

WARRIOR

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Take A Stand



**Stop Violence & Abuse
Against Women & Children**

APOCALYPSE NOW (OR NEVER)!

Indigenous Resistance & Survival into the 21st Century

For all of you who've slept on the issues, here's an update on the real world:

Globalization & the Assault on Indigenous Resources

"The present global economic system, & the global corporations & bureaucracies that are its driving force, cannot survive without an ever-increasing supply of natural resources: forests, minerals, oil & natural gas, fish, wildlife, freshwater, and arable land, among others. In an economic model based on exponential growth, all of these resources are being rapidly depleted, so much so that it has already led to recent wars over oil, notably in Iraq, and soon, over water. The global model also depends on highly developed new modern infrastructure, often built in pristine areas, where Indigenous cultures still thrive. These include giant hydroelectric dams, pipelines, canals, roads, seaports, airports, electricity grids, etc., to efficiently extract resources, move them across different terrain to oceans, and then on to industrial processing & markets."

Paradigm Wars; Indigenous Peoples' Resistance to Economic Globalization, Special Report of International Forum on Globalization, 2005

New World Order

"As we enter the 21st century, the new world order continues to prevail with a lone superpower and its transnational corporations relentlessly seeking greater & greater hegemony & control over the peoples & resources of our planet. The consequences are unparalleled hunger, poverty, & human suffering as the gaping chasm between the few wealthy & the destitute millions widens."

CovertAction Quarterly, "Global Recolonization," 2000

Global Environmental Crisis

"Earth will face more & bigger hurricanes, floods & tornadoes, caused by a warming climate in the century to come... Natural disasters appear to be becoming more frequent & their effects more severe."

"Rising global temperatures are likely to raise the incidence of extreme weather events, including storms & heavy rainfall, cyclones & droughts."

Global Environmental Outlook, United Nations report, 1999

System of Self-Destruction

"What becomes clear from our research is that the economic model that evolved in the industrial West & which is now spreading throughout the entire world is slowly undermining itself. As now structured, it will not take us very far into the next century. The question, then, is whether we can find another path that can be sustained."

State of the World, World Watch Institute, 2000

When Civilization Collapses

"Modern civilized people spend most of their lives in artificial cocoons, where indoor temperatures can be regulated, food, water, & clothing are easy to obtain; and shelter is always available. The underpinnings of technology that support this existence are fragile, as can be seen when a natural or manmade disaster occurs; the amenities of civilization collapse, & the basics such as food, water & shelter are difficult or impossible to obtain. Even a temporary power outage illustrates the thinness of civilization's veneer. Modern man is at a loss when electric stoves, refrigerators, air conditioners, & automatic garage doors cease to function."

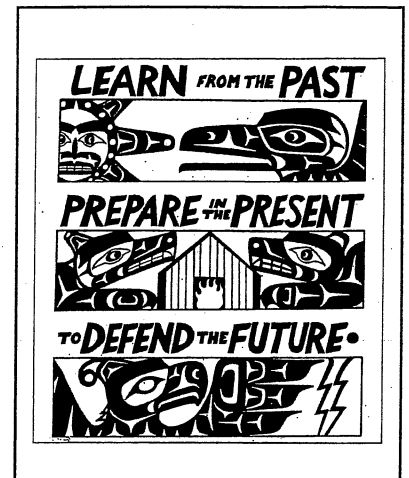
Outdoor Emergency Care; Comprehensive First Aid for Nonurban Settings, National Ski Patrol, 1998

Crisis & Conflict

"The global environment is rapidly deteriorating due to industrial pollution & resource depletion. Global warming is already causing extreme weather patterns, including storms, droughts, deadly heat waves, bug infestations, forest fires, melting of polar ice caps & glaciers, etc., all of which have negative effects on the global economic system."

"The convergence of war, economic decline, & ecological crises will lead to greater overall social conflict within the imperialist nations in the years to come. It is this growing conflict that will create changes in the present social conditions, which will create greater opportunities for organized resistance..."

Zig-Zag, Colonization & Decolonization, Summer 2004 ♦



Indigenous *Intifadah* at Six Nations

Land Reclamation Sparks Police & Settler Attacks, Months-Long Standoff

“What I’m nervous of now is the Ontario Provincial Police going in with guns. The natives don’t make me nervous at all; it was all peaceful until this morning.”

Kathy Maher, Caledonia resident, *Globe & Mail*, Friday, April 21, 2006

In the early morning hours of Thursday, April 20, 2006, over 150 officers from the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) raided a Native blockade on the Six Nations reservation, located 20 km southwest of Hamilton, Ontario. They violently arrested 16 Natives, using physical assaults, pepper spray, and tasers. The police were quickly forced to withdraw, however, as hundreds of Six Nations members & allies converged on the site. More blockades were erected around the area, including on Highway 6, consisting of burning tires, vehicles, dismantled electrical pylons, and piles of gravel. A small bridge was also burned down.

The next day, Mohawks on the Tyendinaga reservation, 200 km east of Toronto, blockaded a Canadian National (CN) rail line, cutting off freight & passenger service in a major travel corridor. This action stranded thousands of commuters who had to be transported by bus, and cost CN over \$100 million a day in lost cargo

shipments. The train blockade was removed the next day, but it was a sharp & powerful warning against any further police violence at Six Nations. In Kahnawake, traffic was disrupted on the Mercier Bridge as warriors hung Unity flags. At the Seaway International bridge, traffic was also disrupted by Akwesasne Mohawks. Many other solidarity protests occurred across the country in the days & weeks that followed, including one on April 26 in Vancouver, during which several hundred people blocked the Lion’s Gate bridge during rush hour.

Six Nations members claimed that a planned \$6-million, 600-house subdivision being built by Henco Industries was on unceded Six Nations land, part of a tract that had been provided to them in 1784 by the British for their military alliance during the American colonial revolution. The land had never been surrendered or sold by the Six Nations, but over the years had been cut off & bought & sold to various parties by the government.

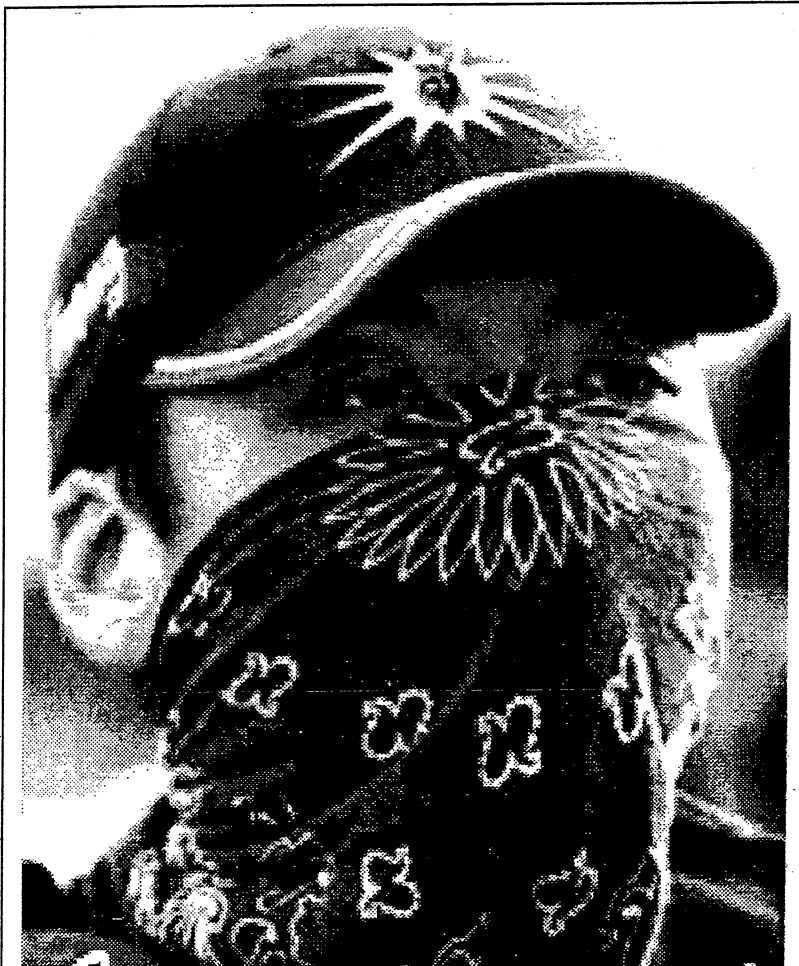
Six Nations is one of the largest reserves in Canada,

with a population of approximately 20,000. It is comprised of members from all six nations in the Haudenosaunee (People of the Longhouse, the 6 Nations Iroquois Confederacy consisting of the Mohawk, Seneca, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Tuscarora). After the US revolution, British loyalist forces & their allies withdrew across the border into present-day Canada.

In the spring of 2006, as Henco began construction, members of the Six Nations set up a camp blockading the entrance to the site (February 28). In March, Henco obtained a court injunction ordering the protesters off the site. A deadline was set for March 22, which came & went as the land reclamation continued. On April 19, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty publicly stated that the dispute would be settled in a “peaceful manner.” Within 24 hours, however, the OPP had launched their violent pre-dawn assault.

As negotiations continued following the April 20 raid, regular rallies were held by residents of Caledonia, demanding police dismantle the Native blockades & reopen the highway. Clashes between settler residents & Natives would continue through the spring and into summer, reminiscent of white mob violence during the 1990 Oka Crisis.

On May 22, just hours after dismantling blockades on Highway 6 as an act of goodwill, barricades were re-built & fortified following



Women Warrior at Six Nations, 2006

violent clashes between settlers & Natives. As dozens of riot police were deployed to separate the two groups, a back-hoe tractor was used to dig up sections of the highway. An electrical power station was also sabotaged & set on fire, causing a blackout throughout the area, affecting several thousand people & businesses. The cost for this attack alone is estimated at \$1.5 million to repair. In Akwesasne, two cars were set on fire closing the Seaway International Bridge for several hours. In North Battleford, Saskatchewan, members of the Poundmaker reserve blocked the No. 1 Trans-Canada highway for 2 hours.

As negotiations continued, the blockades on Highway 6 were again removed on May 23. The reoccupation of the construction site continued. On Friday June 9, a vehicle containing an OPP officer & agents from the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms (ATF) was captured

conducting surveillance. Although released shortly after, OPP claim the incident resulted in serious injury to an officer struck by the vehicle. Warrants for attempted murder, dangerous driving, and assault on police were issued for several individuals.

On June 22, it was revealed that the Ontario government had purchased the land & agreed to compensate Henco Industries as part of its ongoing negotiations with Six Nations. It is estimated that the potential revenue from the project would have been \$45-million, although the amount paid by the government to Henco has been kept secret. Costs of the dispute itself are estimated at well over \$12 million, including policing, repairs, & compensation to businesses.

For updates, see:

www.mohawknationnews.com

www.sisis.nativeweb.org

Interview with Kaheheti:io, Mohawk Youth from Kahnawake

Kaheheti:io (He makes a beautiful garden) identifies himself as a 20-year old member of the Bear clan from Kahnawake. Originally one of 16 arrested on April 20, Kaheheti:io was held for 5 days due to his refusal to cooperate with police & courts. From *Native Solidarity News*, CKUT radio in Montreal.

Question: Why did you go to 6 Nations?

