

dominion, *n.* 1. Control or the exercise of control. 2. A territory or sphere of influence; a realm. 3. One of the self-governing nations within the British Commonwealth.

# The Dominion

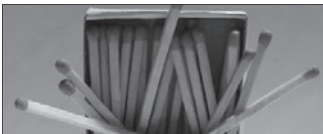
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Haitian-Canadians and indigenous activists at the "Land, Decolonization and Self-determination" march in Montréal on May 15.

CMAQ

## Protests Against Colonization Mark Haitian Flag Day in Canada

by Dru Oja Jay

Every May 18th, Haitians celebrate their independence and freedom on Flag Day. That freedom was won over 200 years ago, when the majority slave population of Haiti revolted, successively repelling the forces of France, Spain and England before finally gaining independence in 1804. The nation's victory was far from sweet, and the world's only republic of ex-slaves faced two centuries of embargoes, invasions, gunboat diplomacy, economic exploitation, an oppressive elite and a string of US-sponsored dictatorships.

This year, Haitian and

Canadian solidarity groups have targeted what they call Canada's central role in the dismantling of democracy in Haiti. Demonstrations were held in Halifax, Montréal, Ottawa and Vancouver, calling for an end to Canada's role in Haiti.

"Canada's current involvement in Haiti is that of a colonizer," said Magalie X, an organizer with Vwa Zanzet, a Haitian organization based in Montréal and Ottawa. Magalie says that Canada is lending support to the "illegitimate" Lator-tue regime, which replaced an entire democratically elected government in 2004. She also

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[www.dominionpaper.ca](http://www.dominionpaper.ca)  
[dru@dominionpaper.ca](mailto:dru@dominionpaper.ca)

PO Box 741 Station H  
Montréal, QC H3G 2M7  
(514) 273-9936

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**Haiti, continued from page 1 »**

points out that RCMP officers are training the Haitian police who “kill the poor people of Belair and Cité Soleil.”

During Flag Day protests in Haiti, police shot and killed three unarmed protesters. It was the latest in a string of incidents where police have fired on crowds of tens of thousands from poor neighbourhoods who were demanding the return of their elected government.

The Canadian-trained police force has killed at least a dozen unarmed protesters in recent months.

While Paul Martin has publicly called for the de facto government to allow for the participation of members of the ousted government in future elections, Canadian officials have been silent on the issue of police killing unarmed protesters.

Haiti-based independent journalist Kevin Pina has called the Canadian-sponsored plans for an election a sham, saying that fair elections cannot possibly take place in the context of widespread political repression. Other critics have taken the Canadian government to task for funding the political opponents of elected Prime Minister Yvon Neptune, who has been held without charge for several months.

Protests demanding “Canada out of Haiti” were held in Halifax and Vancouver. In Ottawa, the Canada-Haiti Solidarity Committee picketed Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) offices. According to committee member Kevin Skerrett, CIDA “has been funding highly partisan NGOs that are presenting themselves as independent and non-partisan actors.”

“[The National Coalition for Haitian Rights] NCHR in particular, has been the primary source of completely unsubstantiated allegations against Yvon Neptune and other Lavalas leaders.”

Skerrett said that the com-

mittee had received “not a single word of response” from CIDA to accusations of its complicity in an illegal coup in Haiti.

Skerrett said that groups like NCHR are receiving tens of millions of dollars from the Canadian government to prosecute former elected officials for an alleged massacre but pay no mind to reports of police repression and violence from the current government. The press, he adds, has been complicit in turning a blind eye to the government’s record.

“It attracts no particular attention, because the right people are dying.”

The group of Ottawa protesters also visited the French Embassy to “re-present, on behalf of Haitian people, the petition calling for reparations.” Before being removed from office, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide had demanded that France repay money that it had extorted from Haiti after its independence. The new Canadian-backed de facto government has dropped the demand.

According to Skerrett, “no one from the embassy was willing to physically accept the petition.” Eventually, an RCMP officer who was guarding the embassy agreed to deliver the document.

A “march for decolonization and self determination” was held in Montréal on the 15th, with Haitian, indigenous and solidarity groups participating.

### **Nova Scotians Subsidizing Minimum Wage Employers: CCPA**

When inflation is taken into account, Nova Scotia has not had a minimum wage increase in over twenty years. “The buying power of the minimum wage is lower today than it was in 1975,” says John Jacobs in his report “Time for a Real Raise: The Nova Scotia Minimum Wage,” released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives - Nova

Scotia (CCPA-NS).

According to Jacobs, \$6.50/hour is not enough income to cover the costs of a person’s basic needs, let alone support a family. And the problem extends well beyond the 5.5% of the Nova Scotian workforce receiving minimum wage. A low minimum pulls all wages down, says Jacobs. Employers use the minimum as a reference point from which to negotiate wages for other workers.

At the same time that the economy is expanding, the working poor are not reaping the benefits, and instead “minimum wage workers, their families and taxpayers are subsidizing the employers who pay minimum wage... to very profitable companies such as McDonalds and Tim Horton’s ... and Wal-mart stores.”

The CCPA-NS report recommends the development of a long-term strategy to close the poverty gap by increasing the minimum wage immediately to \$8.20/hour, and providing support to small businesses to train and upgrade the skills of their workers.

**Moira Peters**

### **Israeli F-16s in Alberta Draw Fire From Civilians**

From mid May to late June, Israeli F-16 pilots will participate for the first time in the annual “Maple Flag” military exercises in northern Alberta, which includes pilots and observers—over 5,000 personnel in total—from 18 countries. Critics have raised concerns about Israel’s invitation to the war games, citing the Israeli Air Force’s (IAF) use of overwhelming force in fighting their war and occupation in the West Bank and Gaza.

“We don’t support this Canadian initiative,” a Canadian Press article quoted Issam Alyamani of the Toronto-based Palestine House as saying at an educational and cultural centre in Toronto. “The Israeli air force

was used to destroy Palestinian houses, and it was used against civilians in Gaza and the West Bank.”

Over 3,600 Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) since September 2000. According to Amnesty International (AI), the Israeli Air Force (IAF) “routinely use F16 fighter jets, helicopter gunships and tanks to bomb and shell densely populated Palestinian residential areas.” Over 150 Palestinians have been killed in targeted state assassinations.

Another recent change in the war games, which take place over an area of over 11,000 square kilometres, has been a move from air-to-air “dog fights” to “counterinsurgency” operations. “What we’re seeing now is much more complex, much more of a counter-insurgency type battle fighting guerrilla warfare on the ground,” Canadian Colonel CS “Duff” Sullivan told a National Post reporter.

AI has reported that “the IDF has destroyed more than 3,000 homes and damaged thousands more,” as well as targeting “large areas of agricultural land and other public and private properties, and water and electricity infrastructure.”

Recent changes in Canadian foreign policy have emphasized developing capacity to “fight insurgents” on foreign soil. At a recent address at McGill University, Defence Minister Bill Graham explained that contemporary soldiers “may find themselves fighting insurgents in one area, patrolling the streets and keeping the peace in another, and providing humanitarian relief in a third.”

Occupied populations, Graham continued, “must perceive the use of force in their neighbourhood, and the civilian casualties that are suffered, as being for their greater good and not just the repressive measures of a foreign occupying force.”

**Dru Oja Jay**

## Water Privatization Plan Goes Awry in Tanzania

A water privatization plan in Tanzania backed by the IMF, World Bank, and the British government and run by a British-German-Tanzanian conglomerate named City Water Services has been canceled by the Tanzanian government just two years into the project's ten year contract.

A Tanzanian government official cited in *Forbes* magazine claims that the privatization plan, which was to provide better water service to the country's capital Dar es Salaam, has in fact led to the deterioration of the city's water supply. The official blames City Water Services for investing only half the amount needed to replace worn out parts in the city's water supply system and to expand the water supply network.

Peter Hardstaff, head of policy for the World Development Movement, blames not only the company but also questions the development policies of the world's financial institutions and western governments, which are the key proponents of water privatization in the developing world.

