

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

NEWS FROM THE GRASSROOTS

WWW.DOMINIONPAPER.CA • MAY 2006 • ISSUE #36



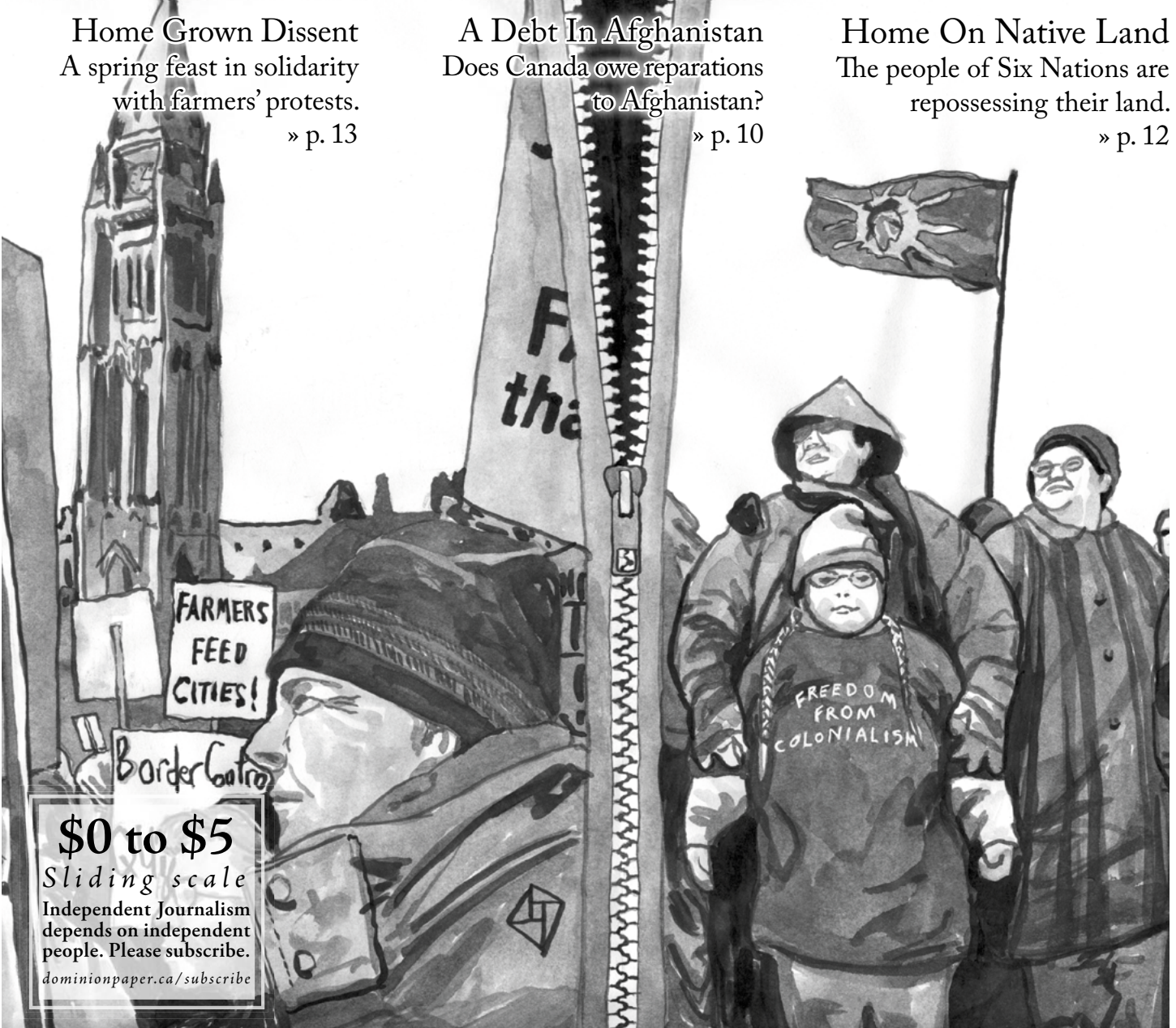
Home Grown Dissent
A spring feast in solidarity with farmers' protests.
» p. 13



A Debt In Afghanistan
Does Canada owe reparations to Afghanistan?
» p. 10



Home On Native Land
The people of Six Nations are repossessing their land.
» p. 12



\$0 to \$5
Sliding scale
Independent Journalism depends on independent people. Please subscribe.
dominionpaper.ca/subscribe

San Francisco passes peak oil resolution

On April 11, San Francisco became the first city in the United States to pass a resolution “acknowledging the threats posed by peak oil.” The resolution, which passed unanimously by the city’s Board of Supervisors, recommended that the city develop a comprehensive plan to deal with what it termed “a prolonged period of irreversible decline” in oil reserves, “leading to ever-increasing prices.”

The resolution follows a two-year campaign by local activists to direct attention to the broad implications of limited oil reserves paired with rapidly growing demand. Activists credit the visual impact of a poster (www.oilposter.org) created by designer/activist group SF Informatics with communicating the urgency of the issue.

“Our society runs on oil,” said SF Informatics’ Michael Poremba. “Our economy runs on oil, and farsighted local governments should begin planning now—indeed years ago—for an era of declining supplies, because that era is starting now.”

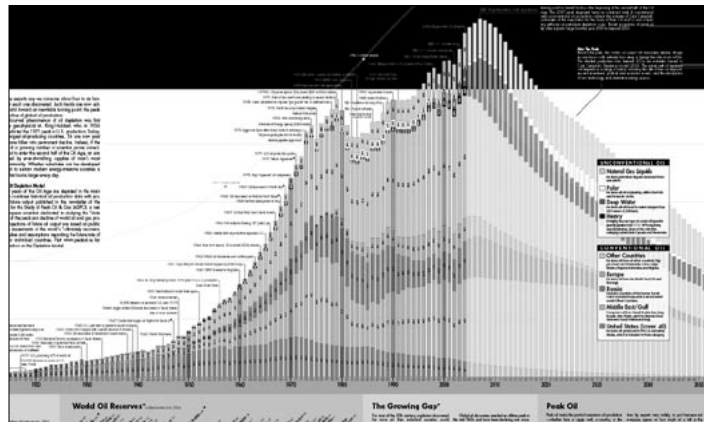
Some experts are predicting that global oil supply will peak as soon as 2007, while rapid economic growth in Asia means that demand will continue to grow.

—Dru Oja Jay

Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands resigns

Massive protests in the Solomon Islands’ capital city have left much of Honiara’s Chinatown in ruins and forced newly elected Prime Minister Snyder Rini from office, reports the *Toronto Star*. Over 200 Chinese residents have fled the violence that was sparked by claims of electoral corruption.

According to the *Guardian*, protesters believe Rini’s election was heavily influenced



Poster used in the Peak Oil Campaign in San Francisco oilposter.org

by Taiwan and local Chinese businesses.

The Solomon Islands has become the subject of a diplomatic tug-of-war between China and Taiwan in recent years, being waged with what the *Associated Press* calls “cheque-book diplomacy.” The Pacific island nation is one of Taiwan’s 25 diplomatic allies, but China has been trying to lure it to its side.

Following his resignation announcement, Rini was escorted out of Parliament by heavily armed Australian police whose numbers have been increased since civil strife erupted in mid April.

Foreign security forces have been in the islands since 2003 to help end violence between rival islanders, although *Sydney Indymedia* says Australia’s growing military presence in the islands has more to do with geopolitical interests than peacekeeping.

Rini will hold onto his post until lawmakers select a new Prime Minister.

—Van Ferrier

US immigrants gather momentum for May Day

An estimated three million people, mostly immigrants, marched in dozens of US cities in March and April, demanding an end to anti-immigrant legislation and an end to the criminalization of immigrant labourers.

Most recently, over 500,000 people participated in a protest against the proposed legislation in Los Angeles. Many walked out of jobs and classrooms to attend marches. It was the largest-ever demonstration in the city.

Groups across the country are mobilizing for a coordinated action on May 1, with many calling for what amounts to a one-day general strike to highlight the economy’s dependence on undocumented labour. Some trade union leaders have refused to endorse the “don’t work, don’t buy” program, saying it violates contracts, but support is growing for the demands.

—Dru Oja Jay

Cars, jewelry and sex buys reconstruction contracts in Iraq

In order to obtain lucrative reconstruction projects in Iraq, Philip Bloom offered US officials money, cars, premium airline seats, jewelry, alcohol, and sexual favours from women at his villa in Baghdad, reports the *Associated Press*.

Bloom’s companies won \$8.6 million worth of reconstruction contracts in exchange for \$2 million worth of bribes. According to court documents made public on April 18th, Bloom is pleading guilty to conspiracy, bribery, and money laundering.

In one e-mail included with the court papers, an unnamed

official requested an electric blue Nissan 350Z sports car costing over \$35 000. An employee trying to find the car told Bloom in an e-mail it was a “very desirable, hard-to-find color” and only two were available in the Western U.S., reports *CorpWatch*.

Bloom is one of four people charged so far in a scheme that included the theft of \$2 million in reconstruction money and the illegal purchase of machine guns and other weapons.

—Hillary Bain Lindsay

Reconstruction money for Iraq spent on security

U.S. construction giant Parsons Inc. has spent its \$200 million budget after completing less than a quarter of the health clinics it was contracted to build in Iraq.