Answer: Well, originally we had gone to check on the status of another issue—Red Hill—where they're building a highway through what was found to be our ancestral land... and that's where we found out there was another protest going on near Caledonia, where land had been reclaimed peacefully.

Q: How long were you there for?

A: I was there for roughly a month and a week, right up to the day they arrested us (April 20).

Q: Could you talk a bit about that?

A: That night it was about 4 AM or so, there were 3 of us at the front gate tending the sacred fire and keeping a look out. That was when the OPP rolled up and about 30 of them swarmed out and then just started arresting people. And what I did, as soon as they put their hands on me, I dropped down to the ground & exercised the right to uh—"peaceful resistance" as I'd been taught by you guys in Montreal and that would be a good way to peacefully continue the protest, to show I wasn't gonna leave there willingly but also that I wasn't—seen as we were totally outnumbered—I wasn't gonna fight them back, you know, live and fight another day, and at that point we were still promoting that we were peaceful.

Q: What happened once you got to the jail?

A: Well, pretty much they had to drag me everywhere cuz I wasn't co-operating with them. I was saying "I shall neither resist nor comply with your foreign laws. I shall remain peaceful." So I had them carry me everywhere. You could just tell they were really pissed off that they had to do that. So they dragged me into the police station and they had a Native cop, his name's Monty, they had him rip my medicine bag from my hands... As soon as they went for it I just grabbed it & they had him just like tear it away and they all tried to pry my fingers off but they couldn't. I was even amazed they couldn't. But

eventually the bag did rip and they have all this on video camera. I was speaking in the language from the time they first grabbed me up to that point, until I was in the cell with the comrades.

Q: So despite the arrests & the huge police presence people are still positive & still fighting?

A: For sure. The people have maintained that we are not going anywhere. And the way Canada views a peaceful resolution to this is us moving out, but that ain't gonna happen. What we put on the table from the beginning was that Canada should compensate Henco for this whole mix up that it was even allowed to go on for this long, and for them to move out.

Q: They had sent negotiators from Ottawa & I remember reading that they left 'cuz they weren't gonna continue talking as long as the blockade was up. So basically there would be no discussion unless it was on Canada's terms.

A: Yeah, that's pretty much how they're making it seem, like they don't wanna reward people for doing something, even though the blockades—like they're trying to say it's all militants and stuff—this was peaceful from the beginning. There was children, elders, there were no weapons whatsoever, and they still want to portray us as a militant group. When they came & invaded us & abducted us from our lands that's when they crossed that line and *they* turned it up a notch, so we had to follow suit.

Q: And you're from Kahnawake? There was a solidarity action in Kahnawake when the invasion occurred, right?

A: Yeah, that was to show we will retaliate if anything happens to our people, if anyone is killed or seriously injured, Canada will have a price to pay. But the fact is, my people are awakening and I think Canada is afraid of that. And I think that as we awake, other people will awaken to the oppression, and who we are as a people. We have a rich culture, we still have a lot to contribute in the ways of peace & friendship and love and understanding. And these are the things once my people awaken we're gonna reclaim—which is the principles of the *Gayanerakowa*, the Great Law of Peace (Six Nations constitution).

Q: Do you think Canada's afraid that this type of reclamation could happen elsewhere?

A: Yeah, in my opinion. I see Canada as being scared, if they say "Ok, you can have your land back," since they stole it, that's gonna like – boom—there's gonna be similar things going on all over, so they're worried about that. But they gotta realize that the people in Six Nations reclamation aren't going anywhere, so they just gotta deal with that. ♦

Resist the Assimilation of First Nations

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) was first established in 1980 in Ottawa. It claims to be the national representative of Indigenous peoples across Canada, one that fights for our title & rights. In reality, it is a state-funded organization comprised of *Indian Act* band council chiefs, who act as neocolonial agents in the interests of government & corporations.

In order to understand the role of organizations such as the AFN & band councils, we need to know our history & be aware of current government strategies in regards to Indigenous peoples.

Indian Act

The *Indian Act* was first passed in 1876 by Canada. It was, and is, a separate set of laws for Indigenous peoples covering virtually all aspects of daily life (apartheid). It was through the *Indian Act* that reservations, band councils, and status were imposed. It was also used to ban ceremonies such as the Potlatch & Sundance, as well as fund-raising for land claims.

Following the defeat of Indigenous military resistance (by 1890), the *Indian Act* became the basis for government control of Natives. Despite this, it was always intended as a *temporary* set of laws, to be used only until Natives had been successfully assimilated into Canadian society.

The 'White Paper'

In 1969, Canada revealed a plan for abolishing the *Indian Act* & phasing out reserves. Known as the 'White Paper', it ignited protests by Natives across the country. Many band chiefs & councils also opposed it. Opposition was so strong not because Natives wanted the *Indian Act*, but because its removal would so clearly mean their assimilation into Canadian society.

Abolishing the *Indian Act* would have removed all special legal status for Natives & reservation land. Many feared dispossession of their last remaining land base: the reserves.

Removing their special legal status would mean the land could then be bought & sold on the free market. Band councils also opposed the White Paper because it would mean cutting them off direct state funding, & shifting the financial burden for governance onto them. Some were also forced to oppose the White Paper due to grassroots community pressure. Canada withdrew the 'White Paper' & claimed it would not be official policy. Despite this, the assimilation of Indigenous peoples remains Canada's goal.

The Role of Collaborator Chiefs

Canada's control over Natives has taken many forms, including police & military violence, churches, Residential Schools, & Indian Agents. Today, chiefs & councilors acting as collaborators have become a vital part of the colonial regime's ability to control Native peoples.



Colonialism always prefers to deal with collaborator chiefs, who can more effectively control their people than can direct government agencies. This is most often done by setting up puppet governments comprised of Native collaborators. The state gives its full support and recognizes only them as the legitimate representatives of the colonized. It is a common practise of colonial powers historically and in Asia, Africa & South America. It is sometimes referred to as *neocolonialism* (see text box below).

These chiefs serve to pacify & confuse Natives, appearing to fight for 'rights & title' when in reality they are working right along with the government & corporations. Many are themselves politicians, businessmen, and lawyers, who gain wealth, status & power from the colonial system. This involves acting as a legal agent (i.e., as a band council or political organization) on behalf of Natives, legalizing the theft & exploitation of our ancestral territories. By helping government impose its policies & strategies on Natives, these types of collaborators aid in the assimilation of their own people.

Assimilation of First Nations

In 1969, many chiefs & councilors opposed abolishing the *Indian Act*; they helped mobilize thousands of Natives into struggle against the 'White Paper'. Today, many claim it is an obstacle to economic development and should be scrapped. Already, bands have signed agreements that remove them from the authority of the *Indian Act* (i.e., self-government & modern-day treaties). What's changed?

Since the 1960s, tens of thousands of Natives have passed through colleges & universities. Many were trained in business, administration, or law, skills which were useful for their careers in the *Indian Act* system as chiefs, councilors, or clerks. During the same time, Indian Agents were phased out and control over local governance was transferred to the band council itself.

Today, band councils handle multi-million dollar budgets & are involved in many diverse businesses, including logging, fishing, mining, airlines, garbage dumps, oil & gas, etc. In many cases, they have entered into partnerships with transnational corporations. This development has only been possible through their assimilation into the colonial society (which they seek to perpetuate upon their own people).

The assimilation of chiefs & councilors is not hard to see: business suits, golf tournaments, fancy hotels, etc., are all signs of corporate culture & reflect the real interests of the Aboriginal business elite. In order for them to achieve ever-greater wealth, status & power, they promote the assimilation of their own people into the capitalist economic system as slaves for the corporations.



Self-Government

Today, band councils & their political organizations (i.e., the AFN, First Nations Summit, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, etc.) are selling away our lands & resources as part of self-government or modern-day treaty negotiations. They are surrendering our rights & title through their constant erosion in these negotiations & agreements (which always recognize the ultimate power & authority of Canada, its provinces, and its constitution).

Portrayed as some form of sovereignty & nationhood, self-government is the exact opposite. It transforms band councils into municipal governments under provincial & federal control. Reserve lands become fee simple property that can be bought & sold on the free market.

As part of self-government, bands are expected to attain economic independence & the ability to raise their own revenue. This is accomplished by giving them greater legal & economic *capacity* to sell or lease land, set up partnerships with corporations (i.e., logging, oil & gas, mining), exploit natural resources, impose taxation, etc.

All of this involves significant changes in legal codes & political administration. For this reason, new laws on First Nations governance, financial accountability, etc. are now being enacted, which are designed to facilitate the expansion of band councils to municipal governments.

Sound familiar? It should. It's the same goal as the 1876 *Indian Act* and the 1969 White Paper: the legal, political & economic assimilation of Indigenous peoples into Canada. Some bands are already well advanced in their self-government deals, including the Nisga'a, Sechelt, Westbank, Nunavut, James Bay Cree & Inuit, as well as the Gwich'in & other Yukon bands.

Money & Economic Development

High levels of poverty, unemployment, & social dysfunction among Indigenous peoples are used by the state, corporations, & the Aboriginal business elite to promote ever-greater corporate invasion of our territories under the guise of 'economic development'. The solution, we are told, is money. The more the better. But is that really true? In Alberta during the 1970s, large deposits of oil & gas began to be exploited by energy corporations. In some cases, they made deals with chiefs to drill on reserve lands, providing royalties to bands. By the early 1980s, some bands were receiving millions of dollars annually from the corporations.

All Sell-Outs Better Get the Hell Out!!!



Far from alleviating the problems in these communities, this money served to create new problems. In Hobbema, near Edmonton, a rash of suicides made this area known for having the country's highest suicide rates in the mid-80s. Drugs & alcoholism, division and internal violence increased; by the late 1990s, Hobbema was known for its gang violence, including robberies, drug dealing, assaults & killings.

On the other hand, the Lubicon Cree in northern Alberta were, until the 1970s, largely self-sufficient. Some 80-90% of the community were self-reliant, relying largely on hunting, trapping & fishing. This all changed in the '70s, when energy corporations built roads into the north & began operations.

By the mid-80s, the Lubicon were 90% dependent on social assistance. They were unable to rely on traditional food gathering methods as most of the wildlife had been forced out of their hunting areas by industrial

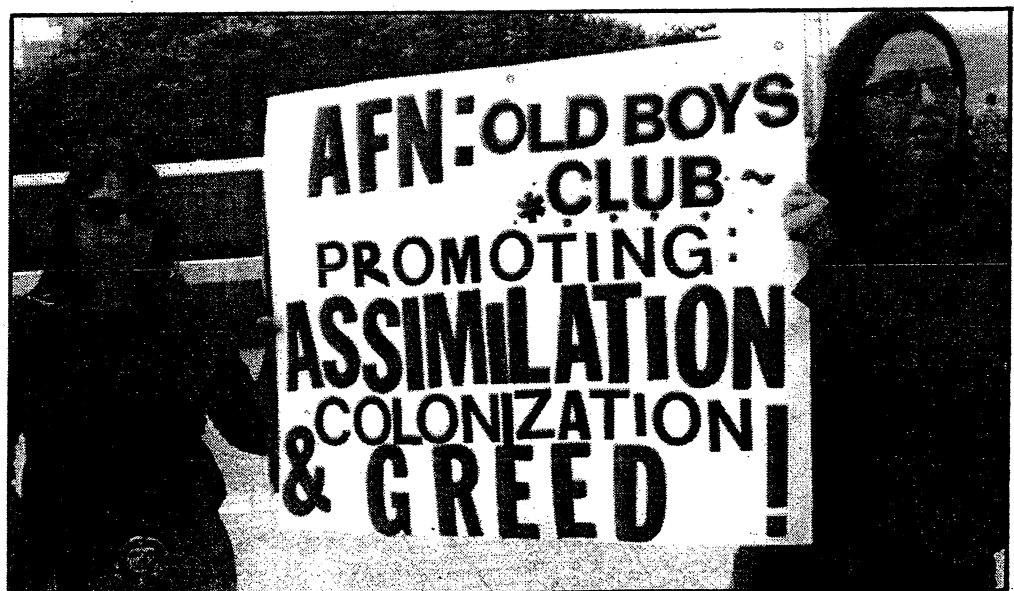
logging, oil & gas drilling, road-building, etc. They were also sick & dying, with high rates of disease & suicide.