"This is yet another example of water privatization failing to deliver clean water to poor communities. Rich country governments and the IMF and World Bank must abandon their support for this disastrous policy. It is a scandal that the UK aid budget, money that should go to reduce poverty, was used to push water privatization in Tanzania," explained Hardstaff to Accra's Public Agenda newspaper.

The Guardian reports that the collapse of this project will throw into question many other water privatization projects around the world. The newspaper notes that demonstrations and increased "resentment against private water monop-

lies" are already occurring in South America, Africa, the Caribbean and Asia as more and more western companies are accused of raising prices beyond what most people in the developing world can afford.

**Sandy Hager**

## Brazil Refuses \$40 Million US for AIDS Funding

Protesting demands that it agree to a declaration condemning prostitution, Brazil became the first country to reject funding under the United States' AIDS programme.

As a result Brazil forfeits the possibility of receiving \$40 million US in new AIDS funding, claiming the declaration is actually counteractive in the attempt to eliminate prostitution and the spread of AIDS.

"This would be entirely in contradiction with Brazilian guidelines for a programme that has been working very well for years. We are providing condoms and doing a lot of prevention work with sex workers, and the rate of infection has stabilized and dropped since the 1980s." Explains Sonia Correa, co-chair of the International Working Group on Sexuality and Social Policy, in a recent Guardian report.

The US demand for such declarations is not isolated to the Brazilian case. As the Guardian reports, in general, "most US AIDS funding goes directly to organisations working in the field and much will be channelled through faith organisations that back the no-abortion, pro-abstinence and anti-prostitution stance of the US neo-conservatives."

The same report suggests that Brazil was able to resist these demands because of strong HIV/AIDS policies and a "strong partnership between government and non-governmental organizations that encouraged a united response

to Washington."

Correa sees Brazil's decision to refuse US funds as setting an important precedent but warns that other countries may not be strong enough to resist US influence. "The US is doing the same in other countries—bullying, pushing and forcing—but not every country has the possibility to say no."

**Sandy Hager**

## Resurgence of Anti-Semitism in Mainstream American Media: FAIR

FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting), an American media watch group, claims that the mainstream press in the US has not only failed to cover "increasing anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish sentiment in many places around the globe," but has also been complacent in allowing "anti-Jewish outbursts" from many of its commentators.

The FAIR report cites various anti-Semitic comments from nationally-syndicated radio and television commentators and their guests. These included Don Imus of MSNBC, who called the book publishers Simon & Schuster "thieving Jews" on his popular radio show; Bill O'Reilly of Fox News, who told a Jewish caller to his radio show to "go to Israel" if he was upset about "Christmas going into the schools;" and Bill Donohue, Catholic League president and guest on MSNBC's Scarborough Country, who claimed that "Hollywood is controlled by secular Jews who hate Christianity in general and Catholicism in particular."

The recent resurgence in anti-Semitic comments by mainstream commentators and guests is attributed to "an aggressive form of religious nationalism" that has gained momentum since the re-elec-

tion of George Bush last November. This religious nationalist movement, according to FAIR, is seeking out a scapegoat to serve a powerful conservative mandate.

**Sandy Hager**

## Amnesty for 700,000 Migrant Workers in Spain

In a move that reverses recent trends in Europe to crackdown on illegal immigrants, Spain's socialist government announced an amnesty programme that will allow up to 90 per cent (700,000) of the migrant workers in the country to apply for residence permits so long as their current employers provide them with at least six-month work contracts.

Speaking of the amnesty programme, Spain's pro-socialist *El País* newspaper was supportive, considering it "the only way to deal with situations that are humanely and socially unsustainable and which harm the economy."

According to Giles Tremlett of the Guardian, the amnesty initiative will help to combat exploited migrants who work "secretly and fearfully in the black economy." Once workers' families are brought into the equation, this will amount to approximately one million people no longer forced to hide from Spanish immigration authorities.

Tremlett also suggests that Spain's booming economy has benefited greatly from the influx of migrant workers, a number which is now the highest in Europe and has quadrupled to 3.7 million since 2000. Immigrants have not only helped curb Spain's population decline, but have fueled consumer growth. Further, the social security contributions of those granted amnesty will help to offset "a looming pensions crisis."

**Sandy Hager**

# Things Left Behind

by Jennifer Chromka

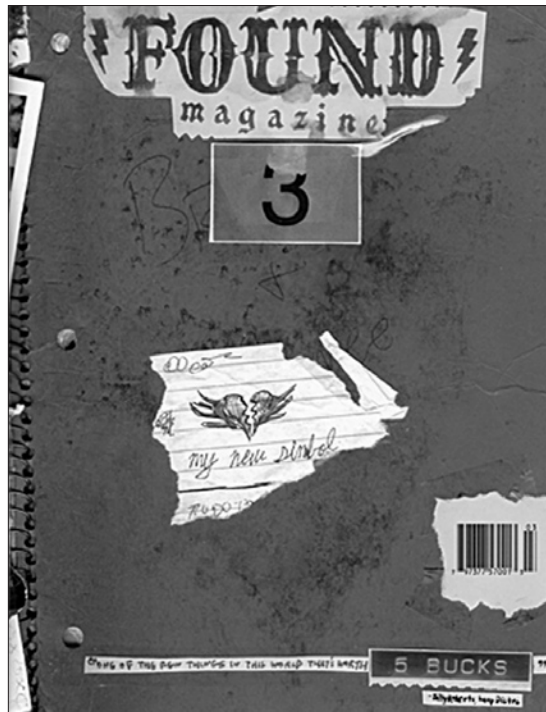
Compelled to make discoveries, intrigued by lost items, gripped by the kind of curiosity that leads one to eavesdrop, the writers of Found Magazine comb the streets for lost or discarded objects.

Created in 2001 by Davy Rothbart and Jason Bitner, Found Magazine delivers glimpses into the lives of strangers. It is a compilation of recovered personal treasures: photos, notes, lists, homework assignments and doodles; things that were left behind and that provide a keyhole view into contemporary North American culture. The enormous enthusiasm for the annual publication has resulted in the release of a best-selling book, an edited catalogue entitled "FOUND: The Best Lost, Tossed, and Forgotten Items From Around the World."

The magazine reveals how odd, humorous, and heartbreaking the private lives of random strangers are—told through stirring love letters, humorous photos, lewd drawings, and simple "to do" lists, all found in buses, cafes, dumpsters, and library books.

Many of the photos are filled with history. A shot of a

1973 parade in Tijuana Mexico, or a black and white photo of a peaceful looking, elderly couple sitting on a porch dated "1889, Rio de Janeiro." Some found notes beg for a story, such as one written in capital red felt letters: "BUY JEWELLRY. FROM:



YOUR WIFE." Another in green pencil crayon on a ripped piece of paper reads "love is the root of estrogen," while a list written in a child's handwriting repeatedly concedes "I will not throw during quiet time".

Finders are asked to describe the circumstances

under which their objects were discovered. A love letter proclaiming "I cherish you beyond question" and "I want you so deeply that my body sings with pain and pleasure" was found under a seat on a high school bus. The finder comments "it surprises me that someone on the rural bus route in Munster, Ontario felt such passion."

Found even has a street team equipped with secret operative instructions to help their cause. The team puts up flyers to recruit finders and spread the word about Found Magazine. The magazine is distributed at bookstores (mostly in the U. S.) and can be ordered online.

An upcoming project at Found Magazine is the collection of polaroids or "super rare gems" as the website describes them, which should be available in the fall or early next year. Polaroids, Davy Rothbart comments, are "one of a kind," and exhibit "inadvertent accidental beauty."