Brig. Gen. William McCoy, the Army Corps commander overseeing reconstruction in Iraq, said he still hoped to complete all 142 clinics as promised. McCoy is seeking emergency funds from the U.S. military and foreign donors. “I’m fairly confident,” he told the *Washington Post*.

By the end of 2006, the \$18.4 billion that Washington has allocated for Iraq’s reconstruction runs out. Much of that money has been spent on security for reconstruction projects (guards and surveillance cameras, for example) and building up Iraq’s police and military.

A recent report released by the nonprofit research organization RAND Corp, states that the US has failed to improve basic sanitation and provide safe drinking water in heavily populated areas of Iraq.

According to *Reuters*, the report goes on to say that botched efforts to improve public health may be to blame for elevated anti-American sentiment in the country.

Doctors in Baghdad’s hospitals still cite dirty water as one of the major killers of infants.

—Hillary Bain Lindsay

Criminologists fear a private prison boom in Canada

Leading criminologists fear a private prison boom under the current Conservative government, reported the *Toronto Star* on April 2nd.

The following day, Prime Minister Stephen Harper addressed the Canadian Professional Police Association in Ottawa, reiterating the crime fighting promises made during the election campaign. "If you do a serious crime, you're going to do serious time," he said.

Experts agree that the government's justice strategy would dramatically spike demand for costly prison space.

"Either they'll spend a ridiculous, unsubstantiated amount of money on this or, more likely, they'll move to a more private model of corrections," Neil Boyd, a criminologist at Simon Fraser University, told the *Toronto Star*.

Critics argue that private prisons put profit margins before rehabilitation; it's not in their interest to decrease the number of repeat offenders.

The Conservative government maintains that it does not advocate private prisons.

—Hillary Bain Lindsay

Government slashes climate change programs

Forty per cent of this year's budget for climate change programs has been slashed from the departments of Natural Resources and Environment.

"If it's not in the taxpayers' interest to fund programs that are not effective, then we are not going to," Natural Resources Minister Gary Lunn told the *CBC*.

"Apparently, the federal government has launched a stealth campaign against action on climate change," said John Bennett, senior policy advisor for the Sierra Club of Canada, in response to the cuts. "The Harper minority government



Farmers in Ontario are bringing the farming crisis into the big cities.

John Bonnar

has no mandate to destroy more than decade's worth of research programs and knowledge networks needed to provide a science-based response to climate change," he added.

Critics argue that the Liberal government did not do enough to address climate change, though it seems that the Conservative government will do even less. Canada's greenhouse gas emissions have continued to rise since the signing of the Kyoto Protocol - an international agreement to address climate change - in 1997. Before being elected, Harper told the *CBC* that a Conservative government would abandon the Kyoto Accord and set new targets that are easier to meet.

A study published in the March issue of *Science* found that the growing human influence on Earth's climate could lead to a long and irreversible rise in sea levels by eroding the planet's vast polar ice sheets, reports *The New York Times*.

"If we don't like the idea of flooding out New Orleans, major portions of South Florida, and many other valued parts of the coastal U.S., we will have to commit soon to a major effort to stop most emissions of carbon to the atmosphere," said Dr. Overpeck, a lead author of one of the studies.

—Hillary Bain Lindsay

Ontario farmers raise crops, livestock...and hell

Farmers in Ontario are bringing the rural farming crisis into the big cities. On March 2 the *CBC* reported that thousands of farmers blocked traffic in downtown Toronto demanding more provincial aid. On March 17 hundreds of farmers took to the 401 in their tractors, reported Pulse24. On March 20, the *National Post* reported that farmers had launched a four-day protest aimed to secure help for farmers in the upcoming Ontario budget.

After four days of circling tractors around the Ontario legislature, farmers were disappointed by the provincial budget, reported the *Ottawa Citizen*. The amount of money for agriculture in the finance minister's budget went down from \$1.14 billion last year to \$896 million this year.

"They don't want us here. All they want is our land to go build houses on," says cattle farmer Kosto Popovic.

On April 5, thousands of farmers gathered on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. The farmers want the federal government to help them compete with heavily subsidized farmers in the United States and Europe, reported *CBC Ottawa*.

"We're losing money," oil-

continued on page 16»

~ ISSN 1710-0283 ~

www.dominionpaper.ca
dru@dominionpaper.ca

PO Box 741 Station H
Montréal, QC H3G 2M7
(514) 313-3478

The Dominion is a pan-Canadian media network that seeks to provide a counterpoint to the corporate media and direct attention to independent critics and the work of social movements. *The Dominion* is published monthly in print and on the web.

Publisher

The Dominion
Newspaper Society

Editor

Dru Oja Jay

Managing Editor

Hillary Lindsay

Volunteer Coordinator

Moira Peters

Arts Editors

Max Liboiron

Jane Henderson

Original Peoples Editor

Kim Petersen

Agriculture Editor

Hillary Lindsay

Environment Editor

Yuill Herbert

Review Editor

Linda Besner

Français Editor

Vivien Jaboeuf

Business Editor

Rob Maguire

Copy Editors

Kate Andronov

Moira Peters

Karen Templeton

Sara Homer

Katie Shafley

Ross Lockhart

Kim Alf

Anna Carastathis

Amy Tea

Roisin Bonner

Sandra Livingston

Adrian Mckerracher

Maria-Helena Pecelli

Contributing Illustrator

Sylvia Nickerson

Portraits of Strength

The women of Panzós

by Moira Peters

Panzós, Guatemala
May 29, 1978.

Early morning. 800 people gather in the town square. Their land, homes, and crops have been expropriated by the Guatemalan government and given to the International Nickel Company (INCO) in mining concessions.

9 am. The mayor of Panzós arrives to address the crowd. He makes a sign and the military, who have the square surrounded, open fire. 35 people are executed and 40 are injured. Those trying to escape in boats drown in the river Polochic. In total, 53 die.

May 31, 1978.

Headline in leading Guatemalan newspaper: "Mob of two thousand farmers attack military detachment at Panzós"

Montreal – May 18, 2005

I am sitting in a small, bright room on the 4th floor of edifice Le Belgo. The floor-to-ceiling windows are open and I can hear the traffic on Ste. Catherine Street. The walls bristle with huge portraits, columns of photographs and typed banners that document a Canadian mining company's implication in the massacre in Panzós, Guatemala in 1978.

Marlon Garcia Arriaga is a short, impeccably dressed young man. His exhibit is titled "Panzós, 25 ans plus tard..." The Guatemalan painter and forensic photographer explains why he has brought his artwork to Montreal.

"When the massacre happened, I was ten years old. At that time, state violence was intimidating, but this was the first time the army was unselective in its slaughter. Men, women and children were shot, clubbed and stabbed without reason. It was all over the papers for weeks. The teachers at my school were very left-wing; they



painting by Marlon Garcia Arriaga

pasted up news articles every day, all over the walls of our hallways.

"When I visited Panzós years later it was to photograph the exhumation of the victims of the 1978 massacre. I visited the town many times, and it occurred to me that I was amassing lots of information, and that I could possibly do something useful with it."

The massacre at Panzós may have been the paradigmatic act of violence in Guatemala's 36 year internal armed conflict, which officially ended in 1996 with the ratification of the Peace Accords. During the war, 200 000 people were killed or disappeared and 1.5 million displaced during a series of military dictatorships. The vast majority of the victims were Indigenous subsistence farmers. Central to this time of violence was the control of land, coveted by foreign corporations for resources like bananas, sugar, nickel, and gold.

INCO, a Canadian Corporation that was recently given a failing grade by The *Report on Business* magazine for corporate social responsibility, was the interest being defended when the population of Panzós was mown down by its own soldiers. This message comes through loud and clear

in "Panzós, 25 ans plus tard..." and, seeing and reading the evidence in a cheery Montreal gallery, I feel the appropriate shame and outrage at what my people did to Marlon's people. Marlon focusses his lens on a different injustice, however, a more local bifurcation in the story he is compelled to articulate: the exclusion of women from documented history.

Dominating the exposition, 8x8 foot portraits, mostly of young women, glow in mellow orange and pink.

"My education was centred on the European painters of the 17th century. I studied the enormous paintings of Napoleon, for example. This was a way to pay homage to a great man - to do a big painting of him. Of course, I am Guatemalan, and so I prefer yellow and orange and blue to the greys and browns those European painters used." Marlon and I think this is funny.

"Do you know that when authorities or journalists wanted to quote witnesses to what happened in Panzós, they only ever asked men?"

"Do you know that when I visited Panzós, I would take rolls and rolls of film? Hundreds of rolls of pictures I took at Panzós. And when they'd be developed, and I'd

have the negatives laid out, all I saw were photos of women. Women, women, women, women, women!

"Women have the traditional right to ask compensation for the deaths of their husbands and sons and brothers. It is women who lead the demand for exhumations, reconciliation, and justice."

I turn my attention to the woman standing in the corner of room 312 with her chin in her hand. Her brown skin glows against the yellow tank-top tucked tight at her waist into her long heavy skirt. She stares at a tree's reflection in a lake that ripples where seeds fall into the water. Three crocodiles slide around each other at the edge of the lakeshore and three humming birds break up the green-and-blue painting with their red wings outstretched. Among the crocodiles float tiny reflections: four military helicopters, their red lights flashing. The woman carries an empty bucket.