Clearly, economic development is not the solution. Based largely on resource exploitation or some form of industrial activity, economic development always has a negative social & ecological impact. Money can't solve problems that don't arise from poverty. The severe social dysfunction affecting our communities—drug & alcohol abuse, suicide, imprisonment, disease, etc.—may be compounded by poverty, but are not simply the result of a lack of money. Instead, they are the direct result of colonialism & genocide. This includes not only the *Indian Act* system & Residential Schools, but also the ongoing dispossession of our ancestral lands & their destruction through economic development. These factors lead to loss of culture & identity, which contributes to social dysfunction & makes Natives vulnerable to assimilation.

Conclusion

In the context of colonialism, there are no legitimate representatives of our peoples on any regional, national or international level. The AFN & band councils are illegitimate entities, existing only through the *Indian Act* and state funding, both of which are the result of colonization (a crime under international law). The main function of the AFN is to assist in developing & implementing government policies on a national level. Without groups such as the AFN, Canada would have far greater difficulty organizing its colonial system. Without the band councils, it would have far greater trouble *maintaining* its colonial system. ♦

Photo: on July 11, 2006, the Indigenous Resistance Organizing Committee (IROC) held a protest during the AFN's annual general assembly at Canada Place in Vancouver, 'BC'. Approx. 50 people gathered to express their opposition to the Indian Act collaborators.



Neocolonialism

Another term for collaborator chiefs is *neocolonialism*, which literally means a 'new colonialism'. It involves the use of state-funded Native organizations, governance & business to indirectly control Indigenous people. To accomplish this, Canada provides billions of dollars annually to literally buy off, co-opt & corrupt our communities, organizations & movements. The late Howard Adams, a Metis militant & writer, explains neocolonialism in his book *Tortured People*:

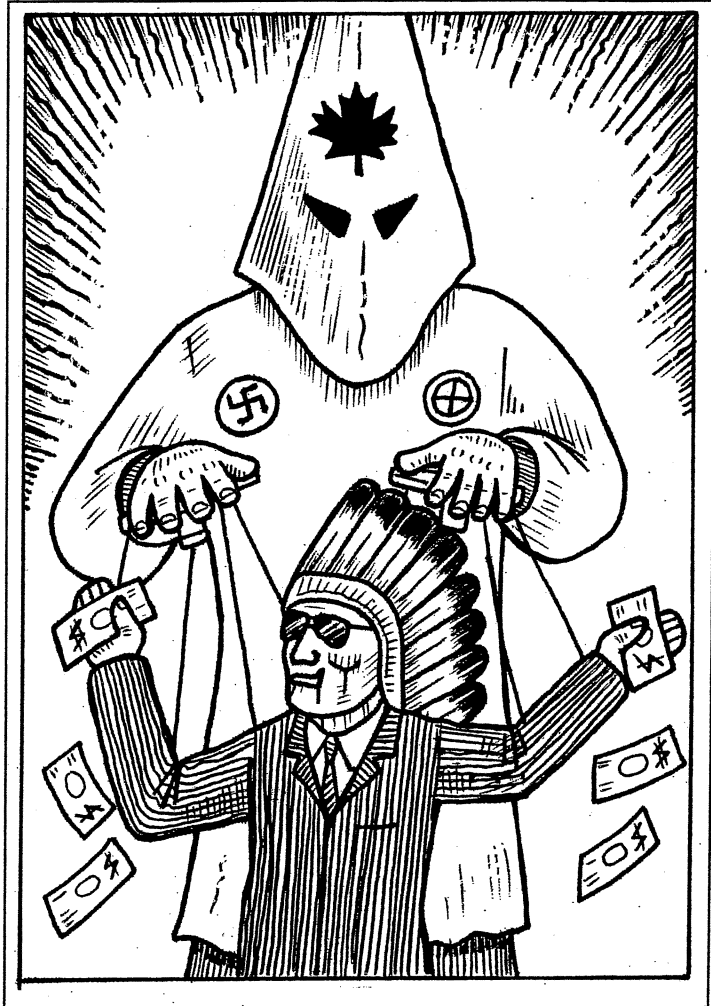
"Neocolonialism involves the use of Natives to control their own people. In general, it means giving some of the benefits of the dominant society to a small, privileged minority, in return for their help in making sure the majority don't cause trouble... the image of successful Aboriginals in government [helps] create the myth that all Natives had a place in the dominant society.

"The change from colonialism to neocolonialism is a change only in how the state controls the colonized people. Colonialism is a system in which the colonized people have no control over their lives—economically, socially, politically, or culturally. The power to make decisions in these important areas of daily life are almost totally in the hands of others, either the state or corporations & business... The state is willing to share some of the wealth of a racist system with a few Natives in return for a more effective method of controlling the majority.

"The most threatening & effective form of neocolonialism devised by the state has been its efforts to intervene & control popular Native organizations which had been previously independent. They began with core grants to help the associations organize; then the elected leaders of the organizations got larger & larger salaries—making them dependent on the state just as the Native bureaucrats in government were. As the years went by more money was provided to organizations—money for housing, economic development & service programs, etc.

"The most important effect of government funding, or state intervention, is that the state, by manipulating grants, can determine to a large extent what strategy the organizations will use. It is no coincidence that when organizations were independent of government money in the mid-sixties, they followed a militant strategy which confronted government. Now, after twenty years of grants, they are following a strategy that requires subservience to the state."

Howard Adams, *Tortured People; the Politics of Colonization*, p. 56-57 (Theytus Books 1999)



AFN Collaborators Take Trip to Israel

In February & March, 2006, an AFN delegation traveled to Israel on a "solidarity trip." According to Grand Thief Phil Fontaine, "Indigenous people in Canada have much in common with the people of Israel, including a respect of the land & their languages... This mission is an excellent opportunity for us to share our values & our traditional ways of life." Among the participants were Fontaine; Bev Jacobs of the Native Women's Association of Canada; Rick O'Brien, Yukon AFN regional chief; Donna Wuttunee of Industry Canada/Aboriginal Business Canada; band chiefs Peter Barlow (New Brunswick), Kelly Bird (Saskatchewan), Tina Levesque (Manitoba), and others. No mention was made of Israel's own apartheid regime it has imposed over Palestinians, or the ongoing military attacks & violence in the Occupied Territories. ♦



Collaborators Ed John, Shawn Atleo, Stewart Phillip, and Mike Retasket

Sell-Out Chiefs Sign Deals with RCMP

In the last couple of years, sell-out chiefs have signed policing agreements with Canada's national police force, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Known as **Public Safety Cooperation Protocols**, the first was a national deal between the **Assembly of First Nations** & the RCMP, signed in 2004. The second was a similar deal inked between the RCMP & three BC organizations: the **First Nations Summit**, the **Union of BC Indian Chiefs**, & the **BC-AFN**, in 2005.

The agreements are more or less identical & establish a working relationship between the RCMP & the organizations that signed on. In the first section it is stated that "The purpose of this Protocol is to establish trusting & reciprocal relationships... with the goal of either preventing situations involving conflict... [or] resolving disputes which do develop at the earliest possible opportunity." This is to be achieved, in part, by establishing "ongoing communications by exchanging information... so as to strengthen local, regional, national policing, agencies, & organizations... and the establishment of a Joint AFN/RCMP Crisis Response Team..." (quotes from AFN-RCMP 2004 Protocol).

In the BC deal (signed by Ed John, Doug Kelly, Dave Porter, Stewart Phillip, Robert Shintah, Mike Retasket, & Shawn Atleo), it is stated that the role of First Nations/band councils in BC will be to "strengthen the shared partnership at a regional & local level of ongoing communication with the RCMP, in particular to identify point persons to liaise with the RCMP... to provide information & suggestions to the RCMP... on conflict prevention, crisis management & resolution; to assist in the identification of mutually beneficial solutions... [and] to establish a Working Group comprised of First Nations in BC representatives to facilitate a conflict or crisis management process, cross-cultural training, awareness, & communication..."

In a section on *Operational Objectives*, the first is to "Identify situations that could lead to crisis." The second is to "Exchange information & advice on how to prevent crisis from occurring." If a conflict does occur, the objectives are to identify solutions, to provide advice & recommendations, as well as "timely responses." If intervention occurs, the agreement sets out guidelines for more information gathering through debriefings in order to "acquire skills & knowledge to address lessons learned from past incidents, as well as to manage crisis more effectively."

In a section on *Operational Arrangements*, it is stated that "the Parties will establish & maintain a network of contact/resource people who are able to act promptly when a crisis arises... The Parties will develop such tools as will effectively address issues related to public & community safety such as: a) the development of collaborative & working relationships; b) the development of training tools such as orientation manuals & workshops including Aboriginal culture, practices & traditions; c) the sharing of lessons learned/best practices of dispute resolutions... The Parties will enhance communications between First Nations Government, local, regional & national community policing agencies & organizations to strengthen shared partnerships."

What kind of conflict or crisis are the RCMP most concerned about? Clearly, it is Indigenous resistance that represents the greatest type of crisis that could confront a colonial regime & its security forces. We can see this in the largest deployments of police in recent history: Oka, Gustafsen Lake, Ipperwash, Burnt Church, Six Nations...