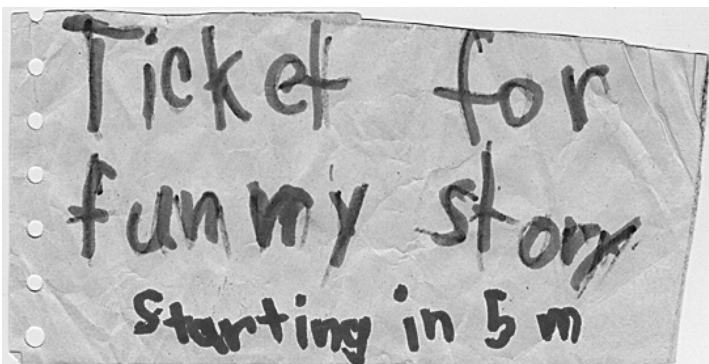
I asked Davy about the magazine's tendency towards voyeurism. He believes it is natural to be curious about other people's experiences. He says that "urban intellectuals tend to be insulated" from other groups they share the city with and that Found forges connections between people.

We also spoke about the readers and sources of Found—readers being somewhat more affluent than sources. Rothbart commented that an effort

is made not to over-represent a particular demographic, but that it is true that "many notes are from people that are down-trodden or disenfranchised." He spoke about his great respect for the authors of the notes and feels that the least interesting way for people to read Found is to laugh at and ridicule the subjects or subject matter. Rather, in laughing at the notes, Rothbart is laughing at himself.

The amount of popular interest and cultural investment in other people's private lives is made evident by the popularity, not only of Found Magazine, but also by the number of reality TV shows, ubiquity of Hollywood biopics, and the trend of reality journalism, where a pieve's author is also a featured character. They all share a common theme by providing windows into the lives of others.

I wonder if this interest lies in comparing our own lives to those of others, or in providing portholes for voyeurism? Is it about temporary fixes for insatiable curiosity, or the idea that a chance find may lead to something bigger? Perhaps by getting closer to someone else's private experience, something about our lives will be revealed, some missing feature confirmed. Whatever the reasons, the growing fascination with found objects seems to convey a desire for direct, unpolished, unmediated experiences that are unavailable in other media.





*Miraculous Hours*  
by Matt Rader  
Nightwood, 2005

There is a fierce, combustible feeling that burns down the lines of Rader's work, and not just in his poem "Firesetter," although it does contain the memorable advice, "life is a kind of burning, a moving towards ashes,/ so life your hands and be gone." It's present as well in the numerous poems that centre around a childhood in rural British Columbia, sto-

ries in which humans intersect with nature and each other at the point of a rifle. What's most striking about Rader's voice is the lack of attitudinizing; the brutal scenes he describes (the accidental crushing of a kitten's throat under a child's heel, a rape, a man hiding a dead body in the forest) are presented with respectful care and integrity, finished in language of high

gloss. "Little survives a broken neck," he remarks in "Friendship". "I guess it was the fall of my shadow between the stairs that froze the only white one where it did/... caught in the drop of my body promised by that sudden black." Rader's speaker possess the fragile lucidity of one who encounters the world in all its violence and beauty. —Linda Besner

*Thirty-Seven Small Songs  
and Thirteen Silences*  
Jan Zwicky  
Gaspereau, 2005

It's hard not to want more from this book than it can deliver. The title is no misnomer; these poems are sometimes small to the point of feeling inconsequential, and have a sing-song quality that verges on the repetitive in its use of hooks like the sky, the wind, the afternoon. The book is mainly a set of apostrophes to things like baths, anger, the

voice of the nuthatch, etc., and Zwicky has adopted a style which deliberately shuns any obtrusively remarkable word-choice in order to create a wash of impressions. The result is often pleasant but forgettable, as in "Study: Aspen": "Shade that wears itself/ lightly in the morning breeze,/ and at noon, the sad sleep/ of its little pointed leaves./ Such sweet

haze/ folds along the gully's flank/ in May." When Zwicky uses smallness as a springboard to larger conclusions, the poems are more arresting, as in "Small Song: Sandwiches", which cuts straight to the point with, "So: we are alive!" This collection is a dignified if not breathtaking addition to Zwicky's substantial body of work. —Linda Besner

*Beyond The Pale: Dramatic  
Writing From First Nations  
Writers and Writers Of  
Colour.*  
Yvette Nolan, Ed.  
Playwrights Press, 2005.

While any attempt to amass bits and pieces of plays together in a book runs the risk of overwhelming its audience, Nolan's wise selection from works by thirty-one First Nations writers and writers of colour varies in writing style and subject matter without sacrificing cohesion. The anthology opens with a Canadian anthropology lesson,

quickly moves to India to make patterns with rice powder, then travels back to Canada by way of a remembered Japan to tell a heart-breaking myth of love, creation, and destruction. The collection moves us through hilarity and horror, through the history book stories about Canada's First Nations, Blacks, Indians, Chinese, and Filipinos

that we have never heard told this way, although they are ever-present to us as a cultural inheritance, a fine dust settled in our blood. We may be familiar with the history book versions, but this collection guarantees a chance to peek directly into the hearts and homes of the human beings behind the statistics.

—Maira Peters

*The Sutler*  
Michael Kenyon  
Brick Books, 2005

Michael Kenyon's debut book of poetry is astonishing in its soft clarity and poignancy. The poetic voice is remarkably developed for a first collection, and the poems benefit from a sense of wisdom and authority. Natural imagery ("I follow/ the small river// at the end of the green trail/ on whose far bank// the year's milky foxgloves/ tilt sinister; the path curves right") merges with images from the bedroom, the city, and

the battlefield. The first of the collection's three parts explores the long slow breakup of a marriage. The middle section consists of two long poems about soldiers and war, the second of which gives the collection its title: a sutler was a camp-follower who sold provisions to soldiers - provisions often taken from the dead. The final section is about awakening and self-exploration, healing and self-discovery. The poems are

rooted in the mind, asking psychological or existential questions, but Kenyon never forgets the tactile language of poetry; he keeps things fresh. Kenyon uses traditional poetic devices such as inverted syntax or exclamations like "O list to port," and "O the mud, the storm," yet in his skilled hands they never feel archaic or old-fashioned. An excellent read. —Matthew J. Trafford

## No Dissing Their Abilities

Canadian athletes compete internationally at the 22nd Défi Sportif

by Chris Tucker

Covered in hockey equipment and sporting modified ski goggles painted opaque in the colors of the Canadian flag, six men throw themselves onto the gym floor in a desperate attempt to thwart the progress of the oncoming jingling ball. A Canadian team member sprawls out—fully extended, he barely manages to deflect the ball away from his goal line. His body covers a full seven feet, yet he only manages to divert the ball with the last measure of his finger tips.

The small crowd does not cheer. Total silence is maintained in the gym. This is goalball, a game where absolute silence from the fans and players alike is not only expected, but intrinsic to the game. Relying on sound rather than sight (all participants wear masks to level the aural playing field of differences in seeing ability), goalball is a game where the sight-impaired hold a competitive advantage over their sight-oriented sisters and brothers, due to their more highly developed use of sound for spatial orientation.

Goalball is one of many such sports that were part of last week's Défi Sportif, held in Montréal. From April 27th to May 1st, 2700 athletes and over 500 volunteers gathered for the 22nd edition of the annual event. In locations scattered throughout the city, athletes with a variety of disabilities raced, battled, and competed in 15 sports.

Défi Sportif is the only competition in Canada that encourages athletes of all disabilities to participate. Whether the disability be visual, auditory, intellectual, psychiatric or physical the athletes face off for gold. They come mostly



I hear a save in the making; a Canadian goalballer in action.

*Benoît Pelosse*

from Québec, although the rest of Canada is well represented along with combatants from 8 other countries.

The badminton, basketball and volleyball played at the Défi Sportif are similar to their mainstream counterparts, slightly altered to allow for each respective disability. Sports such as goalball, tandem cycling and wheelchair fencing, however, are quite unique in their development of rules and competitive dynamics. In many cases, it is the latter category of sport that draws the fascination of spectators.

The previously mentioned Goalball pushes auditory senses to the max. Players sport masks that discourage even traces of light from influencing them. The goal is to roll the ball past the other team's goal line while blocking it from crossing one's own. The players extend themselves across the floor, chasing a ball containing small bells that signal its location. Players rely on textured tape on the ground to determine their location in relation to goal lines and bound-

aries. Twenty minutes after the ball sings its first shot, the team with the most goals wins.