"A woman named Mama Maquin led the march in Panzós the day of the massacre. She was there with her daughter and grandson and granddaughter. Only the granddaughter survived. This is her..." Marlon points to the painting of a woman with high cheek bones, piled hair black against the sky. "She is a leader in her community now."

By bringing us closer to the protagonists of his story, Marlon entices Canadians to appreciate and respect the people whose world we share. "Together, our histories make one history, but with two distinct faces. We are two peoples implicated in one genocide; with two distinct images of the opportunity to be human. Making who you are and who we are more visible will continue to be an essential theme of my art."



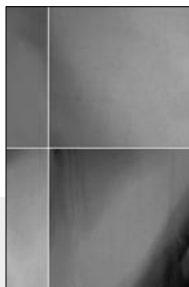
Cariboo Magi
Lucia Frangione
Talonbooks, 2005

In Frangione's seventh script, she chooses bold hilarity as a means of tackling themes of longing, belonging, duty, and deception. A rag-tag set of characters disguise themselves as a theatre troupe and head north from San Diego to the booming Gold Rush town of Barkerville. They are diverse failures: the child actress who has outgrown her roles, the tipsy Anglican minister who has never con-

verted a single soul. With her typical high energy, Frangione here employs both linguistic and physical comedy. *Sarcastic Taishanese* (Chinese dialect) and broken Chinook are mixed with snippets of Hamlet, The Last of the Mohicans, A Christmas Carol, and the Gospel of Luke. Occasional inconsistencies of character (the sudden prudery of the saloonkeeper) and meter (in Joe Mackey's

narrative doggerel) would likely be overlooked in the hilarity of performance. Between false auspices and half-practiced social niceties, between the pastiche stories and their mishmash compilation, these characters invoke a genuine renewal of spirit.

—Jane Henderson



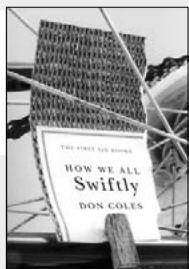
Lemon Hound
Sina Queyras
Coach House, 2006

Any misgivings generated by a book of prose poetry which claims to be, "among other things, a direct response to and engagement with the work of Virginia Woolf" are entirely dissipated on first contact with Sina Queyras' third collection of poetry, *Lemon Hound*. To the contrary, this collection proves Queyras to be a poet of incredible skill and competence, capable of taking such daunting literary giants as Woolf and Gertrude Stein and interacting

with their work in a way which is utterly compelling, contemporary, and uniquely her own. Queyras grapples with the same geographies and issues as in her other collection —Brooklyn and Toronto, international affairs, the state of feminism—yet she retains her amazing capacity for playful sensuality: "In another poem a woman might/ find pleasure in the sound of her own words, ... see the city/ as a pleasant backdrop. In another poem a woman/ might cou-

plet." Queyras bends language, giving us "girls who bite off more than they can eschew," and a stunning array of verbized nouns and nounified verbs: "the smell of bread queases her," "she is brisk and thumbing," "she hinges about feelings." The imagery, repetition, and philosophic range of these poems make for an engrossing and satisfying read.

—Matthew J. Trafford



How We All Swiftly:
The First Six Books
Don Coles
Signal Editions, 2005.

There's no denying that *How We All Swiftly* is an important book. It showcases work from Coles' early volumes, some out of print and all unread. Unusual in the writing world, Coles emerged fully formed, publishing his first book of poetry well into his forties. There's the temptation to pin the undeniable quality here on this late entry into writing; with no evidence of youthful missteps, all the work seems

refined. Here, there's wisdom without pedantry, beauty without flash. Coles is a poet of precision and clarity. His conscious decision to use ordinary language is evident; anyone can access what's on these pages. The love poems presented here are particularly rewarding. "It is More than Common Privilege," for instance, is both formal and intensely erotic, an exercise in gentlemanly lust that rings truer than many a

contemporary poet's attempts to sizzle. Also noteworthy is the long poem "The Prinzhorn Collection." Coles writes about real art through an imagined persona—that of a museum curator fascinated by drawings and letters created by asylum inmates in late nineteenth-century Germany. The effect is deeply moving and thoughtful. The same is true of this entire impressive volume.

—Regan Taylor



The Complaints Department:
A Northern Novel
Susan Haley
Gaspereau, 2005.

This reissue of Haley's 2000 novel explores the shifting power dynamics of Prohibition Creek, a small town in the Northwest Territories. When Robert Woodcutter's smarmy younger brother Danny wins the chief elections, his son goes to jail for assault, and his wife throws him out all on the same day, Robert designates himself the town's head and only board member of a much-needed Complaints Department. The structure of this novel reflects

an interesting marriage of traditional Dene tales, with magical occurrences like the episode in which Robert's (disappointingly wide-eyed) love-interest, Rebecca, gets caught in the body of a caribou, and a Victorian romance, in which townswomen start up a petition to eject her from the community because of her questionable sexual ethics. Haley makes some odd choices: while a central initial question—can men and women be friends?—is raised early on,

it is then inexplicably ignored, unless we take Robert and Rebecca's eventual romance as the implicit answer. Haley's strength here is in her depiction of family relationships in a context of rampant alcoholism and changing values, shown with all the bumbling awkwardness that adults evince when called upon to treat their parents and siblings like autonomous human beings.

—Linda Besner

Farm Out!

Biodynamics will change the way you think about agriculture

by Cammie Harbottle

Nestled in the Kootenay Mountains of South central British Columbia, George and Bridget Baumann's farm comprises 60 acres of fields, meadows, gardens, fruit trees, greenhouses, barns, dwellings and a dynamic mix of animals and people – typical of a biodynamic farm.

While visiting the farm during Easter, snow still capped the mountains surrounding Lofstedt Farm, but the wood-fired greenhouse was filled with seedlings and George said the fields were almost ready to plow.

George's experience with biodynamic farming reaches back to the mid-1930s when his family started the first biodynamic farm in France. Now, as one of the larger biodynamic farms in B.C., Lofstedt Farm runs a community-supported agriculture program that provides 60 families with food for 10 months of the year.

Biodynamics was developed in 1924 by Austrian philosopher and scientist Rudolf Steiner in response to the impact of artificial chemical fertilizers on soil, crop and livestock health. Biodynamics seeks to recognize natural forces at work in the universe: it is based on the philosophy that "we don't just have a physical world, we also have a spiritual world," explains George. "We are using forces that come from outside the earth, from the planets and so on. It is these forces that are influencing the growth of plants." As much as possible, sowing and planting at Lofstedt farm is based on the phases of the moon and other cosmic influences.

Sowing and planting according to "cosmic forces" may raise the eyebrows of more traditional farmers, but George insists it produces "the utmost"



Animals are an essential part of the biodynamic farm.

quality of produce. Biodynamic practices are based upon high levels of biological, chemical and astrological understanding and have been subject to scientific research around the world. Biodynamic preparations have been scientifically verified to enhance soil and plant growth processes, including germination, root growth, and soil pH balance. According to George, biodynamics "goes beyond science. Science only sees one half of it. The other half [spirituality or "cosmic forces"] it ignores because it can't measure it."

Biodynamic agriculture regards the farm as an ecological entity, or organism, of which humans as well as plants and animals play an integral role. The holistic "systems" approach of biodynamics requires integrated management practices – such as crop-rotation, composting, incorporation of animals, soil management and the application of biodynamic preparations – to promote and maintain soil health.

Animals are fundamental in maintaining both the diversity and self-sufficiency of Lofstedt – two cornerstones of a healthy biodynamic farm. According to George, this is "because of the shit!" Lofstedt Farm is home

to four dairy cows and their calves, four sheep, eight to ten beehives, four Norwegian Fjord horses and a number of free-range chickens, as well as cats and dogs.

Their manure is a vital component of both compost and the biodynamic preparations used to fertilize the soil and promote plant growth. Various other animal parts including cow horns, bladders and intestines provide important energetic components of the preparations.

The nature of Lofstedt Farm means that George and Bridget make all of their own biodynamic preparations, occasionally seeking outside sources for key ingredients such as cow horns. However, regulations are making this increasingly difficult for the Baumanns and for biodynamic farmers around the world. Cows are being dehorned at an early age and "in Europe now, making biodynamic preparations is impossible because of mad cow disease. You can't get horns. And not just horns, but intestines, cow bladders, cow skulls. You no longer are allowed to use those things."

In addition to the introduction of legislation restricting the use of animal parts, regulations

are also being passed to control the use of plant material. "They [big business] are doing everything they can to stop the use of plants for healing and things like that." Effectively, farmers such as George and Bridget, who are trying to use traditional and organic methods, are being pressured to adopt chemical practices.

The National Farmers Union reports that agribusiness in Canada is enjoying record profits this year at the expense of farmers who are in the midst of an economic crisis. One of the advantages to biodynamic farming, reports Bridget, is that one isn't at the mercy of agribusiness greed. "Biodynamic farmers are self-sufficient. That means that they don't buy anything [like pesticides and fertilizers]. There are no inputs so there is no industry behind pushing." This renders them independent of chemical companies and other industry.