The basis of any counter-insurgency campaign is intelligence gained from informants & collaborators. These protocols formalize the role of Native political organizations & band councils in providing intelligence to police, as well as assisting in developing strategies, tactics & techniques for police repression. ♦

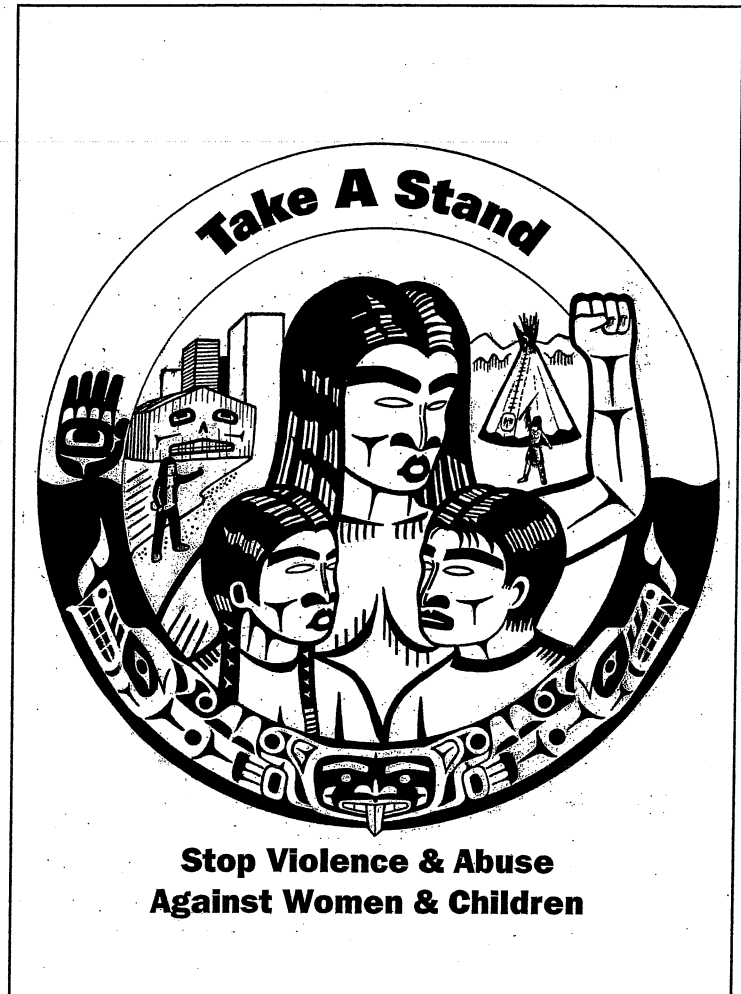
Violence & Abuse Against Indigenous Women & Children: A Legacy of Colonialism & Apartheid

"Sexual abuse of First Nation's children is at crisis proportions. This form of violence is a legacy of colonialism."

Jackie Lynn, *Colonialism & the Sexual Exploitation of Canada's First Nations Women*

"Discrimination & violence against Indigenous women is Canada's untold human rights issue."

Alex Neve,
Amnesty International Canada



Like European society itself, scratch the surface of violence and abuse against Indigenous women & children, and you will quickly find a dark world of corruption, exploitation, perversion & depravity. One that exists at a broad social level as well as in the family household. Sexual violence & abuse against Indigenous women & children has reached proportions that some describe as epidemic. The vast majority of this occurs in the family home, with most of it never being reported. This problem is especially prevalent in Indigenous communities due to the legacy of colonialism.

Sexual abuse of women & children is also part of a multi-billion dollar global industry, involving organized crime groups, prostitution, sex tourism, pedophile rings, massage parlors, escort services, pornography, human trafficking & slavery, etc. Due to impoverishment, family & community dysfunction, trauma, & subsequent drug addiction, many Indigenous women & children are vulnerable to sexual exploitation through prostitution.

Yet, whatever form this violence & abuse takes, the most terrible acts occur behind closed doors, out of sight & out of mind. It's easy to ignore, or rationalize that it doesn't "appear" very widespread. When it is talked about, people don't want to hear about it. Many don't even want to think about it.

As disturbing as this phenomenon is, we must confront it. There is no doubt that violence & abuse against Indigenous women & children is a primary factor in the crisis of social dysfunction gripping our communities, both urban & rural, including alcohol & drugs, suicide, gangs, prostitution, imprisonment, mental & physical health problems, etc. This dysfunction has a negative impact on our resistance movement & seriously undermines our ability to organize & fight. If our struggle is ever to advance, it must come to terms with violence & abuse against women & children at the family & community level.

Highway of Tears

Since the 1980s, some 32 women, mostly Aboriginal, have disappeared along Highway 16 between Prince Rupert & Prince George, in northern BC. Officially, 9 of these, aged 14-25, are under investigation. All but one were Aboriginal. In 2005, a Take Back the Highway march was held to draw attention to the issue. In 2006, the killings & disappearances along Hwy. 16—dubbed the ‘Highway of Tears’—received national & international media attention following the most recent case, that of 14-year old Aielah Saric-Auger. The young Native women went missing on February 2, 2006, and her body was found 10 days later. Community members began to organize. A walk was held along the highway, and calls for action began to sound. This prompted the government, along with RCMP, local municipalities, and band councils, to organize a public symposium in Prince George in March 2006.

Highway 16 is a stretch of highway 724 kilometers in length running between Prince Rupert on the coast, & Prince George in the central interior. There are about a dozen Native communities/reservations along it, including those of the Tsimshian, Nisga’a, Cheslatta, Gitksan, Wetsuwet’en, Carrier-Sekani, and others.

In June 2006, a report was released based on recommendations made at the public symposium held in March. It cited poverty & a lack of social activities in isolated reserves as the “root causes” of the disappearances & murders. It noted that many of the reserves have no essential business or recreation centers, and are several kilometers from nearby town centers. Combined with poverty & lack of transportation, many young women end up hitchhiking. The report saw these factors as making young Native women particularly vulnerable to sexual predators, and recommended shuttle buses between communities, a network of safe-houses along the highway for women to stay at, a series of emergency phone booths, increased police patrols, and a 1-800 phone line to report hitchhikers, be implemented. Government officials promised tens of thousands of dollars, and the RCMP assigned more investigators.






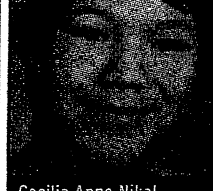
Along the Highway of Tears

From Prince Rupert to Prince George, a trail of tragedy

Aielah Saric-Auger, 14
LAST SEEN: Feb. 2, 2006
FOUND: Feb. 10, 2006

Roxanne Thiara, 15
LAST SEEN: Nov., 1994
FOUND

VANCOUVER SUN

 Tamara Chipman, 22 LAST SEEN: Sep. 1, 2005 NOT FOUND	 Lana Derrick, 19 LAST SEEN: Oct. 7, 1995 NOT FOUND	 Ramona Wilson, 16 LAST SEEN: June 11, 1994 FOUND: Apr., 1995	 Delphine Nikal, 16 LAST SEEN: June 14, 1990 NOT FOUND	 Alisha Germaine, 15 FOUND: Dec. 9, 1994	 Cecilia Anne Nikal LAST SEEN: 1989 NOT FOUND
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Vancouver's Downtown Eastside

There is little doubt that the response from government officials & police to the Highway of Tears was due to the ongoing criticism of police for their handling of the missing & murdered women of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Since the early 1990s, some 68 women, many Aboriginal, have disappeared and/or been found murdered. Beginning in 1991, Native women's groups in Vancouver began holding an annual Women's Memorial March every February 14 (Valentine's Day) to remember the missing and/or dead women. The march passes through the Downtown Eastside, stopping at locations where women's bodies have been found, or where they had last been seen. Songs & ceremonies are carried out. In addition, the march always stops outside the Vancouver Police Department building located at Main & Hastings (in the heart of the DTES).

Over the years, as more women were added to the list of missing, public criticism of the VPD increased. They were criticized for their apparent lack of effort in seriously investigating the disappearances & murders, with critics charging this was due to racism & the social class of the victims (many were Aboriginal, and many are alleged to have been drug addicts & prostitutes). In September 2001, the RCMP were called in to assist the VPD, and a joint task force was established. *America's Most Wanted*, a popular US television show, did a feature article on the missing women. Public pressure was increasing for the police to at least be *seen* as doing something towards solving the disappearances. Eventually, in February 2002, Robert Pickton was arrested & charged with over two dozen counts of murder, based largely on DNA evidence found at his Port Coquitlam pig farm (Coquitlam being a rural suburb of Vancouver).

Following Pickton's 2002 arrest, more revelations of Vancouver police & RCMP incompetence came to light. Despite assertions that a serial killer was involved, police & city officials had vehemently denied this. In 1998, Kim Rosso, a geographic profiler in the Vancouver Police—a highly respected & award-winning investigator—stated that there was a strong possibility that a serial killer was involved. He was then excluded from the case & much of his work undermined. In 1999, the mayor even suggested offering a \$5,000 reward for any of the women on the list of disappeared who stepped forward, implying that they weren't really 'missing' (later offering a \$100,000 reward for tips). In a 2004 report on violence against urban Indigenous women, Amnesty International found that in Vancouver, "Police & city officials had long denied that there was any pattern to the disappearances or that women were in any particular danger."

Pickton himself had been charged with attempted murder in 1997 after he repeatedly stabbed a woman working as a prostitute. The charges included unlawful confinement & assault with a weapon, but were later stayed when the victim would not testify against him. Then, in July 1998, police received a tip regarding a woman who had been at Pickton's property and saw bags of bloody clothing as well as ID from various women. Another tip came from Bill Hiscox, an employee of Pickton's at the time ("Informant in Pickton case fails in bid to claim reward," *The Province*, June 26, 2003). At this time Pickton was considered a 'person of interest' in the case and was even placed

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Nine more women linked to Pickton case, total 31





YVONNE MARIE BOEN

ANDREA FAY BORHAVEN

WENDY LYNN CRAWFORD





Remains include three unidentified women

BY LORI CULBERT VANCOUVER SUN

The number of victims linked to the Robert (Willy) Pickton serial murder investigation reached 31 Tuesday after the Missing Women Task Force announced it had found the DNA of nine more women.

Six of the victims were on the list of 65 women missing from the Downtown Eastside, and their remains were found on the Port Coquitlam pig farm owned by Pickton and his family.

The other three victims have not been identified and police

under surveillance for a brief period ("Pickton farm searched 3 times in 1997," *The Vancouver Sun*, Feb. 28, 2002). Along with these incidents, tips from community members about parties with prostitutes, assaults & even killings occurring at Pickton's farm—known as 'Piggy's Palace'—were provided to police. Despite all this, it would still take several years for Pickton to be arrested.

In August 2006, prosecutors reduced the number of charges to just 6 because the amount of evidence that would have to be used would be an "unreasonable burden" for a jury. Police say the 20 other counts are still 'active' and may be tried separately. Pickton's trial is set to begin in January 2007. Despite Pickton's arrest, and his alleged association to 31 victims whose DNA were found at his pig farm, there still remain over 37 unsolved disappearances from the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.

Violence Against Aboriginal Women

In 1996, a report by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada found that Aboriginal women between the ages of 25 & 44 were 4 times as likely to meet a violent death, compared to non-Native women. A 1989 study by the Ontario Native Women's Association found that while 1 out of 10 women in Canada experienced some form of abuse, for Aboriginal women it was 8 out of 10 (*Speaking of Abuse*, BC Legal Services Society, January 2004).

Across Canada since the 1990s, there are an estimated 500 missing or murdered Aboriginal women. Some claim the real number may be in the thousands. In Edmonton, the bodies of some 20 women, most involved in the sex trade, have been found since the 1990s. There are a reported 40 unsolved murders & 39 long term disappearances in Alberta overall. In 2003, the RCMP established Project KARE to investigate these cases, and have stated that at least 8 of the deaths may be the result of a serial killer. A large number of these women were Aboriginal. The situation is similar in Regina, Saskatoon,

& Winnipeg, cities with large Native populations that are impoverished & heavily impacted by anti-social criminal activity, including gangs, drugs, and the sex-trade.