Cyclists are ranked according to their disability and face fierce competition on traditional bikes, three wheeled bikes or tandems. The tandem cycle is unique in that it involves two racers: a visual impaired athlete who occupies the rear seat and a pilot who steers the duo. The pilot is the only non-disabled athlete who competes for a medal at the games.

Wheelchair fencing also attracts its share of attention. As with traditional fencing, the aim is to strike a hit upon the opponent's body with either an épée, saber, or foil. What separates it from its upright counterpart is that the target area for these athletes is limited to area from the waist up. The wheelchair is tethered in place within striking distance of the opponent. The anchored chair allows for a full range of upper body movement but eliminates any toppling of the fencer. The close proximity leads to an intense and very fast paced clash.

These sports, as with all others in the games have come a long way since organized disabled sports competitions got their start nearly sixty years ago, when disabled veterans of the Second World War were encouraged to compete in wheelchair sports to aid with their mental and physical rehabilitation. Today, disabled sports have a more proactive role. Social values and the promotion of a positive self image are at the forefront and for some, overshadow mere competition. For many, being perceived as a serious athlete and breaking out of the largely negative connotations of "disabled" are as important as winning.

Each year of Défi Sportif has seen an increase in the number of athletes, a deepening of the talent pool, and a growth in media coverage and corporate funding. With hopes of becoming the largest disabled games in the world, the Défi Sportif has received a boost with the support of athletes such as Chantal Peticlerc. The winner of five gold medals in Athens in wheelchair racing, Peticlerc is a well known paralympic athlete from Québec.

Peticlerc and other recognizable athletes competing in these games help draw crowds, media, and funding that are facilitating the advancement of all disabled sports. Apart from its growth, the Défi Sportif's real achievement continues to be in giving these athletes from around the world the spotlight that they deserve. The dedication and years of training become the satisfaction that every competitor feels when they step onto center stage in Montréal to show us just what they are capable of.

## Coal Front Comes to the Maritimes

### Are assassinations lighting Atlantic Canadian homes?

by Stuart Neatby

In the past, the mining industry has played an important role in Nova Scotia, both as a source of jobs and as a part of local culture. Today, due partly to the low price of coal on the world market, Nova Scotia Power (NSP) and New Brunswick Power (NBP) rely on imported coal for electricity generation in the region. NSP in particular relies upon coal for 80% of its power generation.

NSP and NBP are the only two companies in Canada that import coal from Colombia, a country known for massive human rights violations against labourers within its mining and petroleum sector. Canada Steamship Lines—a company formerly owned by Prime Minister Paul Martin—is currently transporting coal mined from La Loma and El Cerrejón mines in Colombia to be fired in NSP plants.

A new campaign undertaken by the Atlantic Regional Solidarity Network (ARSN), a Maritime-based Latin American solidarity coalition, is working to focus the attention of people in the Atlantic region on the human and environmental costs behind their monthly power bills.

“The ‘Mining the Connections’ campaign began after the ARSN annual meeting in December last year,” says organic farmer and ARSN member Steve Law. “We discussed the idea of solidarity which we could bring to the situations faced by sisters and brothers in these two countries [Guatemala and Colombia].”

In its 23-year history as a Latin American solidarity organization in the Maritimes, ARSN has had particularly close ties with Guatemala. The Mining the Connections Campaign is also focused on the actions



**Residents of the Colombian village of Tabaco protest the imminent demolition of their village. 500 soliders and 200 police officers forcibly evicted the residents before bulldozing their homes in 2001. The villagers have demanded that their village be relocated as a whole.**

*Colombia Indymedia*

of Glamis Gold Incorporated, a Canadian mining company operating an open-pit mine in Guatemala. Community organizations in Guatemala are accusing the company of complicity in human rights and environmental abuses in the region.

Francisco Ramirez, the head of the National Mineworker's Union in Colombia, conducted a speaking tour of the Maritimes organized by ARSN last March. He was accompanied by Jose Manuel Chacon, a political cartoonist and environmentalist from Guatemala. The two travelled throughout the region speaking about the culpability of Canadian mining corporations in human rights abuses in both Colombia and Guatemala. Ramirez in particular, in speaking about the connections between Maritime power utilities and labour rights violations in Colombia, received a great deal of attention.

“The tour we organized,” said Law, “went from Cape Breton where we met with government officials, Mi'kmaq community members, [and]

university students. In New Glasgow [Nova Scotia] we held a memorial at the Westray Mine memorial with family members affected by the Westray disaster.” In Sackville they met with university students and community members. In Fredericton they met with labour leaders from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), MLAs as well as MPs. In Halifax they met with community members, IBEW Locals, international development leaders as well as MLAs, and MPs.

Absent from this list were representatives from NSP itself. Although ARSN attempted to arrange meetings between Ramirez—who has been active with unionized miners in the mines from which NSP buys its coal—and NSP officials in December and again in March, NSP officials have refused to meet. During Ramirez's visit to the region in December of 2004, he was informed that NSP only dealt with corporate representatives and did not get involved in human rights issues

in other countries.

According to ARSN, both NSP and NBP purchase coal from La Loma and El Cerrejón mines in Colombia. El Cerrejón mine is currently the world's largest open-pit mine, spanning 50 kilometres in length and 8 kilometres in width. It was initially started in the 1980s as a partnership between Exxon-Mobil and the National Colombian Mining Company. In March of 2002, as a result of IMF-imposed free-market policies, it was sold to a consortium made up of Anglo-American, BHP Billiton and Glencore—three of the world's biggest mining companies. The expansion of this mine has displaced a number of Colombian communities, most recently the village of Tabaco. In 2002, Tabaco was destroyed and its inhabitants, most of whose Afro-Colombian descendants had lived in the community for generations, were attacked by more than 200 soldiers and police.

Alabama-based Drummond Corporation, the owner of La Loma mine, is currently the subject of a lawsuit being pursued by the United Steelworkers of America, as well as the International Labor Rights Fund. The suit alleges that Drummond directly hired paramilitaries who assassinated three labour leaders within the La Loma mineworker's union.

Margaret Murphy, a representative of NSP, who was personally asked to arrange a meeting with ARSN members, claimed that NSP had not been approached with specific evidence of the abuses in question. “None of these groups...have brought forward any specific information to us about these allegations,” she said in a phone interview. Murphy also argued that it was unfair to make gen-

*continued on page 15 »*

Large-scale industrial mining is a straightforward exchange of destruction for profit and raw materials. In most cases, the vast majority of these become the property of northern multinational corporations and their shareholders. The materials become consumer products, jewellery, automobiles, buildings, and infrastructure. Destruction, on the other hand, is confined uniquely to host countries, where mines displace millions of people, destroy or damage ecosystems, displace local artisanal miners, and eliminate the way of life of entire indigenous communities. This fundamental split in benefits and damages is made possible by the sheer power of international capital

# STATE OF

## BC First Nations

On the heels of two Supreme Court decisions which ruled First Nations have an enforceable right to have their interests accommodated in land use decisions impacting their traditional territories, the BC Ministry of Energy and Mines launched an online system for staking mineral claims. Within eight days of its launch, the website attracted 2.56 million hits and processed over 3,000 claims representing 1.2 million hectares of land. The Ministry also approved the elimination of 300 regulatory protections. Concern for the impact on the water supply, ecology, and indigenous rights to self determination have spurred many First Nations to action, taking legal action and working to block new mining activity during what some call a state of siege.

## Ghana

11 Canadian mining companies have invested over \$200 million into Ghana since the 1980s, 10 of which are mining gold. While gold production and revenues have achieved massive growth, the people of Ghana have seen very few benefits. An IMF program has enabled massive privatization of mining, while preventing the government from taxing the foreign companies' profits. Artisanal miners have been denied access to gold fields, cyanide spills have destroyed ecosystems and fisheries, and human rights groups have complained of a pattern of intimidation, arbitrary arrests and attacks in communities near mining operations. Legal action and other forms of resistance are ongoing, despite the risks faced by those involved.