Small farmers whose profits are being consumed by chemical inputs should consider biodynamics for reasons other than its self-sufficiency, says George. "It produces the highest quality vegetables, so it is an ideal that people work towards... it is the ultimate." But Bridget adds, "It is also a lot of work."

There are currently more than 40 biodynamic farms in Canada and there are now biodynamic agricultural societies in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec. Each year Lofstedt Farm is host to several WWOOFers (Willing Workers On Organic Farms) and apprentices; George and Bridget's wish is to spread the word about biodynamic farming. "It has changed many, many people's lives," George says. "It just changes their whole outlook on life; what to do, where to go from here. It's an important thing."

Declassifying Canada in Haiti: Part I

Canadian officials planned military intervention weeks before Haitian coup

by Anthony Fenton and
Dru Oja Jay

Classified memos obtained by *The Dominion* through Access to Information Act request raise new questions about the extent of Canadian participation in the 2004 coup against Haiti's democratically elected President Jean Bertrand Aristide.

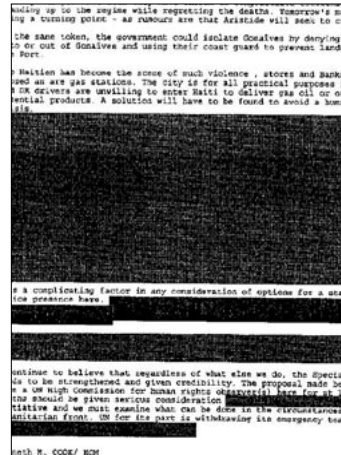
Nine days before the February 29 coup that removed Aristide and thousands of elected officials, then-minister Denis Coderre told the Canadian Press that "it is clear that we don't want Aristide's head; we believe that Aristide should stay."

In the same report, then-Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham claimed that Canada was seeking to pressure Aristide to adopt a series of measures to give the opposition more power in government.

Nine days earlier, on February 11th, Canadian Ambassador Kenneth Cook sent a memo marked "Confidential" to the Privy Council Office and Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, with a subject heading "Meeting with US Ambassador." Its contents suggest that Canada was planning for the removal of the Aristide-led government while officials publicly claimed to be attempting to reach a peaceful agreement.

Cook wrote:

The situation we face is not only one of a struggle for power, it involves a humanitarian crisis and the potential to permanently change the course of Haitian history. President Aristide is clearly a serious aggravating factor in the current crisis and unless he gives dramatic early signs that he is implementing the CARICOM road map then the OAS, CARICOM and possibly UN will have to consider the options



Documents were heavily censored, and weeks of memos were not proided.

including whether a case can be made for the duty to protect.

Large portions of the memo, which discusses specific plans for military intervention, are blacked out. Of the period requested, February 5 to March 15 2004, Feb 20 to March 15 were omitted without explanation.

The "duty to protect" is another term for the controversial Canadian-sponsored "responsibility to protect" (R2P) doctrine, which was adopted as international doctrine without a vote by the UN General Assembly at the UN World Summit in September 2005. Countries like Cuba and Venezuela have strongly opposed the doctrine, saying that it gives powerful countries freedom to intervene when they determine a state to have "failed."

Notable Canadians involved in the drafting of the R2P doctrine were Michael Ignatieff and Lloyd Axworthy. In his writings, academic-turned-politician Ignatieff has praised the US as an "Empire Lite," and supported the US-led war on Iraq. Axworthy was Canada's foreign affairs Minister in 2000 when economic sanctions were levied against Haiti's democratically elected government.

The R2P doctrine developed a framework for "threshold criteria for military intervention," under the guise of "humanitarian intervention for human protection." Under the core principles devised in this doctrine, "the principle of non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect."

Two "precautionary principles" of R2P stand out. First, that "the primary purpose of the intervention...must be to halt or avert human suffering," and second, that military intervention must only be used as a last resort, "Military intervention can only be justified when every non-military option...has been explored."

In this case, substantial evidence suggests that the crisis that Ambassador Cook used to invoke the R2P was itself instigated by the US State Department and other US and Canadian agencies. The US, Canadian, and European Union-funded "civil society organizations" though lacking in popular support, continually demanded that Aristide step down and that their representatives be granted key positions in government. US, Canadian and French diplomats insisted on opposition support for any power-sharing agreement. Some critics claim that the three governments knew that the opposition would not accept any agreement other than one that gave them control.

According to many reports, the intervention itself, justified in memos by the R2P doctrine, had the effect of multiplying and aggravating the humanitarian crisis. An April 2004 human rights report prepared by the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) found that "the multinational force of 3,600 soldiers... was not functioning to protect supporters of President Aristide or prevent killings, kidnappings, and arsons directed at this sup-

porters."

The NLG met with the Director of the State Morgue in Port au Prince, and reported that "The Director admitted that 800 bodies were 'dumped and buried' by morgue on Sunday, March 7, 2004, and another 200 bodies dumped on Sunday, March 28, 2004. The 'usual' amount dumped is less than 100 per month."

A March 2005 Harvard University Law School report, "Keeping the Peace in Haiti?" contended that the UN military force, MINUSTAH, "has effectively provided cover for the police to wage a campaign of terror in Port au Prince's slums." Having discovered evidence of a mass grave, the human rights delegation found MINUSTAH officials aware but unwilling to investigate the "clandestine gravesite." Canadian UN police (UNPOL) Commissioner David Beer, while acknowledging that grave sites were "a point of contention," said that the grave "was not an active case being investigated."

According to other government documents acquired by *The Dominion*, Denis Paradis organized a January 2003 meeting "in the spirit of the responsibility to protect." The secret, high level roundtable was dubbed the "Ottawa Initiative on Haiti." Details of this meeting were leaked in a March 15, 2003 edition of *l'Actualité*, by reporter Michel Vastel. Vastel wrote then that the theme "Aristide must go," along with the possibility of a "Kosovo-model" trusteeship over Haiti, were discussed by members of the Canadian, French, and US governments, along with representatives from the Organization of American States (OAS).

In an effort to control the damage of the media leak, the Canadian government issued a release denying that regime change or a trusteeship were discussed at this meeting.

War, Warlords, War Crimes

Afghanistan in context

by Alex Hemingway

When war is waged, multiple factors are suddenly brought into play. An accurate understanding of the ensuing events requires broad, contextual information. Context, however, is frequently denied, obscured and misrepresented by political leaders and wartime media coverage. In this respect, Afghanistan has been no exception. The analysis that follows seeks to provide some of the historical basics essential for an accurate, critical examination of the war in Afghanistan today.

Afghanistan 1979-2001

On Dec. 22, 1979, Soviet forces began to enter Afghanistan. In the decade of war and occupation that followed, over 15,000 Soviet troops and one million *mujahideen* fighters and Afghan civilians were killed. Yet it was the Islamic fundamentalist *mujahideen*, backed with billions of dollars in arms and funding by the West, who would ultimately prevail. By 1992, three years after the final withdrawal of its Soviet backers, the government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan fell.

An arduous civil war began, fought between rival warlords of the former *mujahideen*. The civil war was brutal, and the warlords became known for their rapes, purges, summary executions and repression of women, among other crimes. These actions were condemned worldwide. By 1996, however, the tide had turned against the warlords as another fundamentalist group, the Taliban, began its rise to power, taking control of the national capital of Kabul.

The ruling warlords were so cruel and violent that most Afghans welcomed their defeat at the hands of the Taliban, who were credited with bringing some semblance of stability and security to Afghanistan, as



photo: Corporal Robin Muiridge, Canadian Forces Image Gallery

well as improving the economy, which had been crippled by the widespread practice among warlords of demanding payoffs from businesses.

While warlords continued to control many parts of the country for some time, by 2001 most of Afghanistan was under Taliban rule. While the Taliban were swept into power amid widespread disgust with the vicious crimes of their predecessors, they too became known as repressive and brutal. In recent years, they became notorious in the West for their repression of women and authoritarian rule.

Afghanistan after 9/11

On Sept. 11, 2001, 19 hijackers (15 Saudi Arabians, two Emirati, one Egyptian and one Lebanese – no Afghans) carried out the infamous terrorist attacks in the United States that killed nearly 3,000 people.

Following the attacks, focus turned to the alleged mastermind of the attacks, Osama bin Laden, who was based in Afghanistan. Amid calls for calm by victims' families and a mourning American public, government rumblings began about possible military attacks against Afghanistan. Aid agencies and the United Nations warned that the threat of bombing would put nearly 2.5 million Afghans at risk of starvation, but the US contended that military force might be necessary to capture those behind the 9/11

attacks.

At the time, British Prime Minister Tony Blair asserted that, "There is no alternative [to a military attack] unless the Taliban regime do what they have so far obviously failed to do and yield up bin Laden." Though largely ignored in the West, the Taliban had stated explicitly through their information minister, Qudrutullah Jamal, that "Anyone who is responsible for this act, Osama or not, we will not side with him." Speaking of bin Laden, they agreed to "give him up," on the condition that they be shown evidence of his involvement. The White House rejected this proposal out of hand, promising there would be "no negotiations, no discussions" with the Taliban.