This phenomenon of violence against Indigenous women, along with police & government incompetence, is part of a broad, systemic pattern with deep historical roots. Although seemingly concentrated in urban areas, it frequently occurs in rural communities as well, and is often not reported. In the modern era, the case of Helen Betty Osborne is often used as an example of this.

In 1971, Helen Betty Osborne, a 19-year old Native woman, was abducted, raped & brutally killed by 4 white men in The Pas, Manitoba (population at the time: 6,000). Many residents knew what had happened and who was responsible, but maintained a conspiracy of silence (the name of a book & TV show about the case). Despite strong evidence, police did not seriously investigate the case until 1987, when one man, Dwayne Archie Johnston, was convicted & sentenced to life in prison. Another man was acquitted, one was granted immunity from prosecution in exchange for testimony, and one was never charged.

In studies of this case, it was found that racism & abuse against Natives in The Pas were part of a general pattern, including the sexual harassment of young Indigenous women. The four men had been cruising the streets purposely looking for a young Native woman to have sex with. It is reported that when Osborne, who was not a prostitute, refused, she was abducted, raped and brutally beaten, her face being smashed in.

Three decades later, Felicia Solomon, 16, a cousin of Helen Osborne, disappeared in March 2003. Her body parts were found & identified three months later. Although the case of Helen Osborne is well known, it is but one small part of an overall pattern of oppression & exploitation that Indigenous women experience in reserves & urban ghettos across the country. It is sometimes referred to as *racialized & sexualized* violence (in particular, white supremacist & patriarchal violence, also directed against African & Asian women). The murder of Felicia Solomon reveals not only these aspects of violence & hate against Indigenous women, but also its continuity over several decades.

If we go further back in time, we find that sexualized violence against Indigenous women & children has been a constant factor of colonization. On the prairies, it can be traced back to the so-called 'Indian Wars' of the 1800s, when massacres, rapes, & sexual mutilation were common aspects of European military campaigns against plains Indigenous nations. The same is true in Central & South America, from the time of the Spanish conquistadors to more recent massacres, torture & rapes carried out by state police, military, & paramilitary forces. In these regions there are also thousands of disappeared Indigenous women, with hundreds of corpses having been found, many with signs of torture & mutilation (i.e., Juarez, Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Brazil, etc.).

A Systemic Social Problem

In 2004, Amnesty International released a report entitled *Stolen Sisters*, documenting violence against Aboriginal women in urban areas of Western Canada. It cited several factors in the high rates of violence against urban Native females, including the legacy of Residential School abuses, fostering out of Native children, racism & sexism, as well as economic marginalization. The result was that many urban Native women were impoverished, homeless, and forced into the sex trade. Many had experienced a loss of culture & identity, dysfunctional families & communities, as well as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. All these factors contributed to making young Native women especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation & violence. Another study reached similar conclusions:

"We interviewed 100 women prostituting in Vancouver, Canada. We found an extremely high prevalence of lifetime violence & post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Fifty-two percent of our interviewees were women from Canada's First Nations, a significant overrepresentation in prostitution compared with their representation in Vancouver generally (1.7 – 7%). Eighty-two percent reported a history of childhood sexual abuse, by an average of four perpetrators. Seventy-two percent reported childhood physical abuse, 90% had been physically assaulted in prostitution, 78% had been raped in prostitution. Seventy-two percent met... criteria for PTSD. Ninety-five percent said that they wanted to leave prostitution. Eighty-six percent reported current or past homelessness with housing as one of their most urgent needs. Eighty-six percent expressed a need for treatment for drug or alcohol addictions."

(Abstract from *Prostitution in Vancouver: Violence & the Colonization of First Nations Women*)

The 2004 Amnesty International report also found that police officers had responded with indifference when informed by Natives of missing family members. There was also a failure to report missing persons due to lack of trust in the police, an observation common in many analyses of sexual assault (and seen as a major contributing factor in the massive underreporting of sex abuse). This mistrust is based on fears the complainant will be criminalized by police, that police will fail to provide protection if a report is made, and/or that the justice system itself will fail to prosecute, convict, and/or punish the offender.



Amnesty recommended that more research be done, that police receive culture-sensitive training, that more Native police be hired, and that the government ensure adequate social & health services for Aboriginals, and especially Native women. Also in 2004, the Native Women's Association of Canada began its Sisters in Spirit Campaign to "raise awareness of alarmingly high rates of violence against Aboriginal women in Canada." The group subsequently received \$5-million from the federal government to carry out this work.

Overall, the main recommendations for dealing with this phenomenon have been to increase government funding for services & programs for Native women (including shelters & crisis lines), to increase policing, and to raise public awareness. None of these deal with the fundamental causes of violence against Indigenous women, however. The problem is systemic & social, deeply rooted in European history & culture (see "Roots of Patriarchal Violence" article). It is also deeply rooted within our own communities. To better understand how institutionalized the problem is, consider the following cases:

- In 2005, former RCMP officer Gary Stevens plead guilty to sexual assault of an underage girl. The allegations were first made in April 2004 while Stevens was a member of the RCMP's Kitimat, BC, detachment.
- In 2005, two RCMP officers were suspended during an investigation into allegations they were buying sex from young prostitutes in Prince George, BC. Lee Lakeman, a spokeswoman for the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centers (CASAC) stated that this was "just the tip of the iceberg," referring also to the case of judge David Ramsey ("2 Mounties suspended in 'misconduct' probe," by Jered Stuffco, *The Province*, May 22, 2005).
- In May 2004, David William Ramsey, a BC Provincial Court judge in Prince George, pleaded guilty to buying sex from and assaulting 4 Indigenous girls & youth aged 12, 14, 15, & 16, who had also appeared before him in court. These attacks had occurred between 1992 & 2001. As part of a plea bargain, Ramsey was sentenced to just 7 years and became eligible for parole in 2006. Despite the first complaint being made in 1999, when the RCMP began an investigation, Ramsey was not removed from his official position until 2002.
- On February 17, 2000, two sisters, Doreen LeClair & Corrine McKeowen, both Aboriginal, repeatedly called Winnipeg's 911 emergency number to request police protection from an estranged boyfriend. Although they called 5 times throughout the day, both were killed.
- In a 1996 trial for two white men charged with beating to death Pamela Jean George, a Salteaux mother of two from Sakimay First Nation, the trial judge instructed the jury to keep in mind that George was "indeed a prostitute." The men were convicted of manslaughter & sentenced to 6 1/2 years. They were paroled in 2000.
- John Martin Crawford was sentenced to ten years for brutally killing 35-year old Mary Jane Serloin in Lethbridge, Alberta. After just 5 years, he was released in 1989 and subsequently killed three more Native women.
- Gilbert Paul Jordan, known as the 'boozing barber', was in the company of at least 10 women—most Native—whose deaths were related to alcohol poisoning. In 1988 Jordan was convicted of manslaughter in the death of Vanessa Lee Buckner, 27, who was found naked in a Vancouver hotel room with a blood alcohol level 11 times the legal limit for driving. Jordan has also been convicted of rape, indecent assault, abduction, hit & run, drunk driving, and car theft.
In June 2000, he was charged with sexual assault, negligence causing bodily harm & administering a noxious substance—alcohol—while drinking with a woman in a Victoria hotel. All charges were dropped in October of that year due to lack of evidence. Then, in November, police found Jordan trying to drink with a woman in another Victoria hotel, a breach of his court-imposed conditions. In May 2001, he was sentenced to 15 months in jail and was out in 2002 on probation.
- In 1992, charges of sexual assault were stayed against Prince George Catholic Church bishop Hubert O'Connor. He had been accused by former students at the St. Joseph's Residential School near Williams Lake of molesting them in the 1960s. The charges were dropped after Crown prosecutors failed to fully disclose all evidence to the defense. Complainants also stated that the Crown had failed to notify them or witnesses about important developments in the case and were generally negligent in prosecuting the case. O'Connor was the highest ranking official in the Catholic church to ever be charged with sex crimes.

These cases, along with those in Vancouver, illustrate a number of important points. They show the targeted abuse & exploitation of primarily Indigenous women, as well as the extent to which this abuse permeates all levels of colonial society (from downtown losers to cops, judges & priests). Not only are government officials & police incompetent in their investigation & punishment of these anti-social crimes, there is a clear pattern of their involvement as perpetrators.

The cases of judge David Ramsey, bishop O'Connor and the RCMP officers in Kitimat & Prince George area are especially disturbing considering the murders & disappearances along Highway 16. The very authorities that the people turn to for protection are morally corrupted and directly involved in the sexual exploitation of young Indigenous women & children. Lakeman's comment that this is just the "tip of the iceberg" indicates that the problem is far greater than has been reported by the corporate media.

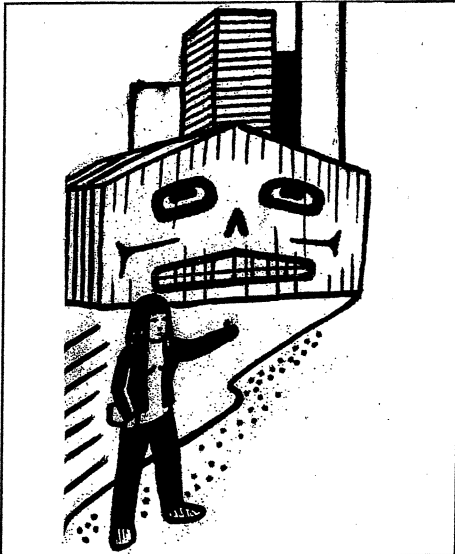
Chief Justices & Corrupt Chiefs: Partners in Crime?

In 1999, one independent BC interior newspaper, *The Radical*, did report on allegations of an organized sex trade in the Prince George area involving judges, doctors, lawyers, police, and even band councils. The paper was forced to close down after one of the accused—Ed John, a long-time chief of the Tl'azt'en band (near Prince George) and head of the First Nations Summit—launched a lawsuit. Ironically, Ed John was named minister of Child & Family Services in November 2000, just as the allegations against him were becoming more public. For those involved in exposing Ed John & others, his appointment as an un-elected minister "brought to light the extent of official protection for pedophiles in public office, and the systemic nature of this crime" (see Appendix VI: Evidence of crimes against aboriginal children, including pedophilia, *Hidden from History*).

These allegations have been echoed by others over the years, including Squamish elder Harriet Nahanee, who has stated that she saw young Native girls being removed from the reserve to serve as prostitutes for wealthy businessmen connected to the Vancouver Club. James Craven, a Blackfoot & constitutional lawyer, has corroborated this story & stated:

"It has been alleged with considerable supporting evidence, that some of the same forces involved in trafficking young Indian boys & girls for the rich & powerful pedophiles are also involved in key aspects of the BC Treaty Commission as well as being involved in using isolated reserves for the landing & distribution of drugs..."

("Reprisals due to exposure of pedophile ring," Statement by James Craven, August 3, 1998)



In 1994, two elders of the Tseshaht band on Vancouver Island stated that "Edward John & Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council members Ron Hamilton & Charlie Thompson have... embezzled money from the Union of BC Indian Chiefs & the federal Department of Indian Affairs to finance an extensive drug trafficking & pedophile network" that sells drugs on Native reserves & supplies Native children to wealthy clients in Vancouver, Victoria, Whistler, and other areas (quoted in Appendix VI, *Hidden from History*). Similar claims were made in Vancouver by speakers at a public tribunal on Residential Schools held in 1998, organized by the International Human Rights Association of American Minorities (IHRAAM, a United Nations NGO with the Economic & Social Council), including Frank Martin & Helen Michel, Harriet Nahanee, and four others.

