

Native Solidarity News

A publication of the Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement – March 2005

Mining Showdown:

Elders occupy Tahltan band office

Elders from the Tahltan First Nation have been occupying their band council office and demanding Chief Jerry Asp step down because of his involvement in recent mining deals. The occupation began on January 17 after a supposed community consultation was revealed to be nothing more than the unveiling of a completed deal between Nova Gold, Chief Asp and the British Columbia government to open new mines on the territory, which could threaten Salmon populations in the Stikine river. In the words of the Elders Jerry Asp is no longer chief of the Tahltan people. The occupation is continuing despite a court injunction but the Elders face the prospect of Asp calling in the RCMP to enforce his authority at any time.

The resistance to Asp and the mining deal strikes a major blow to the new BC mining plan, hatched just weeks before the occupation began. In the government plan Jerry Asp is portrayed as the poster boy of a new era of happy relations between First Nations and mining companies. The arrogance of show consultations and back room dealing by Asp have led the community Elders to send a reminder that any mining that takes place is happening on First Nations land and must be approved by First Nations people not just Indian Act representatives or the BC government. Many of the Tahltan Elders claim that Asp has no credibility because his dual role as Chief and head of the Tahltan Nation Development Corporation puts him in the position of bidding on and giving approval to mining projects and has led to his betrayal of traditional values in his search for a quick buck.

Under the new BC mining plan anyone with a computer and a credit card can access a government site and lay claim to mineral rights across British Columbia. Under the first two weeks of the new system there was more land claimed than in the entire previous year. The cyber land rush completely ignores the fact that what is in fact being claimed is not empty land on a computer screen but unceded territory belonging to First Nations communities.

As a reminder of this the Tahltan Elders with the support of their community, including four band councilors, are resisting this latest project and forcing the return of accountability to their people as a whole. Their struggle is essentially the same as those taking place across Canada wherever corporations with either Government or Band Council support are trying to destroy or remove what is not theirs.

The resistance to mining de-

velopment on Native land is an attempt to put an end to years of environmental abuse, arrogant lack of consultation and economic blackmail. The fight in the Tahltan Nation mirrors worldwide resistance of Indigenous communities to mining incursions. Notably in the Philippines where the Cordillera Peoples Alliance has warned mining companies to stay off Indigenous ancestral lands or be met by force. Closer to Montreal in Kanehsatake, Niocan is attempting to construct a mining project on unseeded territory which would have massive environmental repercussions and has not even had the pretense of addressing Mohawk concerns separate from surrounding white communities. This is only the most recent conflict between First Nations and the mining industry. In the fall of 2000 the Timiskaming First Nation blocked a road leading to the Adams Mine site which crushed a billion dollar deal to mine on their land and in 2004 members of the Clearwater River Dene First Nation blockaded Highway 955 in Saskatchewan in opposition to being left out of jobs and economic benefit from the Cluff Lake mine, despite it taking place on their territory.

Join the Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement to confront Mining Developers at their annual Prospectors and Developers Association Convention in Toronto.

Buses will be leaving Montreal on Tuesday night March 8th and returning Wednesday March 9th in the evening.

Contact ipsm@resist.ca or call (514) 398-3323 to get on the Bus!

Canada:

Cops carry out racist attacks from coast to coast

Police violence and murder has become a growing problem in all of Canada's major cities and one of the most regularly brutalized communities is urban native populations. The past few months in Winnipeg, home to Canada's largest urban first nations community have seen police shoot dead two native men. In Vancouver, the police department recently shot a Nisgaa man 10 times from behind and the practice of beating Native men and leaving them freezing out in the countryside has been exposed as widespread among Saskatchewan police. Meanwhile, in Toronto a court threw out charges against two officers, even after an internal police investigation alleged they had thrown a native man down a set of stairs and beat him bloody, giving a good example of the type of justice doled out to cops who kill or beat first nations.

In the second murder of a



A grassy narrows community member blocks a logging truck.

native man within two months, Winnipeg police gunned down 18 year old, Matthew Dumas on January 31, 2005. They allege that he fled as police searched for a robbery suspect and brandished a screwdriver at two police who then shot him dead. Witnesses say that the police had their guns drawn throughout the entire chase. The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs rejected an opportunity to work with police on the investigation, calling their version of events suspicious and demanding a change in the attitude of Winnipeg police.