## Guatemala

In San Marcos, in the western highlands of Guatemala, communities are divided over a controversial "consultation" process by Canadian-owned company, Glamis Gold, the same company that is suing the US Government under Chapter 11 of NAFTA for not allowing it to mine on land sacred to the Quechan Indian tribe of California. In January, police shot dead one protestor who was trying to prevent the destruction of a pedestrian pathway in order to allow equipment to be transported to the mine. In March, a Glamis security guard murdered a mining critic as he left church. The World Bank is providing "political risk mitigation" for the project.

## Kwale, Kenya

In the biggest foreign investment deal since the current government came to power, Tiomin Resources has been given the go ahead to mine the mineral sand deposits in the coastal region of Kwale. The 400 km stretch of coastline that will be affected is home to a fragile ecosystem of coral reefs and mangrove forests that sustain endangered species such as Sable Antelope and the only bands of Colobus Monkeys on the eastern African coast. Despite heavy resistance from local communities and questions over who benefits, production is slated to begin in 2007.

## Ecuador

In the Intag region of Ecuador, a 3000 hectare community-owned reserve sits on top of coveted copper reserves, which the local owners refuse to sell. The Ecuadorian government has given Ascendant, a Bermuda-based company with a history of human rights abuses, the right to mine the region. The government-granted concessions also include forest in the Toisan Mountain Range, which is home to dozens of endangered species. In order to fund further exploration, Ascendant is seeking a listing on the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSE). So far, locals have not allowed Ascendant personnel into the reserve. A campaign to keep Ascendant from being listed on the TSE is currently underway.

## Chile

Canadian mining firm Barrick Gold plans to relocate three glaciers in the Andes Mountains in Chile. 300 000 cubic meters of ice which cover a 20 hectare surface area lie above 17.6 million ounces of gold and silver; the target of Barrick's Pascua Lama mining project. Upon a visit to the site, two Chilean congressmen have endorsed the transfer of the glaciers. Because agriculture and the ecosystem of the mountains and valleys depend on these glaciers, indigenous communities consider them untouchable.

# CANADIAN MINING



# MINE

to overwhelm poor countries' capacity for resistance. In Canada and abroad, destructive mines and megaprojects take hold uniquely in communities where impoverished governments can be brought on board for a tiny fraction of the potential profits. (Oka, not Oakville; Wiradjuri, not Westmount.) In recent years, awareness of Canada's particular role in the ecological and economic devastation overseas and on native land at home has become the subject of growing awareness. Another enabling factor has been revealed: a general ignorance about the activities of Canadian mining corporations. In some cases, solidarity groups have opened a second front in the fight for survival in indigenous communities at home and abroad. For links to more information, visit <http://dominionpaper.ca/mining>

## Kashipur

Since 1947, an estimated 33 million people have been displaced by mining projects in India. The indigenous Adivasis people make up 8 per cent of the population, but account for a full 40 per cent of the people displaced by mines. One group of Adivasis communities around Kashipur, in the province of Orissa is fighting Montréal-based Alcan for their right to continue their democratic, sustainable, agriculture-based existence. The proposed mine and refinery would cause heavy pollution and pollute two streams, leaving the land unusable. The communities have won a number of victories through international solidarity ties. Former investor Norsk Hydro was forced to divest by Norwegian civil society groups, and a Montréal group, Alcan't in India, recently began a similar campaign. Two union locals representing workers in Alcan smelters have endorsed the campaign, saying they refuse to smelt alumina from Kashipur.

## Burma

In Burma, over 10,000 dissidents are estimated to have been killed by the current regime, and an ongoing crackdown keeps democratic activists on the defensive. This has prompted Canada to impose "selective" sanctions against Burma. While some companies have divested, others continue to do business legally, contributing to the repressive regime. Canadian Ivanhoe Mines is about to become Burma's biggest source of foreign investment, amid reports of the use of forced labour, and the violent displacement of eight villages to make way for mines. Meanwhile, activists like Aung San Suu Kyi continue to call for full sanctions.

## Marinduque

When Vancouver-based Placer Dome finished with its mining operation on the island of Marinduque in the Philippines in 1996, it left 200 million tonnes of tailings in a shallow bay. Locals refer to tailings caught by the breeze as "snow from Canada". The tailings cover fields and villages, and contaminate the water supply, causing lead poisoning and devastating the local fishery. Partially motivated by testimony from Marinduque, MP Ed Broadbent has introduced a bill that would apply Canadian laws to Canadian firms operating abroad. Communities on Marinduque continue to seek compensation and cleanup.

## Thailand

In an official response to a report in Asia Times, Asia Pacific Resources (APR) of Vancouver called reports of death threats a "melodramatic response to endeavour to attract international attention". The controversy is over a proposed massive underground potash mine in Udon Thani, which has faced opposition from community members and politicians. APR has also said that a "growing proportion" of the population supports the mine, and that reports that the mines would cause land subsidence have been addressed. According to the company's most recent statement, "It would seem that the 'furor' may have been over-quoted."

## Lake Cowal

Toronto-based Barrick Gold is planning a gold mine on Lake Cowal, in New South Wales, on land belonging to the Wiradjuri nation. While some within the nation support the mine, others have drawn attention to the ecological consequences of using 6,000 tonnes of cyanide, which is lethal in very small doses, and the exposure of 240 million tonnes of waste rock, which could release massive amounts of arsenic into the ecosystem. The mine would also use 16 million litres of water per day in a country where water scarcity is a major political and ecological issue.

## New Caledonia

A French colony, New Caledonia has a full quarter of the world's nickel deposits. Since taking over in 1853, the colonial forces have met with a continuous series of rebellions by the indigenous Kanak peoples. In 2005, 150 members of the Kanak Rhéebù Nùù Committee blockaded a mine being constructed by Sudbury- and Toronto-based Inco Corp, demanding an independent environmental assessment and good-faith negotiations. Implicitly backed by the French government, Inco has refused to cooperate, instead suing the Kanak for damages.

# AND GLOBAL RESISTANCE

# Tsux'it

## Understanding Indigenous Spirituality

by Kim Petersen

Since 1493, when Pope Alexander VI granted Spain dominion over the “Americas” and gave Africa, the Caribbean and a bit of present-day Brazil to Portugal, the conquest of the “Americas” has been sanctioned by Christian religious authorities. While the native Original Peoples have been forcibly made familiar with Christianity, the settlers’ contemporary understanding of the plethora of indigenous religions remains vague at best.

On the west coast of Vancouver Island, a modern day clash of beliefs is playing out. Canadian officials have attempted to subordinate the reverence for life that is integral to the spirituality of the communities that have lived there for thousands of years.

The majestic killer whales (Orcinus orca) are the largest dolphins, which have become emblematic of the province of British Columbia where they swim in residential pods or as wide-ranging transients. In 1999, a killer whale was born to L-pod, the largest of the southern resident pods that ply the waters of the Pacific Northwest. In July 2001, this young killer whale, L98, turned up alone on the northwest coast of Vancouver Island in Nootka Sound (where British navigator James Cook received a hearty welcome in 1778. The name Nootka is believed to derive from Cook’s poor rendering of the Nuuchah-Nulth tongue).

The juvenile cetacean took up residence near Gold River—a small community situated inland on Muchalaht Inlet—and received intense media attention. The killer whale was named Luna in a contest sponsored by a Seattle newspaper because it “explores the ocean like the moon explores the earth”; however, the Mowachaht/Mucha-



Members of the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation paddling near Tsux'it.

David Wiwchar

laht First Nation (MMFN) named it Tsux'it after their late Chief Ambrose Maquinna. “Chief Ambrose said he’d like to come back as a Kakawin [killer whale in Nuuchah-Nulth language],” said Jamie James, MMFN fisheries manager. “Four days after his death, Tsux'it showed up.” According to James, in the MMFN culture everything works as ‘fours.’ Therefore, Tsux'it’s appearance was an auspicious event for the MMFN.