According to Martin, "Ed John sponsors drug trafficking on northern reserves using Treaty Commission & Indian Affairs money. He's the power up there... but for Ed John to keep power he needs to manipulate drugs & the cops" (Appendix VI, *Hidden from History*).

Allegations of an organized drug & sex-trade involving government, business, as well as band chiefs, are not so far fetched and fit within systemic & intergenerational patterns of abuse. Many current chiefs & councilors are survivors of Residential Schools, and some have been convicted of sexual crimes, yet still remained in power. In reality, however, most sexual abuse in Native communities goes unreported, with perpetrators rarely being charged & convicted.

In 1992, for example, Native women on reserves around Victoria spoke out about concerns that sentencing circles, proposed as an alternative to imprisonment & comprised of selected elders, would be co-opted by band councils to protect male family members accused of sex crimes:

"Saanich Indians fear an experiment in native justice... will turn into a cover-up of sex abuse. Native social workers, elders, women & court workers worry their leaders will use a BC government project to keep assault charges within the community.

"Native women from Saanich Peninsula reserves say they live in fear of powerful band members who pressure & intimidate women not to report instances of assault & sexual abuse. They say crimes such as rape & child molestation are covered up by some of those closest to the alternative justice program. Most victims have yet to speak publicly because they live in fear of telephone threats, of their doors being kicked in and of their children being molested, says Mavis Henry, a Pauquachin band member. The evidence points to widespread corruption, says Rhonda Bowie, a Tsawout native who has laid sexual assault charges against her uncle, considered an elder and leader in the native Shaker church. "I don't believe this justice system helps anyone. All it does is protect the offenders.""

("Indians fear justice experiment will hush sex abuse charges," *The Vancouver Sun*, July 31, 1992)

Commenting on the potential for self-government, Sharon McIvor, spokeswoman for the Native Women's Association of Canada stated "It's really scary to know that these guys are going to be in complete control, they are going to be able to do whatever they want" ("Indians fear justice..." *The Vancouver Sun*, July 31, 1992).

Other reports on sexual violence & abuse in Indigenous communities reached similar conclusions:

"Today, there are northern communities in which the entire female population has been sexually assaulted by males who are living in the community with them. These men are their brothers, cousins, uncles, fathers & grandfathers. Some of these abusers hold powerful positions in band councils—most of them are held unaccountable for their assaults... Often, women feel powerless to effect change, and are threatened with further violence if they attempt to stop the abuse."

(Jackie Lynn, *Colonialism & the Sexual Exploitation of First Nation's Women*, August 1998).

"A mental health worker for Indian Health Service reported, "It is the expert opinion of this writer after a records review & talking to many other health care providers, that rape, sexual assault & incest occur at a much higher incidence than generally thought. Sexual abuse at a young age is quite frequent and almost always involves a relative such as a father, brother, cousin, uncle or grandfather."

Phyllis Old Cross Dog (*Sexual Assault in Indian Country*)

In his 1995 sentencing of dormitory supervisor Arthur Plint, who abused many Native children in the Port Alberni Residential School, BC Supreme Court Justice Douglas Hogarth used the term "institutionalized pedophilia" to describe the Residential School system overall, and the systematic sexual abuse by school staff & church officials. That this would continue well after the last such schools were closed, and as many survivors gained positions of power & authority in their communities, appears logical considering how widespread patterns of intergenerational abuse have been.

The Case of Renate Auger & Jack Cram

One of the first 'official' allegations of such a pedophile ring surfaced in 1994 when Renate Auger, a Cree lawyer living in Vancouver, filed a writ in the BC Supreme Court charging judges, lawyers & officials of the BC Law Society with aiding & protecting pedophiles, including a teacher, doctor, other lawyers & judges. Auger named the prestigious Vancouver Club (a private businessmen's club) as a major site for this activity. Auger had also challenged the BC courts regarding errors & irregularities in the 1991 *Delgamuukw* land title case, specifically that judge McEachern, several lawyers & members of the crown council all had associations with the same law firm and had conspired to fix the outcome of the case.

All of Auger's allegations were dismissed and she was subsequently disbarred from practicing law, the pretext being that her accounts were not in order. Auger retained the services of lawyer Jack Cram, who was subsequently assaulted & arrested by sheriffs in court while defending her, in April 1994. During one exchange with judge Howard Callaghan, Cram, referring to a chief justice that had protected an accused charged with sex crimes against children, stated:

"They should put him in jail right now. The chief justice should be in jail. Aiding & abetting an alleged pedophile." "I don't want to hear that," Callaghan shot back, unable to restrain himself any longer. "It's preposterous."

"Let's try this one in front of a jury and see what they think," replied Cram... "You may not mind the chief justice aiding and abetting pedophiles. I can only think of one reason that may be."

("Is Jack Cram Crazy?" by Marc Edge, *Georgia Straight*, May 27, 1994)

Bill Lightbown, a Kutenai elder present in court during the sheriff's assault & arrest of Cram, stated to the sheriffs: "You should be ashamed of yourselves because you know as well as anyone else in there that what happened there was a disgrace..." (Ts'Peten Defense Committee press release, March 17, 1997).

Shortly after, Cram was again arrested while returning from a radio show interview about the case. Although police claim he was arrested without incident, Cram has stated he was assaulted, forced into an unmarked van, and drugged. He was placed in a psychiatric ward at Vancouver General Hospital and was released after 1 week, only to find himself disbarred as well (this also occurred to lawyer Bruce Clark during a court appearance following the 1995 standoff at Gustafsen Lake/Ts'Peten). While under arrest, Cram's office was taken over by members of the Law Society, who also took evidence implicating two judges, according to Cram.

Cram himself had first become well-known in 1986 after winning damages for a client who alleged that WAC Bennet—a former BC premier-- had forced him to sell property after having him thrown into a psychiatric ward. This case established Cram's reputation and was the peak in a highly successful 25-year career, with most of his cases involving law-suits against the government. According to Cram's law firm partner at the time of his disbarment, Elayne Crompton, "Jack was stomped on big time because he had proof that could put away Supreme Court judges, and the powerful men they protect. This goes to the highest levels of power" (Appendix VI, *Hidden from History*).

Systemic Social Problems Require Systemic Social Change

Considering the nature & extent of the problem, are the solutions offered by groups such as Amnesty International, the Native Women's Association of Canada, and other organizations, really viable? Will more money & police adequately protect Indigenous women & children? As violence & abuse against Indigenous women & children continues at an extremely high rate, the answer appears to be No.

Violence against Indigenous women & children is not a new phenomenon. Although we would be naïve to suggest it never existed in pre-colonial societies, its expansion to a social & systemic problem most certainly has its roots in the violent colonization of the Americas by Europeans, beginning in 1492. European colonization was fueled by racist & patriarchal ideology that was legally & morally sanctioned by the Christian church.

These beliefs served to dehumanize Indigenous people & instill in colonial settlers a profound fear & hatred. Indigenous women were seen as 'squaws' & whores, sexually available for depraved Europeans away from their homes & families. The result was campaigns of rape, torture, murder, and massacres. Women & children were abducted to be used as slaves & sexual objects.

The same beliefs that fueled genocidal military campaigns also guided colonial policy, including the *Indian Act* & Residential Schools, which were designed to assimilate Indigenous peoples by suppressing their culture & imposing European forms. It is no surprise, then, that the same techniques of rape, torture, murder, abduction, & enslavement were used in the Residential Schools.

Prior to colonization, most Indigenous nations were matrilineal, with women having far greater autonomy & power than their European counterparts. Indigenous women were frequently in positions of leadership in family, community, trade, military & ceremonial life. Under colonization, all this changed as European culture was imposed, including patriarchal forms of social organization. Christian missionaries played an important part in this process. Patriarchy was institutionalized under laws such as the *Indian Act*, which recognized only male leaders and placed the most assimilated of these into positions of power & authority through the band councils. Native women, in fact, were not even considered legal persons and were not allowed to own land or participate in band councils or even elections. In addition, Native women who married a non-band member (Native or non-Native) lost their status, a measure designed to further undermine their position & influence in Indigenous society. Combined, these measures disempowered women politically, socially, culturally and economically, making them increasingly dependent on men & the colonial system.

By the late 1800s, Residential Schools had been established in both the US and Canada to forcibly assimilate Indigenous children into European society. Run by the churches, where staff had absolute control & were accountable to no one, the result was widespread sexual, physical & mental abuse of Native children. Many survivors returned to their communities traumatized, where the patterns of abuse learned at the schools was perpetrated against their own people. The result has been widespread intergenerational patterns of physical & sexual abuse in Indigenous communities that continue to this day.

If we agree the problem is a systemic and social one, this means that there must be systemic & social changes made. Not only must we raise awareness & understanding in an effort to change individual views & practices, we must also address ourselves to making the necessary systemic change. This must involve not only our communities, but also the entire colonial system that maintains oppression & exploitation, for it is here that the root causes of violence & abuse directed against Native women & children originate. More money & programs, more police, will not help to make these changes. Instead, they *retard* our ability as a people to come to grips with this phenomenon, even if they are able to capture some of the perpetrators & provide shelter for a few women. Ultimately, they will increase our dependence on the colonial regime while perpetuating division within our communities, at the same time disarming us of our ability to self-organize and take action.

INCITE!, a US-based women's organization, has stated that,

"Law enforcement approaches to violence against women *may* deter some acts of violence in the short term. However, as an overall strategy for ending violence [against women] criminalization has not worked.

"The reliance on state-funding... has increased the professionalization of the anti-violence movement & alienated it from its community-organization, social justice roots...

"The reliance on the criminal justice system has taken power away from women's ability to organize collectively to stop violence & has invested this power within the state. The result is that women who seek redress in the criminal justice system feel disempowered & alienated. It has also promoted an individualistic approach... Such that the only way people think they can intervene in stopping violence is to call the police. This reliance has shifted our focus from developing ways communities can collectively respond to violence."

(*Conquest; Sexual Violence & American Indian Genocide*, pp. 171-72)

In the past, before colonialism, our peoples had the ability to protect ourselves from both external & internal threats. People were held accountable for anti-social crimes and could not seek refuge behind closed doors or colonial institutions. Under colonialism, this ability to defend ourselves has been dismantled along with the breakdown of family & community structure.

DIA: Domestic Internal Abuse

“Domestic violence & sexual abuse among Native Americans have become a problem of epidemic proportions that effects both old & young...”

Charon Asetoyer, *Seminole Tribune*, June 17, 1999

“It is commonly known throughout Indian Country that 90% of Indian women in chemical dependency treatment are victims of rape & childhood sexual abuse.”

Terri Henry (Cherokee, quoted in *Sexual Assault in Indian Country*)

It would be a grave mistake to see violence & abuse against Native women only at the level of serial killers & unknown predatory males stalking sex-trade workers. In its 1989 survey, the Ontario Native Women's Association found that 80% of Indigenous women had experienced some form of family violence, with 53% reporting they had been physically abused. According to most data, the vast majority of abuse & violence against women & children in general is perpetrated by male partners or family members (with most of this going unreported).