Even the former Vancouver Police Department tactical trainer Alan Chad calls the police version of their murder of Gerald Chenery "absurd" Chenery, a 29 year old Nisgaa, was shot 12 times, 10 from behind, on December 26, 2004. Police claim Chenery attacked two officers with a knife but witnesses say there were more cops than two present and they never saw Chenery with a weapon. The injuries sustained by Chenery included two pinpointed shots to the back of each wrist, which suggest that they did not occur in a tussle.

Ramsey Whitefish claims to have been dragged into a stairwell, thrown down stairs and then beaten to a pulp with no charges resulting from a June 2002 run-in with Toronto 14 division officers—a division notorious for their off the record tactics. In a criminal hearing on the matter charges against two police were thrown out of court for lack of evidence. The reason: racism against Native people. The defense case rested primarily on portraying Whitefish as an alcoholic and his story as unbelievable. In throwing out the charges the Judge noted that it was clear race was not a factor in the incident!

In 2000 the case of Darrell Night, member of Saulteaux First Nation, brought to light racist policing practices in Saskatchewan. Night had been beaten by police

and then taken out of the city and ditched in freezing temperatures to make his own way back or die. When the case became public it emerged that this was not an isolated incident but a regular practice of racist cops from multiple forces in Saskatchewan—one that has more than likely led to several deaths.

There can be no doubt that racism against First Nations people is widespread among police forces from coast to coast. Ontario Provincial Police, the assassins of brother Dudley George, have been caught emailing photos of the autopsy of a native woman with racist jokes alongside. These are not isolated incidents. We must learn to defend each other and all our brothers and sisters. The cases listed show that there will be no justice in the internal investigations of the police or in the courts.

Tuesday March 15 will mark the 9th Annual International Day Against Police Brutality.

In Montreal meet outside St. Laurent Metro at 5pm to remember our brothers and sisters who have been murdered by police and to stand up to the racist force that took their lives.

Grassy Narrows: Resistance to Incursion Continues

Through the first 2 weeks of March, members of the Asubpeeschoosewagong (Grassy Narrows) Anishinabe community will be touring through southern Ontario to raise awareness about their ongoing campaign for justice, dignity and self-determination on Anishinabe territory. Most recently, in December 2002, a blockade was erected in Grassy Narrows to force an end to the illegal clear-cutting practices of Abitibi-Consolidated Inc on their

territories. Since that time, the defiance of the Grassy Narrows community to corporate and state colonialism has become a source of inspiration for indigenous self-determination across the continent, and around the world. (See events listings for details.)

"Smart" Cards:

Government Bloodhound Plan to Track Indians

The Mohawks of Kahnawake and the Cree of Quebec will soon be guinea pigs for a worldwide "Smart Card" system. These new super ID cards have been on the wish-list of the powers that be for years. But their dream keeps getting shot down because human rights activists say "Smart cards" are an invasion of privacy. So now they have done a run-around all the idealistic do-gooders - the project has surfaced in Indian Country. Smart cards are being passed off as a make work project in Kahnawake. Anteon, a private American company in Virginia with close ties to the US government has persuaded Canada's Department of Indian Affairs to fund the project. The new card will replace the present Indian Status Card. The work is being done in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The plan is to make smart cards for all of the Aboriginal nations. Anteon is preparing specifications for a new facility in Kahnawake even though the project has never been publicly discussed there. Some of the machinery is apparently already on location. Mike Bush of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake says, this card "will prevent fraud and satisfy the border crossing requirements, while bearing a unique logo for each community and including 'additional' information". Former Kahnawake chief, Joe Norton, has been hired as a consultant. His services are appreciated because he brought the Assembly of First Nations on board. Joe Norton met in late October 2004 in Ottawa with the AFN. The AFN then met with the Minister of Indian Affairs and got his support. And there you have it. Smart cards get their foot in the door and Indians get ruled by American Big Business. The colonization of North America began in Virginia. It was started by a private company chartered to a foreign monarch. Nothing has changed in 500 years. Is there any real justification for all this spying? Once it's in place it will be even easier for them to inhibit freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of movement. Smart Cards are the electronic bloodhounds of the 21st century.

—Akwasasne Phoenix

Kanehsatake:

Elections, Anyone?