James explained, “Chiefs believe that when they die they shape-shift into other animals that walk this earth. In the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation culture the Kakawin is the enforcer of the Sea, the Wolf is the enforcer of Land and the Eagle is the enforcer of the Air. All living creatures have a significant purpose in their lives in relation to the water, land, and air. The Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation has always been the protector of its land and resources for thousands of years and continues to this day.”

Some thought that Tsux'it would eventually rejoin L-pod but this has so far not transpired. Tsux'it seemed healthy and his boisterous antics and friendliness began to draw tourists to a community still recovering from the economic loss of its pulp mill in 1998. However, it was feared that Tsux'it’s curiosity for boats and human con-

tact was putting him at risk and steps were taken to minimize direct contact. Based on the successful reuniting of another killer whale, Springer, with its pod, Canada’s Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) made plans to move Tsux'it.

Dave Wiwchar, media and communications advisor to MMFN Chief Mike Maquinna and editor of Ha-Shilth-Sa Newspaper stated, “DFO hadn’t consulted Mowachaht/Muchalaht at all about their plans for Tsux'it.”

“For DFO just to go in and enforce their views on residents of Gold River and Mowachaht/Muchalaht who have been there since time immemorial seemed like the wrong thing to do.”

MMFN people believe in the right of the whale to rejoin L-pod. However, added James, “We object to the techniques of the DFO to move Tsux'it back down: throw him into a pen, then the back of a truck, with no certainty of whether he will rejoin his pod or not.”

MMFN had qualms about the planned move; the outcome was confrontation. When DFO and the Vancouver Aquarium—of ignominious history vis-à-vis killer whales—attempted to capture Tsux'it, MMFN and Hesquiaht First Nation people in canoes coaxed the whale away toward Yuquot, the coastal portal for Nuuchah-Nulth people’s first contact with

people from the Old World.

Wiwchar quoted MMFN Chief Mike Maquinna last summer, during the height of the confrontation with DFO: “All we are doing is the same thing we’ve been doing here for thousands of years; paddling our canoes and singing songs. We have a very special connection with Tsux'it and we’re paddling in support of him. . . We’re trying to stay out of harm’s way, but DFO seems committed to turn this into a battle, even though we’ve made it clear we don’t want that. They have bulletproof vests, guns and high-powered vessels. We’re just paddlers in traditional canoes.”

The DFO eventually relented in its pursuit of Tsux'it and in mid-September a joint stewardship was set up between the DFO and MMFN. Funding for the stewardship is still being negotiated.

### A Settler Perspective on First Nations Spirituality

In one example indicative of responses in the settler media, The Christian Science Monitor expressed dismay that “a native group would be given such power” concerning Tsux'it. Not atypically, the Monitor’s position implies that despite having lived on the land for millennia and never having ceded their land to the Canadian state, the MMFN has no grounds for “special” rights or claims to knowledge of the world they live in.

The Monitor continues: “Killer whales may well be important in native mythology. And there are more things in heaven and earth, and all that. But Tsux'it is not a mythological whale, he’s a real one. Perhaps a simple, ‘We’re sorry we stole your land, but the whale

*continued on page 15 »*

# Psychiatry and Human Rights

## Bush's Drug Plan for America

by Pierre Loiselle

On May 2nd, dissident mental health professionals joined forces with people who have been "psychiatrized" to protest human rights abuses in mental health treatments and what they call the collusion between the pharmaceutical industry and the psychiatric profession. Targeting the pharmaceutical industry's lobby group PhRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturer's Association) in Washington D.C., they sounded the alarm on a Bush Administration plan to screen all United States citizens for mental illness.

The screening initiative is the outcome of the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, a year-long task force which concluded by making recommendations to improve the mental health of Americans, including mandatory nation-wide screening of individuals for mental illness. The screening is to be based on the Texas Medication Algorithm Program (TMAP), established in 1995 - coincidentally when Bush was the governor of Texas. TMAP is designed to standardize treatments for various diagnoses ranging from schizophrenia to depression and its use and influence has spread to over 9 states.

In states where TMAP has been implemented, critics say it had disastrous consequences for patients, while increasing profits for the pharmaceutical companies. David Oaks is the Director of Mindfreedom Support Coalition International, an umbrella group bringing together the voices of those harmed by the psychiatric model of mental health. He explains that TMAP "actually funnels people to the most expensive drugs first; then if those don't work, maybe they'll try the generics, and then next up is electroshock." TMAP



A protester in front of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturer's Association (PhRMA) in Washington DC in May.

*Pierre Loiselle*

recommendations not only suggest using new drugs that are, by their nature, the most experimental, but it excludes methods of treatment such as therapy, exclusively prescribing bio-medical intervention.

"They are already going into schools," said Oaks. "They are testing the kids and then pressuring (them) to be on the psych drugs but they've also called for this program to apply to every single adult, for instance through your general health care practitioner. In New

York City already, physicians are being trained to ask certain mental health questions." The May-June 2005 issue of Mother Jones reported that "in one month, Texas put 19,000 kids on atypical antipsychotics. Half were overmedicated: and as many lacked a diagnosis that validated the drugs' use in the first place."

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) has made their allegiances clear on this issue, boasting of their role in suppressing attention to TMAP

and Bush's screening of America. An article that appeared in the APA's membership newsletter stated that the "mainstream media have not touched the story, in part thanks to the APA's work, for which the [Bush] administration is appreciative."

Allen Jones is a whistleblower who and former Investigator in Pennsylvania's Office of Inspector General. In a legal affidavit, he reported that "the pharmaceutical industry has methodically compromised our political system at all levels and has systematically infiltrated the mental health service delivery system of this nation." He publicly exposed the extensive pharmaceutical bribery which was used to bring TMAP into legislation and warned that "the pervasive manipulation of clinical trials, the non-reporting of negative trials and the cover-up of debilitating and deadly side-effects render meaningful informed consent impossible by persons being treated with these drugs."

Informed consent is being disregarded in numerous cases. In many states, government agencies can force people to take medication. In some documented cases, children were removed from the custody of their biological parents and forcibly drugged for months in state-run mental institutions. The parents had refused to place their child on medication.

"People suffer from real problems and struggle daily with mental health issues, making mental health an important priority," said Sandy Ingram at the protest outside of PhRMA. "But this initiative ensures individuals are denied a full range of treatment options while furthering human rights violations in the name of psychiatric treatment."

# Bolivia on a Tightrope

## The struggle for control of resources and the current crisis

by Benjamin Dangl

On June 6th 2005, after months of steady road blockades and protests demanding the nationalization of the country's natural gas reserves, President Carlos Mesa offered his resignation to congress, explaining he was incapable of presiding over such a tumultuous country. This was one of many climactic points in a series of popular uprisings over the destiny of the second largest gas reserves in South America. At this writing, the fate of the gas, and the geopolitical future of the country, is still very much in question.

### A Recent History of Division

Bolivia's reserves constitute an estimated 1.5 trillion cubic meters of gas, which at current market prices, are worth more than US\$1.5 billion. The unpopular ex-President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, commonly referred to as "Goni" in Bolivia, pushed to privatize the nation's gas reserves in a deal with foreign companies such as British Gas, Exxon-Mobil and Spain's Repsol in 2003. Under the deal, the Bolivian government was to receive a meager 18% of revenues. This percentage struck a raw chord with many Bolivians. For centuries, foreign companies had been exploiting the nation's natural resources such as coal, copper and tin, making enormous profits while Latin America's second poorest country struggled on. In recent gas-related uprisings, many Bolivians have been trying to make sure history didn't repeat itself.

Outraged by Goni's privatization plan, activists took to the streets in what has been called Bolivia's first "Gas War." From September to October of 2003, protests, road blockades and strikes paralyzed the country.



Social movements mobilize in La Paz to demand the nationalization of natural gas.