The European family structure, in which the man is traditionally the head of the family (“His home is his castle”), itself enables patriarchal violence & abuse to occur, while at the same time concealing it behind closed doors. Every household then becomes a separate kingdom, in which the levels of abuse rest entirely on the nature of the individual male in command. Community division & social isolation enable this abuse to continue, along with tolerance, indifference, or outright denial, by family & community members.

In regards to violence & abuse against Native women & children, it is in the family & community structures where real change must be made, for it is also here that the vast majority of abuse occurs. It is from the home that many Indigenous children & youth attempt to escape in the first place, through gangs, drugs, alcohol, & urbanization. Along with poverty, it is this domestic violence & abuse that propels so many Indigenous women & children into drugs & prostitution.

Identifying Abusive Relationships

Domestic violence & abuse is based on power & control; usually, it results from the efforts of a male to control & assert power over women and/or children. Alcohol & drugs are often a part of this abuse, and are seen as contributing factors to the loss of self-control associated with violent & abusive acts. This power & control is manifested in different ways:

- **Psychological Abuse** includes intimidation, controlling behavior, isolation from family & friends, possessiveness & intense jealousy, control of money & other resources, as well as verbal abuse such as threats, degrading language or constant criticism.
- **Physical Abuse** includes acts such as slapping, punching, kicking, shoving, etc. It can result in assaults & death.
- **Sexual Abuse** involves forced sexual acts such as molesting & rape, or violent & degrading sex.

Safety Plan

For women or youth in a violent & abusive relationship or situation, they must devise a safety & escape plan for themselves and their children (if any). These might include:

- Talk to others that you trust so that they are aware of your situation.
- Telling trusted friends & neighbors to intervene or alert others if they hear or see violent assaults occurring.
- Plan a safe location to go to if you decide to leave. It may be a local transition house/women's shelter, a relative or friend, where your partner cannot locate or approach you.
- Acquire money & resources to aid in transportation, food, etc.
- Packing bag for yourself & children and storing at friend's.
- Putting ID or important documents (i.e., custody papers) in a safe place, both your own and child (if any).

Take Action Against Abusers!

- Men who abuse women and/or children must be exposed. Take or acquire photographs of individuals confirmed to be abusers and anonymously make posters revealing their actions. Share information & knowledge, both within & between communities. This alerts others to the problem and enables them to better protect themselves and/or children. It may also result in more severe consequences for abusers, so every effort should be made to confirm charges against specific individuals.
- Form a group of trusted friends to take direct action against violence & abuse when necessary.
- Challenge patriarchal attitudes & beliefs in the family, at school, at work, and in the community. This includes beliefs that men are inherently smarter, stronger, better, etc., and that women are naturally inferior, stupid, weak, etc. It also includes views that women are sexual objects to be exploited by men (i.e., the glamorization of prostitution & pimping as promoted through corporate entertainment).
- Whether you are male or female, work to promote women's leadership & participation in the resistance movement. In Chiapas, Mexico, many commanders in the Zapatista Army of National Liberation are Mayan women.

Conclusion

It is our duty as warriors to defend & protect our people, territory & way of life. Abuse & violence against women & children, whether in the form of attitudes or actions, must be challenged. The traditional role & status of women in Indigenous society must be reaffirmed & strengthened. The church & state have a long history of institutionalized violence & sexual abuse against our people, which has resulted in intergenerational patterns of abuse within our communities. The criminal justice system has proven itself incompetent & incapable of protecting Indigenous women & children. This struggle will necessitate confronting both abusers in the community and the source of systemic abuse itself: the colonial system. ♦

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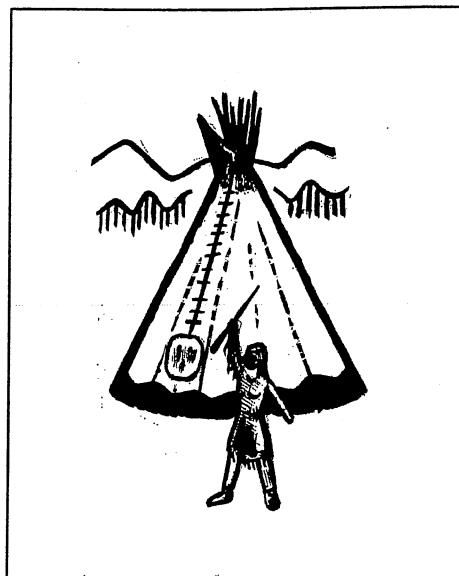
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Sexual Assault in Indian Country, a report by the US-based National Sexual Violence Resource Center (available from www.nsvrc.org)

Speaking of Abuse, pamphlet by BC Legal Services Society, January 2004

Stolen Sisters, Amnesty International Canada, 2004



Also, Check Out these Resources:

Websites

www.sistersinspirit.ca (Native Women's Association of Canada web-site on Missing/Murdered Women)

www.nsvrc.org (National Sexual Violence Resource Center, US)

www.justiceforgirls.com (focus on children & youth)

www.prostitutionresearch.com (focus on prostitution with other info)

Video

- **Stolen Lives**, by Shona Miko, National Film Board of Canada, 1999. Video documentary on child prostitution in Vancouver. 45 min.
- **Zapatista Women**, 30 min., Spanish with English subtitles, 1995. Interviews with Zapatista women commanders.

Books

- **Stolen from Our Embrace; the Abduction of First Nations Children & the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities**, by Ernie Crey & Suzanne Fournier, Douglas & McIntyre, Vancouver 1997. About Residential Schools & state theft of Native children.
- **Kill the Indian, Save the Man; the Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools**, by Ward Churchill, City Lights Books, San Francisco, CA, 2004.
- **Behind Closed Doors; Stories from the Kamloops Indian Residential School**, Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, Kamloops, BC, 2000
- **Conquest; Sexual Violence & American Indian Genocide**, by Andrea Smith, South End Press, Cambridge, MA, 2005

Canadian Forces Target Aboriginal Recruitment

"I went to war because there were no jobs on the reservation."

Wilson Keedah Snr., WW2 Navajo 'code-talker'
(*Warriors: Navajo Code Talkers*, p. 56)

"The Conference Board of Canada predicts that 920,000 First Nations people will be of working age in 2006... More & more are awakening to this realization, and are taking steps to recruit, train and retain First Nations people..."

(*The Canadian Forces & Aboriginal Peoples*, Special Edition, Winter 2003, p. 3)

Every summer, hundreds of Indigenous youth undergo military training. Not through Warrior Society's organizing to defend their people, territories, and way of life, but through the military forces of the colonial regime. Today, the Canadian Armed Forces has several Aboriginal-focused training programs, including the CF Aboriginal Entry Program, Bold Eagle, Raven, and others. They consist of basic military training that incorporates elements of traditional culture. The first to be established was Bold Eagle:

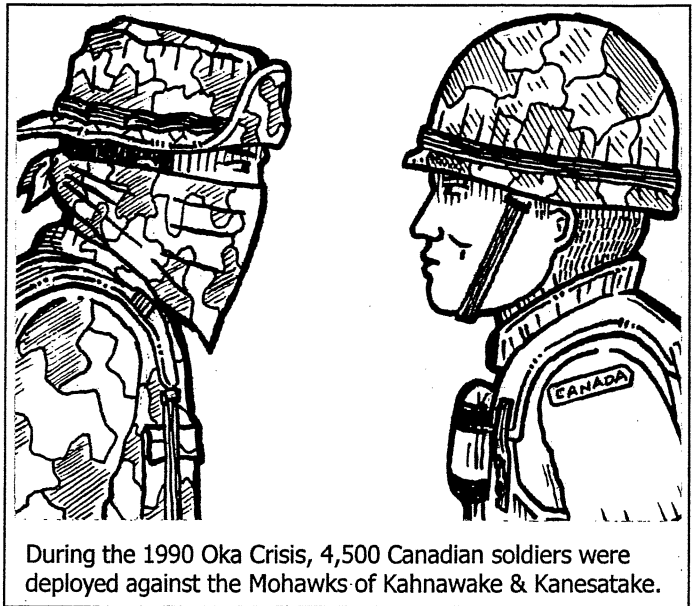
"**Bold Eagle** is a partnership between the Department of National Defense, the Department of Indian & Northern Affairs, and First Nations from across the West. It has been conducted within Land Force Western Area since 1988. It has been expanded from its Saskatchewan origin to include participation by First Nations' youth from all Western Canadian provinces & Northwestern Ontario.

"Bold Eagle consists of two parts: a five day Culture Camp followed by a military recruit training course... The culture camp is administered by Elders of different First Nations with the intent of facilitating the transition to military training... Military recruit training is instructed by military personnel. The skills taught include: basic military knowledge; weapons handling; navigation; first aid; drill; map & compass; and survival skills. All subjects are designed to promote the importance of teamwork..."

(*Bold Eagle* pamphlet, National Defense & Indian & Northern Affairs Canada)

The CF Aboriginal Entry Program consists of a 3-week Pre-Recruit Training Course (PRTC) which is designed to prepare Indigenous recruits for military life, and includes physical fitness, weapons handling, etc. This is followed by basic recruit training, held at the CF Leadership & Recruit School in Farnham/St-Jean-Sur-Richelieu, Quebec (near Montreal). A specialized PRTC has also been developed in Yellowknife, taking into account the unique conditions of Aboriginals from the

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north. After PRTC, they are sent to Farnham for basic training. The CFAEP is primarily designed to funnel Natives into the regular forces.

Raven is one of the newest (est. 2003) and is run as the Aboriginal Youth Training Program under the authority of the CF Maritime Forces Command. It is modeled after Bold Eagle, and consists of a four day cultural camp followed by a one-month basic training course, held at CFB Esquimalt on south Vancouver Island in 'BC'.

As part of this effort, Native soldiers tasked with recruitment are routinely sent into community events such as Pow Wows, Aboriginal Day celebrations, etc., to recruit Native youth into the military. This is often done in collaboration with event organizers. For example, in 2005 & 2006, the Canadian Forces were actively involved in June 21st Aboriginal Day celebrations in Vancouver. In 2005, they set up a recruiting booth alongside a Coyote APC and distributed hundreds of posters & leaflets. The next year, they not only had a recruiting booth, but also supplied tents, chairs, tables, and served barbequed hamburgers to the crowd.

Cadet Corp Established in Hobbema

The Canadian Cadet system consists of Army, Air & Navy Cadet Corps across the country for youth aged 12-18. They provide basic military skills and are an important source of recruits for the Canadian Forces. Recently, this program has been expanded into Native reservations in an effort to recruit & indoctrinate Native youth and are known as Canadian Cadet Organizations (CCOs).

In 2005, a Community Cadet Corp was established among the four reserves known collectively as Hobbema, Alberta. It has been promoted as an effort to counter gang violence among Hobbema's youth, which has become more & more frequent in recent years. The CCO was one part of a broader, \$8 million strategy that also included the hiring of 9 additional RCMP officers for the Hobbema reserves.

In less than six months, the Hobbema Cadet Corp reportedly had over 700 young people sign up in a community of some 12,000, rapidly becoming one of the

largest such Corps in Canada. The first CCO was established in Saskatchewan by RCMP Constable Rick Sanderson and now includes some 40 corps across the country. Sanderson also conducts courses for trainers, many of whom are also police officers. As a result, the RCMP have a strong presence in the Community Cadet Corps program.