In fact, there had previously been negotiations, well before the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, and the Taliban offered to extradite bin Laden to a neutral third country. In addition, following 9/11, as Britain's *Telegraph* reported on Oct. 4, 2001, they offered to give up bin Laden to an international tribunal in Pakistan, even without being shown evidence.

With the offers to turn over perpetrators quietly dismissed, on Oct. 7, 2001, the American-led coalition began its assault on Afghanistan. The military forces of the US, Britain, Canada, and other countries co-ordinated with an Afghan group calling themselves the "Northern Alliance" to overthrow the Taliban.

Between 3,800 and 5,000 Afghan civilians were killed by the initial bombing campaign, and 20,000 to 50,000 eventually died as a result of the invasion (according to investigations by University of New Hampshire economist Marc Herold and British journalist Jonathan Steele). The country, particularly outside the capital of Kabul, transformed into the cauldron of violence and unrest it remains over four years later.

The Northern Alliance Warlords and Afghanistan Today

The US-led coalition allied itself with the "Northern Alliance," and one might rightly wonder: who are they?

The answer to this question had been well known to the governments of the invading countries, but ordinary Afghans knew it even better. The Northern Alliance is comprised of the murderous warlords who were finally thrown out of power a few short years before the 2001 invasion. With US backing, they would come to play a disastrous role in shaping the course of events in post-war Afghanistan.

In December 2001, with the Taliban government defeated, an agreement was reached among Afghani exiles meeting in Bonn, Germany. Hamid Karzai, an Afghan returning from exile in the US, was installed to power and would soon be named interim president of Afghanistan.

Following the Bonn Agreement, Northern Alliance warlords were given prominent positions in the interim government, including in key departments such as defence, industry and agriculture.

The leading Afghani women's rights group, RAWA, which is unequivocally opposed to both the Northern Alliance and the Taliban, had expressed

continued on page 9»

L'immortel inconnu

Un portrait de l'arbre

Par Vivien Jaboeuf

Omniprésent, géant ou miniature, millénaire avéré et témoin du temps, l'arbre est tout simplement l'un des éléments clefs de notre écosystème et de la construction des civilisations. Or, à en croire les biologistes, l'homme n'a pas encore rencontré cet être surprenant.

La simple évocation de son nom induit instinctivement celui de bois, comme si l'arbre ne pouvait être utile que par son abattage. Un sort bien ironique puisque cette partie de son corps est déjà quasiment morte. Aveuglé par le visiblement utile, l'homme est passé à côté de l'arbre et de ses secrets. Si on échangeait alors un instant le dogme de l'« arbre-tronc » contre un regard pausé sur la cime, les branches et les feuilles, où l'arbre garde un vrai trésor génétique et biochimique ?

Contrairement à ce que l'on pourrait imaginer, les chercheurs s'acharment toujours à percer le mystère du code génétique de l'arbre. Une certitude, son génome est dix fois plus important que celui de l'homme et diffère dans chaque grande branche d'un même individu. Pour expliquer cet étonnant trait de caractère, Francis Hallé, biologiste et spécialiste de l'architecture des arbres, propose une hypothèse ingénieuse, mais impossible à vérifier : un arbre centenaire ou millénaire, bien sûr incapable de se mouvoir, s'adapterait aux changements climatiques en se



transformant grâce à sa réserve génétique.

Voir plus haut

Aujourd'hui, la recherche de plante médicinale dans les forêts équatoriales s'effectue toujours au niveau du sous-bois alors que le filon biochimique se trouve bien perché. Pour s'en rapprocher, les chercheurs, avec l'aide d'ingénieurs, ont inventé le « radeau des cimes », une toile d'araignée mobile reposant sur la canopée. Leurs efforts ont été récompensés puisqu'ils y ont découvert une quantité cinq fois plus élevée de molécules actives, celles dont la médecine moderne raffole.

Ce déplacement de valeur est remarquable car il donne à la cime un intérêt économique supérieur à celui du tronc. Prenez 500 kg de feuilles, elles repousseront en un mois;

couper le bois, vous n'aurez plus de forêt et un écosystème endommagé ou détruit. Selon F. Hallé, si les compagnies pharmaceutiques jetaient leur dévolu sur la canopée, les ressources en molécules actives seraient économiquement protégées.

Mieux connaître l'arbre, c'est aussi découvrir sa personnalité et imaginer une entité timide, comme le chêne vert d'Europe. Celui-ci préfère garder un espace de 80 cm, une fente sinuose et compliquée, entre sa couronne de feuilles et celle d'un congénère de la même espèce. Personne n'en connaît le fonctionnement ni l'utilité. On suppose seulement l'existence de sens et d'organes très développés.

Nos connaissances sur sa vie souterraine ne sont pas plus étendues, car aucun scientifique n'a pensé à déterrer un arbre

pour en étudier vraiment le comportement. On sait malgré tout que les arbres correspondent chimiquement entre eux grâce à des champignons, les micorises, vivant en symbiose avec les racines.

Un être complexe, sensible, communicatif et doté d'un pouvoir presque surnaturel : le contrôle de sa propre pluie. Car une énigme se pose aux scientifiques : comment expliquer, en effet, la présence de forêts fortement arrosées jouxtant des milieux plus arides comme les savanes ? L'hypothèse des molécules volatiles libérées par l'arbre pour influencer la pluviométrie de son milieu de vie ne résulte encore que d'une vague idée.

Que l'homme soit incapable de comprendre le rôle joué par un être végétal aussi proche et essentiel est symptomatique de son ignorance vis-à-vis de son écosystème. F. Hallé s'en amuse avec talent : « Demandez au plus compétent des architectes de concevoir une tour de 60 mètres avec 20 hectares de surface à son sommet, des fondations de deux mètres de profondeur dans un sol meuble, il vous prendra pour un fou. Pourtant, il ne s'agit que d'un arbre... »

Notes :

Texte inspiré d'un entretien de Radio Canada avec Francis Hallé.

A lire absolument : Francis Hallé, *Plaidoyer pour l'arbre*, Editions Actes Sud, 2005.

War...continued from p. 8» hope for reform under Karzai. However, they quickly became one of his administration's harshest critics, decrying its corruption and collusion with warlord extremists. While the interim government maintained relative stability in Kabul under the protection of multinational troops, the rest of the country fell squarely into the hands of the despised warlords.

To this day, the warlords wield prominent, even dominant influence in the US-backed Karzai government. Human Rights Watch observed that last December Karzai again directly appointed notorious human rights abusers to Afghanistan's upper parliamentary house, including former defence minister Mohammad Qasim Fahim. The group also concluded that an astounding 60 per cent of the

deputies currently sitting in the lower house have been linked to human rights abuses.

Sadly, this reflects the reality of the human rights situation in Afghanistan today. Approximately 600 children under the age of five die every day in Afghanistan, according to UNICEF, "mostly due to preventable illnesses." While women technically have more rights than before, they are

not able to exercise them due to lack of security. Afghans are regularly detained arbitrarily, tortured, and denied due process rights.

Infrastructure is in ruins and rebuilding efforts are made difficult by lack of funding and rampant corruption. Much of what is spent is wasted as contracts go to foreign firms whose

continued on page 15»

Canada's Debt to Afghanistan

Canadians needs to “undo the damage”: visiting activist

by Dru Oja Jay

MONTREAL--In the midst of a public debate about Canadian troops in Afghanistan, a Montreal audience heard a stark message about what the majority of Afghani people want, but aren't getting from occupying forces: disarmament, justice and reparations.

Sonali Kolhatkar, co-director of the US-based Afghan Women's Mission, and radio host on Los Angeles' KPFK Pacifica Radio, was the messenger.

“Afghanistan,” Kolhatkar told a crowd at Montreal's Sala Rosa, “is a broken country,” that has “endured decades of continuous war.” Much of that war, said Kolhatkar, was funded by “billions and billions of dollars” from the US, which trained, funded and armed the fundamentalist *Mujahideen* to fight against Soviet forces. After the Soviets left, the well-equipped warlords fought amongst each other, brutalizing populations with killings, rape and oppression of women. This violence was simply “formalized” by the Taliban when they seized power in 1996 with promises of a reprieve from war and corruption, said Kolhatkar. While the autocratic Islamist regime provided some stability, it also systematized the oppression of women in Afghanistan.

“The rapes of Afghan women, the forced marriages, all of that started under [what is today known as] the Northern Alliance.

“The Taliban institutionalized into law, in a more organized fashion, what the Northern Alliance and the *Mujahideen* had already begun. What the Taliban did was the same, but with less killing. [The two] are ideological twins,” said Kolhatkar.

The Northern Alliance was a key ally in the US-led 2002 invasion of Afghanistan, receiving additional millions in arms



Corporal Robin Mugridge

and financing from the US government.

Today, Kolhatkar told *The Dominion*, many of the feared warlords occupy high offices in Afghanistan's government and benefit from US and Canadian aid.

What nearly all Afghans agree on, said Kolhatkar, is that democracy and security cannot be achieved without disarmament; “Survey after survey shows that they want disarmament.

“This is something people brought up over and over again [during Kolhatkar's recent visit]. ‘We want pens not guns, pens not guns.’”

There is a UN program, known as Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), but Kolhatkar says it is “very underfunded, very selective and not at all comprehensive.”

“People want absolute and complete disarmament,” she said.