*Bolivia Indymedia*

Often without sufficient political representation, protest groups have become adept at directing political and media attention to their demands by shutting down the economy with road blockades and strikes. Protesters demanded that the natural gas reserves be nationalized, and run by the government so that profits from the business could go to poorer sectors of society, helping to build much-needed hospitals, roads and schools.

In 2003, protesters also demanded the resignation of President Sanchez de Lozada, who had continually channeled state resources toward foreign investors and international donors instead of social programs to address the needs of Bolivian people. Sanchez de Lozada's heavy-handed protest control tactics also left nearly sixty dead in the month long Gas War, the large majority of them protesters. At the end of the conflict, Sanchez de Lozada

fled the country, leaving the administration in the hands of Vice-president Carlos Mesa.

Mesa knew that if he was to survive the political climate, he would have to concede to some of the diverse demands of the protesting sectors. Among his promises were plans for a national referendum on the gas exportation issue and justice for the victims of the 2003 Gas War.

On July 18th, 2004 the referendum took place. Voters were to choose yes or no to five questions including whether to repeal Sanchez de Lozada's gas exportation plan, increase revenue with a new plan, use the gas as a strategic way to gain access to the sea from Chile, and use most of the profits from the exportation plan for the development of schools, hospitals, roads and jobs. Unfortunately for Bolivian protest groups, the referendum did not include the nationalization of the gas as an

option.

Many voters did not understand the convoluted wording of the questions, which were not only pointed towards a "yes" vote, but also left open opportunities for corporate exploitation of the gas. Citizens were also reportedly forced into voting by a harsh new law which called for the imprisonment of any person who refused to participate in the referendum.

The controversial referendum led to divisions among activist leaders in Bolivia. Jamie Solares from the Bolivian Worker's Union and Felipe Quispe, the director of the Bolivian Farm Workers Federation, led blockades and protests against the referendum, but were not able to generate enough grassroots support to stop or impede the voting. Congressman Evo Morales, leader of the Movement Toward Socialism Party (MAS) and a major coca farmers' union, supported the refer-

endum. Some viewed Morales' endorsement as a strategic move to gain urban middle support for a presidential bid in the next election.

After the polls closed on July 18th, it was announced that seventy five percent of the voters said "yes" to all five questions. Yet for months, gridlock in congress, pressure from foreign investors and protesting groups postponed any major decisions on what to do with the gas.

The violence of the 2003 conflict still hasn't been fully investigated, and members of Bolivia's security forces have not been charged. However, Mesa has differed from his predecessor in one significant way: he has refused to call upon the use of lethal security force to break up the many protests and road blockades. In the year and half that Mesa has been in office, though confrontations between protesters and security forces have resulted in injuries, no deaths have been reported.

### Gas War: 2005

In March of 2005, protest groups made up of unions, farmers, civil society organizations and students, were tired of waiting for the government to nationalize the gas. Through both independent and coordinated efforts, protesters marched, blockaded vital highways and shut down four oilfields near the central city of Cochabamba.

On March 6, after facing an estimated 800 protests during his term in office, Mesa stated that the country had become "ungovernable" and offered his resignation. He blamed Evo Morales for the chaos in the country and used the resignation announcement as a threat to hand power over to the President of the Parliament, Hormando Vaca Diez. Due to his ties to foreign investors and the

main right-wing party in government, Vaca Diez was highly unpopular with Bolivian leftists and was likely to respond more violently to protests than Mesa.

Mesa was hoping the gesture, which many called a plea for sympathy, would force the left to back off. Yet not only was Mesa's resignation rejected by congress, but his announcement backfired. During Mesa's show of weakness, diverse protest groups led by Morales, Quispe and Solares came together to re-launch a past protest front known as the People's General Staff. The group, formed to unite the country's social movements, called for continued strikes and demanded that governmental royalties from the sale of the gas be raised to a minimum of 50%.

On May 17th 2005, the Bolivian Congress passed a gas law which imposed a new 32% tax on production on top of the existing royalties of 18%. However, it fell short of the protesters' demands as they said it would be easy for the oil companies to evade the 32% tax. This set off another round of marches and road blockades. The legislation also agitated foreign investors, who claimed it gave far too much control to the government. The law increased taxes for foreign companies and stated that indigenous groups would have to be consulted about further use of gas in their areas and would receive compensation for the use of their land. Many foreign investors had been pumping money into Bolivia's gas industry since 1996 and felt that the new law was confiscating their investments. Some threatened to sue the Bolivian government in international courts.

Jefferey Webber published an article in ZNet, which quoted US Treasury Department's Assistant Secretary of International Affairs Randal Quarles as

saying that, if the new gas law were to go into effect, it would be a "sure thing that the first measure would be the suspension of investments, at minimum while Bolivia continues this uncertainty." Quarles also suggested that the law might influence the amount of financial support that organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank offer to the Bolivian government.

The day before the law was passed, 100,000 protesters, primarily from El Alto, a working class community near La Paz, the country's capital, rallied outside

to get here as they have so little money. But I decided to come because we need to reclaim our natural resources. We have been robbed for centuries and our government is robbing us again."

Not all protesters shared the same goals. Evo Morales said that Bolivia should receive 50% of the royalties from the sale of the gas, a demand which had been previously supported by protesters but by this point was viewed by many as too moderate. As the perhaps strongest leftist presidential candidate, Morales and his positions are



Bolivia Indymedia

parliament demanding Mesa's resignation. In the preceding days, other sectors joined the El Alto protesters. The La Paz teachers' union called a strike, peasant unions across the country organized road blockades, and the National Congress of the Miners' Union also began marching in La Paz. The MAS party organized a massive march from the city of Cochabamba to La Paz, a distance of 190 kilometers.

In an article on ZNet, Nick Buxton quotes a miner named Iriaro who had traveled six hours to join protests in La Paz as saying, "People are suffering

often highly scrutinized. In an article in CounterPunch, Forrest Hylton explained that "Morales poses as the defender of democracy in hopes of winning over the urban middle class... Though the U.S. Embassy, the weak and divided Bolivian elite, and the London Economist see Morales as a wolf in sheep's clothing, a strategic radical disguised as a tactical moderate, in rhetoric and fact Morales is the strongest defender of Bolivian democracy as presently configured. Neither he nor MAS want to see the constitutional order unravel, as both have had their sights set on the 2007 elections since 2002, when Morales nearly won the presidential race."

By May 24, tens of thou-

*Benjamin Dangl worked at the Andean Information Network in Bolivia in 2003. He is the editor of Upside Down World, an online magazine about activism and politics in South America. Contact: Ben@upside-downworld.org. Thanks to April Howard for editorial help with this article.*

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# Danger and Spectacular Opportunity

## A growing movement against corporate media meets in St. Louis

by Steve Anderson

“Out of 393 interviews by the major news networks leading up to the invasion of Iraq, only 4 contained anti-war voices,” said Democracy Now’s Amy Goodman at the opening of the National Conference for Media Reform (NCMR)

Over 2,500 media reformers and revolutionaries gathered in St. Louis, Missouri in mid-May to discuss everything from micro radio licensing policy to direct action campaigns against media conglomerates. The second annual NCMR had to turn away attendees, with registrations far exceeding capacity.

“That is not a mainstream media, that is an extreme media,” Goodman added, to loud cheers from the standing-room only crowd.

*“Every day, we hear a story that, if amplified, could bring down the government.”*

Norman Solomon of the Institute for Public Accuracy reminded conference-goers that The Phil Donahue Show was cancelled by MSNBC because it allowed room for anti-war voices during the Iraq War. Solomon quoted an internal MSNBC report that stated that Donahue’s show could create a “difficult face for MSNBC in a time of war” and that there was a danger of the show becoming “a home for the liberal antiwar agenda at the same time that our competitors are waving the flag at every opportunity”.

Populist radio personality Jim Hightower noted that “108 cities have defeated Wal-Mart” and asked: “why isn’t the big media reporting this?” Author and filmmaker Naomi Klein commented that “every day, we hear



Participants at the National Conference for Media Reform.

*San Diego Indymedia*

a story that, if amplified, could bring down the government.”