Unlike other Cadet Corps, these CCOs are established with the collaboration of local band councils, who provide infrastructure & other resources. According to press reports, many parents have placed great hopes in the program as a way to deter their children from becoming involved in gangs, drugs & partying.

While this is understandable, it is not entirely correct. Instead of joining street gangs such as Indian Posse or Redd Alert, these youth have joined another, even larger & more deadlier gang: the Canadian Armed Forces. This gang is tasked with enforcing the will of the gang leaders (the government & corporations), who continue to loot & plunder not only Indigenous lands here, but also those of tribal peoples in Afghanistan & Haiti.

In regards to the image of a more 'positive' lifestyle, it should be noted that alcohol is a major part of military culture, from mess halls to the completion of training exercises, when crates of beer are routinely distributed. In addition, European military culture indoctrinates soldiers with imperialist ideology & blind obedience to authority. If deployed into combat, veterans are often traumatized upon their return and have difficulty reintegrating back into

community life. As a result, many turn to alcohol & drugs in order to cope. Overall, there is little positive value in the military recruitment of Indigenous peoples, which is also a means of assimilation.

An Anti-Military Recruitment Strategy

What should be our strategy in regards to military recruitment of Native youth? There are two approaches which we should consider: co-optation & opposition.

Co-optation involves those who have already undergone such training but who have not joined the regular forces. For the most part, they are naïve, misinformed, and colonized. They require education that exposes them to the reality of colonialism & the existence of an Indigenous resistance movement, a movement where their warrior spirit is both validated & strengthened. These state-military recruits are potential recruits into our resistance movement but who require some level of decolonization.

Secondly, we must implement anti-recruiting measures to stop vulnerable Native youth from being recruited in the first place. This should involve not only educational materials & propaganda, but also the establishment of warrior societies capable of recruiting, training, and organizing Indigenous youth. This would strengthen our movement and provide an alternative to both state-military service & gangsterism (both of which exploit traditional warrior culture). ♦

Aboriginal Military Training Recruits bound for Bold Eagle Militia

by Kerry Benjoe
Leader-Post, July 8, 2006

A new list of recruits will be marching out on Sunday. Fifty-two aboriginal youth from northwest Ontario & the western provinces will be arriving in Wainwright, Alta., for six weeks of intense military training.

The Bold Eagle Militia Training Program—a partnership between various First Nations organizations, the Department of National Defense and Indian & Northern Affairs Canada—was established in 1988 to introduce aboriginal youth to military training.

"It is one of the success stories that has not been talked about," said Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) vice-chief Lawrence Joseph, adding the program has been a huge success because "it's an example of what First Nations can do."

The program has evolved over its 18-year history, like moving from its original location at CFB Dundurn to Wainwright. It has also expanded to include all western provinces and northwest Ontario. Prior to 2005 the program was only available to status First Nations youth, but has since opened up to include all aboriginal youth including Metis & Inuit.

Despite the changes, the FSIN has remained the "mother" organization and is responsible for all the administrative work because Bold Eagle was developed in Saskatchewan.

Bold Eagle provides select youth with "meaningful summer employment" that they can use to launch any career, explained the vice-chief. Many graduates of the program have opted to start a career in the military.

Bold Eagle's six-week course emphasizes culture, self-discipline, teamwork skills, physical fitness, and self confidence.

Prior to the military training, candidates participate in a week-long cultural camp conducted by First Nations elders. The military training is conducted by military personnel.

Bold Eagle is popular among youth and FSIN receives a large volume of applicants each year, but due to space limitations only a select few are chosen. ♦



Palestinian fighters moving into formation during patrol in Beit Hanoun in northern Gaza Strip, shortly after forcing withdrawal of Israeli forces, May 2003

“Despite Ties to Hamas, Militants Aren’t Following Political Leaders”

by Craig S. Smith, *NY Times International*, Friday July 21, 2006

JABALIYA REFUGEE CAMP, Gaza, July 20 – Five men in black hoods emerged from a dimly lighted street of stark concrete houses and garbage-strewn lots. With Israeli drones buzzing overhead, they kept the meeting short.

“We ask America to stop supporting the Israeli aggressors,” said the leader, who carried a new Czech-made Kalashnikov rifle while another shouldered a new Gaza-made rocket-propelled grenade launcher.

The men are members of the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades, the well-armed, highly organized military wing of Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic movement that now governs the West Bank & Gaza Strip. Members of the militia led last month’s raid in which they killed two Israeli soldiers & captured another, setting off the current crisis.

Despite its links to the Palestinian government, Palestinian & Israeli analysts say, the Qassam Brigades does not take orders from the governing leaders of Hamas. This is why, according to many accounts, the Hamas-led government itself was surprised by the Qassam Brigades’ attack against the Israeli military post in June.

“They lost their position as leaders of Hamas when they joined the government,” said Abu Muhammad, a Qassam Brigades field commander in Jabaliya. “New leaders were named in the movement, and they are more

senior than the government leaders, even Haniya,” he said, referring to the Palestinian prime minister, Ismail Haniya.

The Qassam Brigades is the Palestinians’ largest & best organized militant group but it is not the only militia operating in the area under Palestinian control. At least six other armed groups field soldiers to fight Israeli occupation. There have been frequent clashes between some.

The current crisis seems to have pushed the militias to join ranks. Several of the militia members said the groups organized a “joint operations room” when Israel began threatening to invade Gaza two or three weeks ago. By all accounts the operations room is more virtual than real, but spokesmen for three of the groups insisted that senior political and military leaders of the seven militias now communicated regularly to plan actions.

“We are more united now than at any time before,” said Abu Majahed, spokesman for the Salahadin Brigades, the armed wing of another group, the Popular Resistance Committees.

Abu Muhammad, the Jabaliya field commander, said the Qassam Brigades was in charge of the operations room because it was “the backbone of the resistance.” Nightly operations are mapped out, and a password is agreed upon for fighters of different factions to identify themselves in the field.

"When two groups meet each other and both are masked, the password identifies them so we know they are not Israeli agents," Abu Muhammad said. He said scouts were posted on the edges of Gaza and the outskirts of towns to watch for raids by Israeli forces. "If they see something, they send the information back up the line to the joint operations room, and it broadcasts to all the groups," Abu Muhammad said. "Special forces cannot enter Gaza easily."

It is difficult to say how many Palestinians are members of armed groups. Israeli intelligence officials say there are probably as many as 20,000 hard-core members of the various factions, most of which are in the Gaza Strip. But including free-lancers who join in when the fighting picks up, intelligence officials say, the militias' forces outnumber the 35,000 members of the Palestinian Authority security forces.

Israeli intelligence officials say the leadership of Hamas, previously split between Gaza & Syria, consolidated in Damascus after the assassinations of Hamas' charismatic leaders, Sheik Ahmed Yassin & Abdel Aziz Rantisi in 2004. Two months ago, General Eiland said, Hamas military leaders appeared to gain the upper hand.

According to the accounts of Israeli intelligence officers and senior Hamas officials, the influence of Hamas leaders in Gaza weakened further after they joined the Palestinian Authority in the wake of parliamentary elections early this year.

The Qassam Brigades, which is believed to have received money from Saudi Arabia until recently and now from Iran, grew in the 1990s as a counterweight to the Aksa Martyrs Brigades of the Fatah Movement, then led by Yasir Arafat (PLO).

Capt. Jacob Dallal, an Israeli Army spokesman, said that in the past few years Hezbollah had also helped underwrite some Palestinian groups and had provided technological skills.

To become a member of the Qassam Brigades, Abu Muhammad said, a person must first join Hamas. The movement accepts only people who demonstrate Islamic piety, who pray five times a day, not something that all young people can manage, he said. Hamas investigates the background and relations of all prospective members before indoctrinating them into the culture of strict obedience. Only then can they join the military wing.

Abu Muhammad, now 37, said he joined Hamas during the first Intifadah in the late 1980s and became a member of the Qassam Brigades six years ago. "I started as a common soldier and after three years became a commander," he said. Like all Qassam members, he gives part of his income to the militia.

As field commander, he distributes arms & ammunition to the men under his command. The Qassam Brigades smuggles in weapons to the territory when it can, but it has developed a substantial munitions industry that

makes everything from rockets to antitank mines. "If I need something, I requisition it," he said.

The Qassams Brigades' members say they do not have any Katyusha rockets, but they claim to have extended the reach of their Qassams, putting the Israeli city of Ashkelon and its roughly 100,000 inhabitants within range. Most of the weapons including antitank mines, are made in Gaza. The handle of the group's grenade launchers are stamped "Al Yassin," in honor of their late leader.

Many of the smaller militias now follow the Qassam Brigades' classic cell structure, in which few people know more than their immediate superior and subordinates. Abu Muhammad, a short man with wire-rimmed glasses and a short, dark beard, described the organization from his point of view.

"I'm a field commander and I'm responsible for eight groups of five men each," he said. "No group knows the others and I don't deal with the fighters, only the commanders of the eight groups."

He said he did not know how many layers were between him and the senior leadership. But Israeli intelligence officials say that while the organization is broad, it is not very deep, which is why the army focuses on targeted assassinations of militia leaders. They say there are only a few layers between field commanders like Abu Muhammad and the top commander, Muhammad Deif.

The Qassam Brigades is well financed; many members carry new weapons and ammunition vests. Despite the well-equipped Palestinian Authority security forces in Gaza, the new Hamas government prefers to use a contingent of Qassam Brigades fighters for protection.

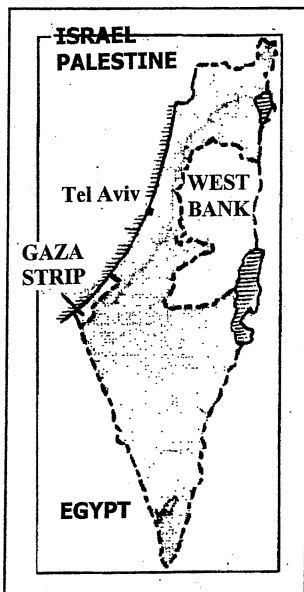
The militia members use radios because they do not trust telephones, speaking in code for less than 30 seconds at a time to keep the Israelis from pinpointing their location.

On a visit to a cell arranged for a reporter, Abu Muhammad moves to an intersection on the edge of town and the masked men appear. The group's leader, Abu

Ahmed, is a thickset man of 44, a carpenter, the father of six boys and a girl. He has been a member of Hamas for 10 years and joined the Qassam Brigades four years ago,

Besides the routine patrols he said the group sometimes had "specific operations with mines and RPG's against tanks." If fighters plant a mine, he said, they watch it until it is detonated, or they take it away. He said they were among the Qassam Brigades fighters who fought back against an Israeli raid into Jabaliya in October 2004.

They wear masks to hide their identity from possible collaborators in their midst and from Israeli intelligence in battle, fearing that if they are identified, they could be assassinated later. Each squad operates in a well-defined geographic area, usually tied to where its members live. ♦



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BY JIM BRONSKILL

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A30 The Province
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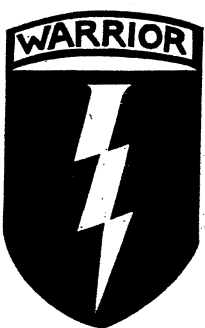
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