The International Crisis Group, a research NGO, reported in February that:

the central government and its international supporters have, to some extent, been complicit in the maintenance of power by militia commanders. The US-led coalition has relied on militia commanders in its military operations against al-Qaeda and the Taliban, empowering its local allies militarily and economically

and helping them to resist central government control.

Kolhatkar proposed that the US and its allies need to reverse this policy. However, she insists that disarmament is only the first step towards reconstruction.

“Many people identify as victims of war crimes and they want some sort of war crimes tribunal,” said Kolhatkar. “Not,” she added, “of the kind that the US has carried out in the former Yugoslavia or in Iraq, but something that is led by Afghans, that is created by Afghans, but that simply needs some sort of foreign support.

“If you have justice and take these men to court, you might also have to indict [US presidents] Carter and Reagan and the men who supported these warlords.

“[A war crimes tribunal] is something that Canada, the UN and NATO could at least support,” she added.

Kolhatkar also criticized one-sided North American media coverage of Afghanistan, saying that few journalists venture outside of Kabul, where the country's minimal wealth is heavily concentrated and where warlords are not in control. She also cited the little-heard-of case of Malalai Joya, an Afghan woman, who interrupted the *loya jirga* (a constitutional forum) to point out the *Mujahideen* warlords in attendance and their responsibility for the civil war that destroyed what

was left of Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion. For this, and subsequent acts of bravery, she has been the victim of four assassination attempts and countless demeaning insults and death threats, but she has also received enormous grassroots support. Now a member of parliament, she often says she does not expect to live out the year. The Canadian- and US-backed Karzai administration removed funding to her security detail in March, but the North American press ignored her story in favour of a man sentenced to death for converting to Christianity, said Kolhatkar.

What can be done?

“This is a crucial moment for Canadians to be questioning the war, but I don't think it's as simple as ‘troops out now,’” said Kolhatkar. Most Afghans, she said, believe that if troops leave, the result will be deadly: “The warlords that we armed will plunge the country into another war and tear the country apart, piece by piece.”

However, Kolhatkar believes that the conflicting messages coming from Canadian commanders—alternately, “our job is to kill people” and “winning hearts and minds” - are damaging, and their actions are making things worse. Military “Provincial Reconstruction Teams” (PRTs), she said, are an extremely ineffective and expensive way to rebuild infrastructure. Additionally, Kolhatkar said the existence of PRTs has made all aid workers potential targets for Taliban attacks, as they are no longer distinguishable from the military. She cites the case of Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), which pulled out of Afghanistan after maintaining a constant presence for over two decades and three wars. MSF said that the situation is now too dangerous for its workers.

The fact that US-funded

continued on page 16»

Coal Comfort

What are New Brunswickers supporting when they pay their power bill?

by Chris Arsenault

Coal mining is usually a dirty business, but for Jose Julio Perez and the 700 other former residents of Tabaco, a small town in northern Colombia, it's downright bloody. The village was illegally destroyed to make way for the expansion of Cerrejon, the world's largest open-pit mine. Cerrejon supplies coal to NB Power, a Crown corporation that supplies electricity for New Brunswick.

Perez gave talks across New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in March, calling for international solidarity. "I appreciate what you are doing tonight, trying to understand and feel our pain," Perez said to the 50 people gathered at one of his speaking engagements. "We feel international pressure will help us receive justice" he added.

Approximately 16 per cent of NB Power's coal comes from Colombia's often-violent mining sector, most of which comes from Cerrejon. During the mine's rapid expansion, entire Afro-Colombian communities like Perez's were displaced; 350,000 Colombians were violently ousted in the first nine months of 2002 alone.

Perez's presentation began with a short video from the eviction and eventual destruction of his town; heavily armed riot police bullied unarmed villagers while bulldozers smashed the town's church and school. Members of the media who were filming the event had their cameras broken by the army and were threatened. The camera panned to an interview with Perez, who stood in front of a destroyed home: concrete and corrugated iron lay in shambles as his son cried.

When the mine was expanding, owners offered some villagers trite compensation on the condition that they wouldn't try to negotiate collectively for relocation. Perez and many



During the mine's rapid expansion, entire Afro-Colombian communities were displaced.

others refused the deal and demanded that they be moved collectively to a new town with all the amenities that Tabaco once had; Tabaco had boasted a school, telephone exchange, medical clinic and church before Cerrejon's bulldozers destroyed them. The demand for relocation has meant Perez and others have not received a penny in compensation. Perez and his family are now living with relatives in a nearby settlement.

In 2002, Perez and his fellow villagers challenged their eviction in Colombia's Supreme Court. They won. The court issued a judicial decree ordering the relocation of the village. Four years later, the order hasn't been enforced and the townspeople are still living as refugees; their children are not in school. "The mine company has more power than the president," said Perez, citing

corruption in the police and military as the primary reason the high court's order hasn't been enforced.

Jim Brittain, a professor of political science at the University of New Brunswick, hopes that Perez's story will make New Brunswickers think about where they get their electricity. "People throughout the world are more socially, politically and economically connected than ever before," he said. Brittain is a member of the Atlantic Regional Solidarity Network (ARSN), the organization that is co-ordinating the 'blood-coal' campaign that brought Perez to the Maritimes.

ARSN is demanding that NB Power pressure its Colombian suppliers to improve their human rights record. Perez and his supporters in New Brunswick met with NB Power officials, along with the provincial minister of energy, Brenda

Fowlie.

"They all stated that they were not aware of the issue until quite recently and welcomed the opportunity to discuss it with Jose Julio [Perez]," said Ramsay Hart, a member of ARSN who attended both meetings. "I think the personal connection that people made with [Perez] was also really important," Hart added.

NB Power did not return phone calls or e-mails from *The Dominion*.

Ninety per cent of Colombia's human rights violations are perpetrated in mining and petroleum exporting regions; 433 massacres in eight years, according to Amnesty International. In 2001 alone, Canadian corporations invested \$869 million in the mining and petroleum sectors in Colombia.

"There are coal mining co-operatives in Colombia that have good human rights records," says Francisco Ramirez, president of Colombia's National Mine Workers' Union, who has found common cause with Jose Julio Perez and other villagers displaced by the mines. "They [worker mining co-operatives] sell coal at the world market price, so I don't know why NB Power won't even consider switching, at least until the situation improves at Cerrejon," said Ramirez.

Activists from New Brunswick are sending mock power bills to NB Power, showcasing the "real costs" of Colombian coal that include an "immeasurable human cost." They are also planning a conference in Colombia for August 9, which will take place near the mine and feature presentations for unions, displaced communities, local officials and other stakeholders.

Home On Native Land

The people of Six Nations are repossessing their land

by Hillary Bain Lindsay

According to the Six Nations Confederacy, women are the title holders of the land.

Sewatis has been at the Six Nations blockade since it began on February 28. "I was the first one to encounter your enforcement officer," he says. "I was peaceful and just explained the situation. [I said] 'I cannot follow your orders because I'm not Canadian. I'm Haudenosaunee.'"

The police officer he was speaking with didn't appear to know how to handle Sewatis' response to his order. Apparently, the fact that someone born and raised only a few miles from where they stood - just outside of Caledonia, Ontario - was not Canadian was a difficult concept to grasp. "So, I just told him 'You'll have to wait for my superiors to come,'" says Sewatis. "That's the kind of language they seem to understand."

I am sitting with Sewatis in his van. For over six weeks this is where he has slept. That is to say, when he has slept. Many nights he sits by the fire, keeping watch in case the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) chooses to invade the site.

From where we sit, we can see dozens of people gathered around the fire, singing, laughing and talking. To our left is a cookhouse that was recently built to feed the growing number of people who have come to support the repossession of Six Nations' land. There are several tents, a teepee and a couple of trailers scattered nearby.

It might feel like a camping trip except for the fact that we are in the middle of a construction site. There are no trees or grass and ten partially built suburban homes stand nearby. Henco Industries had hoped to build hundreds of houses here. Construction was halted on February 28 when the road to the site was blocked and Henco was informed that the land is



Rally at the Six Nations' blockade.

CKRZ

not theirs to build on.

"We're here telling people that it's our land and it was illegally attained and it was illegally sold," says Sewatis. "That's just the plain and simple truth."

This is not "the kind of language they seem to understand."

On April 6, the Canadian government said that the Six Nations dispute is not about land rights. "This is not a land-claim matter," said Deirdre McCracken, a spokesperson for the Minister of Indian Affairs Jim Prentice. She also said that the blockade "has nothing to do with the federal government."

But according to a statement released on March 20 by the women of Rotinoshon'nonwe (meaning Iroquois or Haudenosaunee, depending on the language being spoken), the blockade has quite a lot to do with land - and with the Canadian government.

The statement outlines how "General Haldimand confirmed that Britain would affirm the right of the Six Nations to a tract of land six miles deep on either side of the Grand River, running from its mouth to its source." The piece of land immediately under dispute is only a small part of the much larger 'Haldimand Tract.'

This piece of history is not being debated. A plaque erected in Cayuga, Ontario by the Ontario Archaeological and Historic Sites Board says much the same thing. The sign also

notes that the land was awarded in 1784 in recognition of the Six Nations' help to the British Crown during the American Revolution. What the plaque says next is where the stories diverge. "In later years, large areas of this tract...were sold to white settlers."

