home in a Halfbreed community in Saskatchewan, to escape in a shortlived career as an RCMP officer; struggle toward a career in education in Vancouver; radicalisation in the Berkeley student movement; and return to Saskatchewan to lead the Red Power movement.

The archetypal character that takes shape through this composite text reveals the inevitable pain and ambivalence in a life that oscillates between indigenous and settler worlds. And it reveals how the complex and uneven process of political awakening is imbedded in a combination of lived experience and dialogue with others in order to gain a larger understanding of the colonial system.

The book also includes a substantial collection of writings in memory of Howard Adams. This adds more details to the story of the man, his strengths as well as his personal struggles and contradictions. Adams emerges as very much a product of his time. The Red Power movement allowed him to flower as an orator, an incorruptible political leader, and a teacher. The decline of the movement was devastating for his morale, and he may well have exiled himself to California because of a combination of depression and victimization by official indigenous leaders. Decades of political isolation meant that he lost touch with developments such as the lessons of the feminist movement, as his friends Maria Campbell and Donna Heimbecker point out in describing his behaviour toward women.

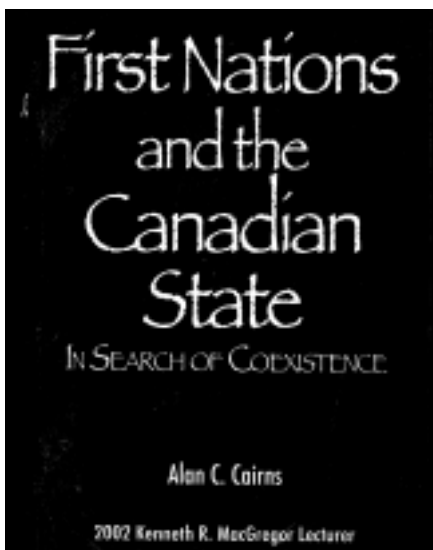
"Revolutionary nationalism plays a very important role in our liberation....Once we are free, free from the imperialism of Canada and America, then our Indian-Métis nationalism may disappear. This, we don't know. It sets our culture in motion once again because it has been static or fossilized for so many centuries thanks to Whitey's imperialism. It will help to decolonize our minds, our mentality, and our whole psychological make-up. It fosters a new humanism and opens the doors to a new creation."

Excerpt from *Otapawy!*

This book is an important contribution. However, much more discussion will be required to account for the political lessons of Adams's life and writings. Hartmut Lutz is an academic based in Germany and specialising in indigenous literature. His editorial framing of Adams's writings thus focuses on their biographical and narrative aspects. In his afterward, Lutz suggests that Adams's revolutionary optimism forged in the 1960s and 1970s "now looks almost naïve, since many of those grassroots movements soon lost their power for action."

Lutz fails to account for Adams's renewed political engagement in the last years of his life – Adams developed a relationship with the New Socialist Group, and was involved in local political activities in Vancouver. It is our responsibility to take up the challenge of his unwavering commitment to revolution. ★

BOOK REVIEW



FIRST NATIONS AND THE CANADIAN STATE: IN SEARCH OF COEXISTENCE

BY ALAN CAIRNS

PUBLISHED BY QUEENS UNIVERSITY, INSTITUTE FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS, 2005.

REVIEWED BY TAIIAKE ALFRED AND ADAM BARKER

ONE THING IS CERTAIN ABOUT THE conservative Canadian academic Alan Cairns: he is bound and determined to cram his “citizens plus” concept down our throats, even though Canadians and indigenous people have repeatedly rejected his agenda.

He was undeterred when his book *Citizens Plus*, arguing for the integration of indigenous people into Canada as “enhanced” citizens, was widely panned (especially by fellow academics who saw through his friendly-sounding jargon). Cairns now returns with *First Nations and the Canadian State*.

In this sparse 59-page policy puff piece, Cairns argues passionately for the status quo. The Cairnsian view is that the “integrity” of the Canadian state is paramount. Innovative solutions to the oppression of indigenous peoples must be rejected because they are simply too difficult.

Cairns argues that until the present, only two polarized options have been available regarding the future of relations between indigenous peoples and the state in Canada: Native nationalism and assimilation. Cairns seeks to convince us of his moderation in putting forth a third option based on the concept of “coexis-

tence” – a compromise between two “extremes.”

But it soon becomes clear that his proposed option is little more than transparent trickery. Who would disagree with the concept of “coexistence” after all? His so-called alternative belies a series of logical fallacies and intentional obfuscations that are effectively assimilationist – aiming to eliminate indigenous peoples as political entities and ultimately as cultures.

Cairns sets himself up as a brave crusader, the lone voice of reason who will discuss three “taboo” subjects underpinning what he views to be the implacable dissolution of indigenous nations: the growing urban indigenous population and shrinking reserve populations; intermarriage between indigenous and Canadian peoples; and the large Canadian population that self-identifies as having “aboriginal ancestry” but not “aboriginal identity”.

All of this is meant to attack the legitimacy of indigenous nationhood. Cairns equates all forms of indigenous nationalism with separatism, noting disingenuously that “sadly” decolonization cannot occur in Canada as it occurred in Africa. This does not address the broad spectrum of possibilities encompassed by indigenous struggles for self-determination.