Canada's 4 Chiefs should know this: This is about all the people who stood up to your attack on January 12, 2004. This is about the 24 people wrongly accused for defending their territory and their families on January 12, 2004. This is about our Police Commissioners roughed up by your KMP goon squad on January 12, 2004. This is about our Elders who were mistreated on January 12, 2004. This is about the safety and security of all our children who were caught in the middle of your attack on January 12, 2004. This is about our Traditional People who proudly and respectfully represented Kanehsata:ke in their oration to the members of the United Nations. This is about our Security Cars and the incredible amount of time committed by many of our Mothers and Fathers who Patrol our Territory day and night. This is about the incredible amount of support this community has received from our Elders, the Mohawks of Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, and Akwesasne, as well as the legal firm Reynolds Dolgin, and other groups like the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), the Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement (IPSM), The United Church of Canada, Amnesty International, student bodies from several Montreal Universities, and Prayer Warriors from around the world. This is about all the people you mistreated, fired or who lost their jobs as a result of your actions. Shame on you all!

Should the candidates be calling the shots? What about Canada and Quebec? What about the AFNQL? Let's talk about breach of trust. Let's talk about the turmoil created in Kanehsata:ke on January 12, 2004 with the illegal police coup in our territory organized by Jimmy, led by the AFNQL, and paid for by Canada and Quebec.

When it comes right down to it, this was never about security. The propaganda Canada spun through Jimmy's PR firm hasn't fooled anyone. This is not an election to choose between GOOD versus EVIL, as they would like everyone to believe. This is not just about the Mohawk bashing or beatings that have taken place at the hands of the Kanehsatake Mohawk Police (KMP). This is certainly not about the governments doing the right thing. This election really has nothing to do with the AFNQL, KPMG or Judge Poitras who insulted us by attempting to control Kanehsata:ke's Electoral Process on the strength of a BCR – an Indian Affairs Policy – signed on November 16th 2004 by an illegitimate group of Chiefs named to their positions by Canada and Quebec without input from the true holders of that power, the People of Kanehsata:ke.

This is about justice. This is about being accountable for the attack of January 12, 2004. This is about being accountable for the illegal policing agreement. This is about an unprofessional and partisan KMP police force controlled by Jimmy. This is about millions being misspent on policing, PR

firms, and 3rd Party Managers for Kanehsata:ke.

This is about Canada and Quebec manipulating, interfering and illegally mandating Kanehsata:ke Chiefs without the People's consent. This is about the AFNQL remaining silent to Canada and Quebec's appointment of Chiefs in Kanehsata:ke.

This is about our schools closing. This is about no housing for the last 8 years. This is about a lot of things, including the turmoil we have endured for the last year. This is about the People being heard and finally having Peace. This is about our collective right to prosper and exercise our rights in a peaceful environment.

This is about our Lands. 15 yrs after 1990 and 100 million dollars later and what did we truly get? Nothing but more abuse of power and misuse of our band monies. But most of all, this is about the lengths that Canada and Quebec have gone to cover-up their crimes, abuses and interference with the Mohawk Nation at Kanehsata:ke. And this is about their fear of facing the 90 million dollar lawsuit launched by this community aimed at exposing all the lies, corruption and backdoor deals.

Canada and Quebec must legitimize Jimmy and his KMP goons at any cost before any election happens. They couldn't do it at the end of a gun. Their foreign court has no jurisdiction to do it. And we will never allow it. We do not put any trust in a process that Canada, Quebec or Jimmy have their grubby little hands in.

Canadians did not tolerate the Liberal Sponsorship Scandal. They got the Gomery Inquiry. What do we have? Nothing but the prospect of another Police attack and possibly with the army's assistance this time. But trust us, another invasion will be met with the appropriate force necessary to defend our sovereign territory and our inherent rights as Mohawk People in as peaceful a manner as possible. And trust us Jimmy, you and your crew will not escape your illegal acts. Many of us have received death threats by telephone and mail from your supporters. You, your Canadian handlers and your small group of cowardly supporters will not be trusted anywhere near the communities electoral process. In short, Canada and Quebec have no say.

Nia:wenko:wa,

Pearl Bonspille,
Kanehsata:ke Mohawk

John Harding,
Kanehsata:ke Mohawk

Homelessness NFC diary

There are various estimates of the number of homeless on the streets of Montreal. The Ka'wahse Street Patrol Van (Mohawk for Where are you Going?) serves between 60 and 130 persons per night, around 2000 per month, about 60% repeats. That is still several hundred individuals, with fluctuation from new people arriving, regulars going to jail for

certain periods, some losing their lives through violence, exposure, disease or accident. It is a rough life, but the regulars to the van express gratitude and exhibit a zest for life and a realness that is beautiful in its own unique way.