### Celebrating Media Reform Victories

Participants were reminded that media reformers have much to celebrate, starting with an unprecedented level of popular support. According to Janine Jackson of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, “when we used to talk about media reform people used to tell you to just turn [your TV] off; you don’t hear that so much today”.

One widely-touted success was the recent Congressional decision barring federal agencies from producing video news releases (VNRs) that do not clearly disclose the government as their source. Another came in 2003, when the FCC was forced to roll back plans to further deregulate media ownership after hundreds of thousands of people voiced their opposition in letters to the FCC. It was the largest outpouring of public input the commission had ever received.

The growth of independent media at a time when mainstream print and TV outlets are shrinking was also celebrated. Democracy Now!, a daily newscast featuring social movements and underreported news, airs on

330 stations in North America, and was nearly ubiquitous at the NCMR. By some estimates, as many as three million hear host Amy Goodman’s passionate journalism every day.

Conference organizers created a space specifically to feature independent media organizations. Over 70 organizations staffed displays for the “Media Democracy Showcase” meet and greet.

A proposal for an “Independent World Television” network generated considerable buzz. Founding Chair Paul Jay, the former executive producer of CounterSpin, announced plans to raise to raise \$25 million to start a global television network featuring “serious news and full-spectrum debate”.

### The Perfect Storm

Federal Communications Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein predicts what he calls a “perfect storm” in the coming years. In the next few years, he says, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and US congress will make crucial policy decisions regarding internet content and broadband delivery. These decisions will come at a time when media reform activists, media education organizations, and inde-

pendent media outlets enjoy their greatest influence and political momentum in decades, while the corporate media (especially those involved in telecommunications) are pouring unprecedented resources into lobbying the FCC and Congress. The result of these forces gathering momentum in the coming fight over policy, says Adelstein, will be an historic clash with massive implications for the coming decades.

Jim Hightower called it “an historic moment” and Free Press chair Robert McChesney said that the present is “a moment of danger and a moment of spectacular opportunity.” While the outcome is far from decided, the media reform movement appears to be gaining momentum and enthusiasm, and activists seem to be spoiling for a fight with corporate media conglomerates.

“The public is beginning to understand how critical healthy media are to a healthy democracy,” said Robert McChesney. “They are recognizing they must get involved if they want a better system.”

US public broadcasting veteran Bill Moyers galvanized this recognition in a widely rebroadcast speech to an electrified audience.

“An unconscious people,” said Moyers, “an indoctrinated people, a people fed only partisan information and opinion that confirm their own bias, a people made morbidly obese in mind and spirit by the junk food of propaganda is less inclined to put up a fight — ask questions and be skeptical. And just as a democracy can die of too many lies, that kind of orthodoxy can kill us, too.”

*Steve Anderson is Managing Editor of COA News. Sign up for the free COA News Alert Service at coanews.org.*

**Bolivia, continued from page 13 »**

sands of protesters had again descended into La Paz from El Alto. They were met with rubber bullets and tear gas from security forces. Six protesters were reportedly injured in the clashes. Road blockades were set up on main roads across the country, shutting down routes to La Paz, the nearby international airport, and roads to the borders with Peru and Chile.

On June 2nd, as a last ditch effort, Mesa announced plans to re-write the constitution in a national assembly. With such an assembly, Mesa hoped to calm the protests by offering marginalized indigenous people a larger voice in the government. Under his decree, members to the constitutional assembly would be elected on October 16, 2005. According to a June 3rd report by the AFP News Service, Evo Morales, stating that Mesa's proposal could easily be rejected by congress, said it had "good intentions, but is unconstitutional... a new show put on by the government [to demobilize the protests]."

Protesters were not satisfied with Mesa's proposal, as it didn't offer an immediate response to their demands for nationalization of the country's gas. Protest groups pledged to continue road blockades and marches until the gas was nationalized and plans for the constitutional assembly were passed by congress.

Mesa also proposed a referendum on the autonomy of resource-rich areas in Bolivia, such as the province of Santa Cruz, where much of Bolivian gas is located. There is a strong drive in this region to privatize the gas. Protest groups are deeply against right-wing demands for such autonomy, as it would thwart any plans for full nationalization.

On June 6th, after another full day of protest and road blockades, Mesa again offered his resignation to congress. "This is as far as I can go," Mesa stated in a televised address.

The Andean Information Network reported that Mesa also said that he had done his best, and that he asked Bolivians for forgiveness if he shared responsibility for the profound political crisis that was gripping the nation. Although the MAS party demanded Mesa's resignation, it was not a key demand of many groups; most primarily advocated for the nationalization of the gas. For many protesters, the issue wasn't who was President; it was who was in control of the nation's gas. As such, Mesa's resignation is unlikely to offer a solution to Bolivia's crisis.

Promising not to repeat the mistakes of his predecessor, Mesa did not call upon the use of lethal force by police to quell protests. However, should Mesa's resignation be accepted, the presidency would then go to Vaca Diez, who has often advocated the use of force to stop protests. During the Sanchez de Lozada administration such crackdowns only fueled national discontent.

Even before Mesa offered his resignation, Vaca Diez said that the idea of having early elections is "gaining momentum as a way out of the problem". Morales also told reporters that holding early elections "is the only way we will find a political solution." If early presidential elections do take place, Morales may have a solid chance of winning. He lost to Sanchez de Lozada in 2002 by less than 2% of the vote. Whoever ends up becoming president will continue to face similar pressure from foreign investors, international donors and a largely discontented majority of citizens.

As the conflict has proven so far, only full nationalization of the gas is likely to satisfy protesters. Marches, blockades and strikes are expected to continue across the country. Meanwhile, the second largest natural gas reserves on the continent remain in the ground.

**Colombian coal, continued from page 7 »**

eralizations about the mining industry in Colombia, and added that NSP only dealt with reputable companies in its overseas purchasing.

At press time, officials from NBP had not returned calls.

Catherine Hughes, another ARSN member based in River John, Nova Scotia, noted that ARSN members - as well as Ramirez himself - have as-of-yet not been given an opportunity to present their information about the connections between NSP and NBP's suppliers in Colombia. "We certainly haven't had a chance in a formal manner to present this information to them," she said, but added that NSP has recently indicated a willingness to speak to ARSN members.

Colombia has the highest rate of assassinations of labour leaders in the world. Ramirez himself has faced no fewer than seven assassination attempts, the most recent of which

occurred as he was walking his daughters to a lunch counter in Bogota. Ramirez worked personally with the union leaders within La Loma mine, and had been leading a union campaign against the privatization of Minercol, the state mining company. During his presentation in Halifax, he claimed that there are enough co-operative mining operations throughout Colombia, which respect the basic rights of workers, to provide for the needs of both power utilities in the Maritimes.

"NS Power should be moving toward renewable energy sources," said Hughes, echoing a familiar refrain among environmentalists in Nova Scotia.

"But if the coal is to be purchased from Colombia, it should be purchased from sources with basic respect for the environment, and for labour rights."

**Indigenous spirituality, continued from page 10 »**

needs its pod' is in order."

While conceding—albeit by quoting Shakespeare—that there might be more to the world than the reality of the western worldview, the Monitor immediately reasserts their privilege to determine what is "real" and what is "mythological". Meanwhile, the reader's understanding of the situation remains impoverished.

Native American Studies professor Arlene Hirschfelder and White Earth Chippewa writer Paulette Molin noted in the preface to *The Encyclopedia of Native American Religions*: "The public knows or understands little about native religions in North America despite all the Native American issues which frequently make

the news.... Yet despite all this news, the North American public remains ignorant about Native American religions, and this despite the fact that hundreds of books and articles have been published by anthropologists, religionists and others about native beliefs."

DFO claims to "understand the cultural and spiritual significance" of Tsux' iit to the MMFN. But for the MMFN, it is much deeper. Speaking of his people, James said, "We all have a spiritual connection to nature and the land around us."

James advocated a simple, non-confrontational course of action: "Let nature take its course; that's what we stand by as Nuu-Chah-Nulth First Nations."

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