Traditional indigenous conceptions of nationhood are quite distinct from Euroamerican nationalisms. Recognizing these differences would go a long way in addressing the “problems” perceived by Cairns. For example, traditional forms of governance are far from the dysfunctional state-imposed “band councils” that Cairns situates at the centre of his arguments against indigenous nationhood. The history of indigenous nations in sharing

lands and resources negates the assumption that nationhood leads to the exclusion and displacement of others. Perhaps Cairns fears that indigenous nations will start treating Canadians the way that Canadians have always treated them.

Cairns boldly states that it is “beyond the capacity of First Nations” to maintain their own societies, cultures and treaties in close proximity to the cultural and social behemoth of Canada without the protection of the federal state.

In Cairns’ words, “Aboriginal nations are part of the Canadian nation.” Cairns suggests that any movement to recognise the distinction between indigenous peoples and Canadians will only lead to further neglect of their situation. The logical extension of this argument is that assimilation is the only solution for the “Indian problem.” Sound familiar?

At the same time, Cairns views indigenous inclusion under the umbrella of the Canadian state to be essential to “common civic community” and thus the very survival of the state. But if the common bond that unites our state is the oppression of other nations within, shouldn’t we be seeking to hasten its demise?

Cairns concludes that indigenous nationalism is to be “accommodated” only because it cannot be eliminated. Conversely, the Canadian state requires obedience; the state is not going anywhere, so indigenous people need to shut up and live with it.

Cairns’ essay is in essence a parting shot from another era. The decline of the cadre of political theorists that he represents is much anticipated by those working to create truly respectful coexistence and a just relationship out of the legacy of their empire. ★

Taiiake Alfred is a professor and Adam Barker is a graduate student in the Indigenous Governance Programs at the University of Victoria.

The basics of Wasáse

The basics of Wasáse

The basics of Wasáse

Our Editors pick the essentials for indigenizing and radicalizing your mind and body.

BOOKS

Akwesasne Notes. For over 30 years, the voice of Natural and Native peoples.

Almanac of the Dead, Leslie Silko. Poetic imaginings of the coming of the Native Reconquest.

From a Native Daughter, Haunani-Kay Trask. A classic of indigenism and Polynesian national struggles.

God is Red, Vine Deloria, Jr.. The Native view of religion as an antidote to Christianity.

I am Woman, Lee Maracle. Deep explorations into contemporary colonialism, sexism and racism.

Journey of Crazy Horse, Joseph Marshall, III. Wise and respectful telling of the oral tradition of a true warrior.

Our Word is Our Weapon, Subcommandante Marcos. Zapatismo! Political analysis, propaganda and poetry from the Lacandon Jungle.

Prison of Grass, Howard Adams. The first true history published in Canada.

Wasáse, Taiiaki Alfred. Anarcho-indigenism: something real for the people to believe in.

Wretched of the Earth, Frantz Fanon. Colonialism diagnosed; a founding document in revolutionary struggles worldwide.

FILMS

Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner, by Zacharias Kunuk. An arctic warrior battling mean spirits and bad men in this new classic.

Battle of Algiers, by Gillo Pontecorvo. The bloodiest revolution in the history of the world.

Dead Man, by Jim Jarmusch. Nobody prepares Johnny Depp for his journey into the spirit world.



WASÁSE
MOVEMENT

Gandhi, by Richard Attenborough. How India's political saint made the Brits "Quit India" through non-violent struggle.

Geronimo, Walter Hill. The Original Athapaskan ass-kicker definitely did not hang around the fort, or the rez.

Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai, by Jim Jarmusch. Detached, somber, stoic... is he a warrior? Soundtrack by Wu Tang.

Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance, by Alanis Obomsawin. We can't watch this doc on the Oka Crisis without wanting revenge.

Once Were Warriors, by Lee Tamahori. A Maori family trapped, like the rest of us, in cycles of colonial confusion.

Whale Rider, Niki Caro. In the past and now, Paikea is a great leader born to save the people.

V for Vendetta, James McTeigue. A warrior for freedom takes on the police and blows up Parliament. It's anarchy. Seriously.

MUSIC

Aztlan Underground, El Vuh, Dead Prez, Manik, War Party, Resistant Culture.

FOOD

Anything wild and natural... especially the good stuff like muktuk, deer tongue, oolichan grease, fiddleheads, fish head soup, moose nose, berry soups, pickerel cheeks, corn soup, beaver and muskrat tails, bear grease, and of course, caribou babies.

TIME TO ORGANIZE

Branches and members of the New Socialist Group are active in a number of cities. Call for information about our activities.

Vancouver	Box 4955, Vancouver, V6B 4A6 vancouver@newsocialist.org
Hamilton	hamilton@newsocialist.org
Edmonton	(780) 451-3103, or edmonton@newsocialist.org
Kingston	(613) 542-8462 (Contact Toby), kingston@newsocialist.org
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Teiowí:sonte Thomas Deer displays his passport. See his article on Cuba's refusal to recognize the Haudenosaunee passport at page 39.

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THE NEW SOCIALIST GROUP *is an organization of activists working to renew socialism from below as part of today's struggles. Our socialism is revolutionary and democratic, committed to working-class self-emancipation, internationalism and opposition to all forms of oppression. We reject bureaucratic and authoritarian notions of socialism and look instead to the radical tradition of socialism from below, which believes that liberation can only be achieved through the activity and mobilization of the oppressed themselves. Ideas need to be put into action. So if you like what you read, get in touch with us.*