I met with Pete, a 32 year old fellow from BC, who currently volunteers for the NFCM. Pete is First Nations and says he has been homeless throughout much of the past 15 years. Pete has a great attitude, is very streetwise and is friendly, hard working and dedicated. He is very reliable as a volunteer and loyal and respectful of the Friendship Centre, the community and especially the Ka.wahse Street Patrol van, which is his main focus as a volunteer.

Your greatest challenge when you're on the street is finding food., says Pete, his face weathered by smiles and sharp winds carving a roadmap of his travels to Vancouver, Victoria, Calgary, Toronto and now Montreal. You need to find a safe spot to sleep, he says, but admits he doesn't much like shelters. When asked why, he tells of a place in California where he had to sleep on the floor, with a knife under his pillow, no blanket, no feeling of safety. Somebody in Calgary went through his bags. Pete says he likes to live and sleep outside because .of my own head.. He says outside he has his own freedom, he can do what he likes and can make his own decisions about where he goes, the people he associates with. His eyes light up when he talks about this. Freedom is a powerful thing.

I asked Pete about volunteering. He says he has been volunteering at the Friendship Centre since October of 2004. He likes working on the Street Patrol van because he really thinks the program of bringing food out to the streets is great. He says he likes that the NFCM has lunches, snacks and especially fresh fruits, because that is the major thing you need on the street.fresh fruit. If there was no donated food, says Pete, who sleeps most nights outside regardless of the weather, lots of people would go hungry. Lots would be unhealthy. Some serious things would happen., he says, without the food donations of others. Donating food for others shows a real person., says Pete. And he should know, as Pete is as real as it gets. He is always willing to help, lend a hand, do what needs to be done to make sure the food, the warm clothing, the blankets are loaded and ready to go out to the streets where they will help others. Pete is the real deal, a real Human Being. I am proud to know him.

Sky Bellefleur
Native Friendship
Centre News

Events Calendar

Tuesday, 1 March, 7:00pm

“Security, Racism and the ‘War on Terror’”

Patro Le Prevost, 7355 Christophe Colomb
(Metro Jean Talon)

Wednesday, 2 March, 7:00pm

Mining and Indigenous Peoples' Struggle

McConnell Building, Room 204
McGill University, 3480 University St.

Thursday, 3 March, 1:30-3:30pm

“Security, Racism and the ‘War on Terror’”

8535 Pie-IX

Friday, March 4th, 4pm

Film screening: “Our Nationhood”

Le Frigo Vert, 2130 Mackay

Saturday, 5 March, 1:00pm

“Security, Racism and the ‘War on Terror’”

625 Sainte-Croix Blvd. (metro du College)

Tuesday, 8 March – Wednesday, 9 March

Toronto demonstration:

Undermine Capital: Building Resistance to Destructive Canadian Mining

Get on the bus to Toronto with IPSM
To sign up, call 398-3323

Wednesday, 9 March, 7:00pm

“Elections Under Occupation: Iraq, Palestine, Kanehsatake”

Herzberg Bldg. (main entrance) John Abbott CEGEP
21,275 Lakeshore Rd. (211 bus from Metro Lionel Groulx)

Thursday, 10 March, 6:30-9:30pm

“Security, Racism and the ‘War on Terror’”

3340 Ontario East (Metro Prefontaine)

Friday, 11 March, 4pm

Film Screening: “Justice Denied”

Le Frigo Vert, 2130 Mackay

Sunday, 13 March, 6-9pm

Panel discussion with speakers from Grassy Narrows, NFCM, and IPSM

Native Friendship Centre of Montreal (NFCM)
2001 St-Laurent (corner Ontario, Metro St-Laurent)
Free dinner

Monday, 14 March, 12 noon

Strength in Solidarity:

Justice for Grassy Narrows demonstration

Dominion Square (Metcalfe, between Ste-Catherine and Rene-Levesque, Metro Peel) Free lunch

Thursday, 17 March, 7:00pm

Unmasking Canada in the War of Terror panel discussion

DS-R510 Pavillion De-Seve, UQAM
320 Ste-Catherine E. (Metro Berri-UQAM)

Friday, 18 March, 4pm

Film: “Above the Law, Part 1 & 2”

Le Frigo Vert, 2130 Mackay

Saturday, 19 March, 1:00pm

March Against the Occupation of Iraq

Dominion Square (Metro Peel)

Friday March 25th, 4pm

Film: “As Long as the Rivers Flow”

Le Frigo Vert, 2130 Mackay

Friday, March 25, 7:30pm

Resistance is not a crime:

Kanehsatake Benefit Show

La Petite Gaule, 2525 rue Centre (Metro Charlevoix)