According to the women of the Rotinoshon'non:we, however, "None of this land [the Haldimand Tract] was ever legally surrendered." The women's statement carries a great deal of weight as, "Women are the 'Title Holders' of the land of Rotinoshon'non:we as recalled by Wampum 44 of the Kaianereh'ko:wa."

The significance of the previous sentence will be lost on most Canadians, who will have no idea what it means.

Indigenous nations have their own constitution (Kaianereh'ko:wa). "The idea that British Colonists or their descendents - like Canadians - were the only people who had 'law' is a legal fiction," says Kahentinetha Horn, a Mohawk elder from Kahnawake. Canada "has totally disrespected our laws and agreements to conduct a nation-to-nation relationship."

The Six Nations Confederacy has been called the oldest living participatory democracy on earth. Hazel Hill, one of the women active at the blockade describes how decisions are made: "There are fifty chiefs who represent the Confederacy

Council and they have a clan-mother with each chief. It is the people whose voice the chiefs and clanmothers carry. Any decision regarding land comes first from the women, and then to their clans; and through the process of our council, when all are in agreement, or when consensus has been reached, only then does the decision stand," she says. "In our history of the Haldimand Tract, this has never been done."

In 1924, the Band Council system was imposed by force on Six Nations. In the place of the traditional government what critics refer to as "a puppet government" was installed using the Indian Act.

Since 1924, the Canadian government has done its negotiating with the Band Council, a system that is a part of and paid for by the federal government. "The Band Council," says Horn, "does not represent the Six Nations peoples according to international law."

In an open letter to local newspapers, Hill compares the government's agreements with Band Council to finding a few people in Caledonia to agree to sell their town to the people of Six Nations. "Would that be legal?" she asks.

The Band Council system does not allow the voice of the people to be heard, says Horn. If the Canadian government wants to seek legitimate discussions, negotiations must be undertaken on a nation-to-nation basis. "There could then be an orderly settlement based on an orderly investigation of the facts and an orderly identification of the laws that apply," says Horn. "The reason Canada doesn't want to do this is because it knows full well that when the process is complete, the facts will clearly show they have illegally invaded our land."

There is a large sign at the
continued on page 15»

Home Grown Dissent

Connecting the evening news and the evening meal

by Kristen Howe

*April is the cruelest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
—T.S. Eliot, the Wasteland*

On and off the fields, things have indeed been ‘stirring’ this spring. Thanks to the Easter weekend, grocery stores recorded some of the highest daily profits of the year. April also saw thousands of farmers literally drive their tractors into the political arena.

An estimated 10,000 farmers traveled to Parliament Hill in early April to protest their rising costs and falling incomes. They brought their tractors and the message that Canadian farmers cannot bear the burden of negative incomes produced by a dysfunctional food system.

The National Farmers’ Union (NFU) reports that realized net income for the average Canadian farm is between negative \$10,000 and negative \$20,000 per year. Meanwhile, agribusiness corporations supplying inputs such as chemicals and seeds are making record profits. Likewise, food processors, exporters and retailers are also enjoying high profits at farmers’ expense, according to



Why aren't Canadians eating food grown locally?

John Bonnar

the NFU.

Around the same time that Canadians were spending record amounts on groceries over the Easter long weekend, tractors began blockading food terminals in Ontario. Farmers were protesting the small amount of profits they will see from grocery stores that are flooded with foreign products.

The blockades were called off at three Ottawa terminals on April 15 after discussions with federal officials led organizers to believe that the upcoming federal budget would provide help to Canadian farmers. A second victory came on April 18, when the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors, which represents the heavyweights in

the grocery industry, agreed to bolster the farmers’ lobbying efforts and push for new regulations promoting Canadian produce on grocery store shelves.

Colleen Ross, the National Farmers’ Union’s Women’s president, herself an organic farmer, points out that recent farm protests in Canada are part of a larger international movement of farmers seeking social and economic justice. April 17 was the International Day of Farmers’ Struggle, an event organized by La Via Campesina, a coalition of international farm organizations. Farm and food issues affect all people, says Ross: “The structure of the global food system is an issue that should concern everyone.”

Although the farming crisis is a global one, Ross brings the issues back to the manageable level of the dinner table. Canadians can support farmers and local economies by eating locally grown food, says Ross who likes to “encourage...nay, hound!... people to boycott products that compete directly with Canadian grown and raised products.” Even this can be tricky, however, as labeling laws in Canada “are so misleading, that even when people think they are buying Canadian, what they are often getting is some water and a container from Canada and the contents coming from China,” says Ross. “For example, apple juice concentrates coming from China and reconstituted here, [and] bottled and marked Canadian Number 1.”

Over the long weekend in April, Ross cooked up a meal for her family at her home near Iroquois, Ontario. She used mainly local ingredients that can be frozen and canned from the garden, or bought at local grocery stores or directly from farmers markets. Although Ross does use some non-local ingredients, like olive oil and pepper, she says that many meals can be sourced locally. In Ontario, “you can find locally-grown apples, squash and even wines. Carrots and other vegetables grown and stored over winter can be found across the country. The list of high-quality Canadian foods that are available is endless,” she says. “Unfortunately, it’s not always easy to find Canadian-grown on the shelves,” she adds. Ross suggests consumers ask specifically for Canadian-grown produce and Canadian-raised meat products.

In spring, when new crops are just beginning to stir in the fields, Ross recommends the recipe included, which can be made with locally grown ingredients.

Colleen Ross’ Spring Feast

“For the chicken we have free-range organic, which I raise here. First, season the chicken with sea salt and fresh ground pepper. Brown the whole chicken all over in a big pan with some butter and some olive oil. Then put in a casserole dish that has a lid, but not too small to crowd the chicken. You then pour over the juice of two lemons and about two cups of milk, then about 10 cloves of garlic, crushed but not minced. Season again well. Add either tarragon leaves or basil, whatever you have, best fresh. (I freeze whole leaves that I take out and use like fresh in cooking. Better than drying everything.). This is very important. Take the lid off for the last 1/2 hour. Cook in total for about two hours, depending on size of chicken. The chicken should be nicely browned.”

Ross accompanies the chicken with roasted Canadian parsnips, potatoes, onions, sweet potatoes and carrots seasoned with sea salt and pepper, olive oil, herbs, and baked in a covered casserole dish in the oven with a few table spoons of water. For dessert, Ross recommends Kawartha Dairy 100% Canadian Ingredients ice cream.

ReFraser The Question Please

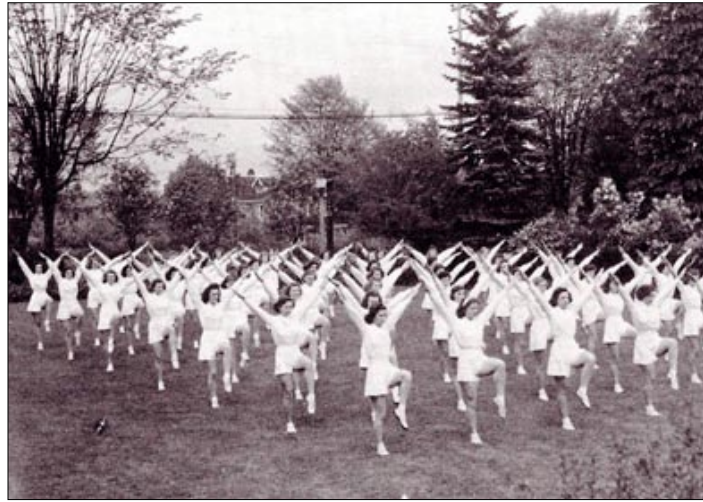
The flip side of the Fraser Institute's Annual School Ranking

by Anna Kirkpatrick

On April 9, the Fraser Institute (FI) released its annual *Report Card on Secondary Schools in British Columbia and Yukon*. The FI published its first report card on B.C.'s secondary schools in 1999. Since then the Fraser Institute has broadened its focus and now issues yearly reports on elementary and secondary schools in B.C., Alberta, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick, as well as a special report on Aboriginal education. This year, the B.C. report was expanded to include four Yukon schools.

Over the past eight years, the annual report has become well-known. In B.C., *The Province* newspaper publishes the report in its entirety and references to the report are frequently made in the mass media. The report, authored by Peter Cowley and Stephen Easton, sets out to influence the educational assumptions and decisions of parents from the outset. According to Cowley, "Parents use the *Report Card's* indicator values, ratings and rankings to compare schools when they choose an education provider for their children."

The Fraser Institute, a Vancouver-based think tank, focuses on "the redirection of public attention to the role of competitive markets in providing for the well-being of Canadians." The Institute's *Report Card* consistently favours private schools and public schools located in wealthy neighbourhoods. All six of the schools receiving perfect scores in this year's report are private institutions. Four of these schools—Crofton House, Little Flower Academy, St. George's and York House—have held this position for five years or more. The FI uses provincial exam marks and graduation statistics to assign every eligible secondary school a rating out of 10. A new



What is the purpose of education according to the Fraser Institute?

York House School

sports-participation indicator has been added to this year's report, but is not used in calculating the overall scores. The Institute has repeatedly come under fire for the narrowness of its criteria. Vancouver School Board Chair Adrienne Montani has expressed concerns about "the bias and dubious statistical validity in the calculations used to create the report card."

Certainly, the report, in trying to use quantitative analysis to evaluate something as complex as education, is bound to encounter problems. But while the report's criteria may be narrow, perhaps they accurately reflect the interests and priorities of the Fraser Institute. The annual report judges schools as successful insofar as they produce adults who will contribute to the economy. Cowley and Easton claim that they are interested in helping "students make good decisions about their education." But instead of encouraging a spectrum of educational choices, the report penalizes schools with lower graduation rates and schools that fail to process students within the normal timeframe. The reason for this efficient processing has more to do with economics than with the well-being of individual students. Teya Klavora gradu-

ated from Crofton House, one of the FI's top-rated schools, in 1998. Reflecting on her time at the school, Klavora commented, "The priorities were solely academic excellence and getting into as many prestigious universities as possible... the sky was the limit, but only in the university department."

The kind of narrow academic achievement the report rewards has little to do with the most important kinds of learning. In fact, there may be a direct relationship between conventional academic achievement and the magnitude of our social and environmental problems. Elie Wiesel once noted that it was a highly educated German society that gave birth to the holocaust. While German schooling may have been academically rigorous, "it emphasized theories instead of values, concepts rather than human beings, abstraction rather than consciousness, answers instead of questions, ideology and efficiency rather than conscience." The implications of Wiesel's statement are worth considering. Perhaps the schools with the most efficient processing and strongest exam results also do the best job of preparing students to participate in a destructive economy. Unfortunately these are the same schools that

the Institute highlights and holds up as models. According to the report, "There is great benefit in identifying schools that are particularly effective. By studying the techniques used in schools where students are successful, less effective schools may find ways to improve." The effect of holding up private schools as examples may be to encourage the further privatization of education.

What constitutes a 'good school' depends on your priorities. If your main concern is the creation of cogs for an economic machine then a certain set of schools will fare well. If, on the other hand, your aim is the development of thoughtful and compassionate people, the results will be quite different.

The private schools at the top of the Fraser Institute's charts have plenty of advantages: excellent facilities, low teacher-to-student ratios, and a student body drawn largely from affluent families. Yet built into the private education system is a disadvantage these schools cannot overcome: Private schools separate kids with certain academic skills and/or access to money from other kids their age. It is not uncommon for students to graduate from these elite schools having never interacted with a person with a disability, a refugee or someone on welfare. According to Klavora, "We were sent out prepared to function in a closed university environment, not the world...the most important life skills I learned were outside of the ivy walls." It is an ironic twist that these top-ranked schools have a fundamental flaw that, by definition, they cannot overcome. The schools that the Fraser Institute favours may provide a good education in a narrow sense. Unfortunately, the perfect 10 scores the Institute awards to this handful of elite schools overlook the failures of this type of education.

Six Nations from p. 12»

Six Nations blockade that reads "Oh Canada, your home on native land." The play on words from something as basic as the national anthem is appropriate for a standoff that could turn the meaning of Canada on its head.

"A lot of people have squatted on our land," observes Carol Bomberry. Pointing to Caledonia she continues, "This is one of the towns that is on our land."

Most Caledonians probably don't consider themselves squatters. Chances are they consider Caledonia home. What does it mean if Caledonia is not Canada?

Mike Laughing, one of the men manning the blockade, responds matter-of-factly. "Look at it this way: just imagine if all those people got to live on native land. Instead of paying taxes to the government they could be giving it to the true landlords, back to this nation," says Laughing. "If they didn't want to do that then they'd have

to move. But we're not saying move away."

As for the small piece of land immediately under dispute, Bomberry has a similarly straightforward suggestion: she'd like to see the Canadian government buy the houses back from Henco Industries and restore the land to Six Nations.

The Six Nations Reserve, the most populous reserve in Canada, is currently less than five per cent the size of the original Haldimand Tract. "There's a ten year waiting list for houses," Bomberry points out. "Our population is growing every year. We need more room."

Acknowledging Indigenous land rights will, of course, mean much more than establishing who lives where or who pays taxes to whom. Laughing says he's at the blockade for the sake of his kids. Canada "has been standing on the back of an Indian for too long," he says. "It's time to get off and let us stand proud of who we are."

It is not only First Nations people that stand to benefit from a just outcome to the Six

Nations standoff, says Horn. Native and non-native people alike are suffering from a system that is destroying the environment. Horn believes that under Indigenous title, the land would be treated with far more respect. "According to our constitution, we have to take care of the land, in other words we're environmentalists," explains Horn. "That's why it's important [for non-native people] to help us assert our jurisdiction."

People from across Canada and around the world have lent their support to the Six Nations' struggle. Hundreds of people have gathered at the site each time there has been a threat of the OPP moving in.

"The Canadian government calls themselves peaceful," says Sewatis. "I hope that they live what they say."

If the OPP chooses to invade, many at the site feel that it is their duty to defend their land and defend their people. "We're not seeking violence," Sewatis says. "I seek peace first...but, I believe in what's right."

Sewatis has seen how standoffs over land rights have ended before. "They think they can make peace by having a gun and having it their way," he observes. "We want to talk about peace and the laws and jurisdiction of the lands. We are going to utilize the great law of peace. We're going to offer it one more time."

The OPP moved into the site in the pre-dawn hours of April 20. Using pepper spray, tasers and tear gas they cleared the area, arresting sixteen. Within hours, hundreds of people from Six Nations had reclaimed the site and forced the OPP to retreat. Negotiations with the government have begun and the Six Nations Band Council has stated that the traditional government - the Confederacy Chiefs - should take the lead in land negotiations. People at the Six Nations blockade remains on "Red Alert." For up-to-date information see: http://auto_sol.iao.ca/

War, Warlords.. from p. 9»

bids are, in many cases, ten times more expensive than their Afghan counterparts. Organizations inside and outside of Afghanistan cite insecurity as the top human rights issue in the country.

Who is responsible for all this insecurity? Groups like RAWA, all the major human rights organizations, and even Hamid Karzai agree that the US-backed warlords are a greater threat to security in Afghanistan than the Taliban.

US Operations in Afghanistan

Throughout its occupation of Afghanistan, under the auspices of Operation Enduring Freedom, in its quest to hunt down Taliban and Al Qaeda members, the US has continued to collaborate closely with the Northern Alliance warlords.

Over the repeated objections of groups like the Afghani-

stan Independent Human Rights Commission, RAWA, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International, the US-led military forces have undermined the rule of law in Afghanistan by backing the criminal warlords, arbitrarily detaining and denying due process rights to Afghans, and using "excessive force . . . in residential areas." Amnesty condemns what it calls "grave human rights violations" by US and coalition forces, including "killing of civilians and torture of prisoners."

This kind of conduct has "generated tremendous resentment against the international community" and "made a mockery of respect for justice," in the words of Human Rights Watch. Most critically, it is driving the crippling state of insecurity in Afghanistan.

Canada's role

In recent months, Canada has endorsed and contributed to

this counterproductive, ostensibly "counterterrorist" role in Afghanistan by joining Operation Enduring Freedom. The Martin government made the plans to scale down our peace-keeping role in Kabul and join the US-led combat operations. These plans came to a head in February under the new Harper government when 2,200 Canadian troops began to arrive in Kandahar, ready to hunt down and "destroy" pockets of Taliban loyalists in the region.

The Canadian government is certainly aware that this type of mission is doing more harm than good, if they are listening at all to those they claim to be helping. The reality is not unknown to Canadian officials. In an astonishing display of self-contradiction, Major General Andrew Leslie – describing why Canada must be in Afghanistan for at least 20 years – explained that "Every time you kill an angry young man overseas, you're creating 15 more who

will come after you."

Still, Canadians are told this is what we must do. While Canadian troops are abroad, we must stop questioning our leaders, whose noble aims ordinary citizens cannot fully comprehend. While our troops are in danger, we should "roll up our sleeves" and prepare ourselves for the "inevitable" deaths we must endure on the march for freedom.

Short-term Solutions

The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission has developed extensive action plans and recommendations on transitional justice, women's rights, children's rights, human rights monitoring, and education. Supporting their work is a potential starting point for making a positive impact in Afghanistan.

Human rights groups have stressed the need for security **continued on page 16»**

Ontario Farmers from p. 3»

seed farmer Colleen Ross told CBC News. "We're selling below the cost of production."

On April 12, farmers began blocking distribution at three Ottawa grocery distribution warehouses. Three days later, the farmers called off the blockade in an "act of good faith" after meeting with federal agriculture officials. Blockade organizers say that their discussion

with federal officials led them to believe there will be help for them in the upcoming federal budget, reported CTV.

On April 18, farmers extracted a concession from grocery store chain owners who agreed to arrange a meeting with the prime minister and agriculture minister, reported the *Ottawa Sun*.

The Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors, which

represents the heavyweights in the grocery industry, agreed to bolster the farmers' lobbying efforts and push for new regulations that would promote Canadian produce on the shelves. Large grocers import about 70 per cent of their food.

"They said they would work with us," area cash crop farmer John Vanderspank told the *Ottawa Sun*. "They asked for a little bit more time."

He says the council also tried to convince the farmers to tone down their blockades, but the farmers refused to change tactics.

"They wanted to get it where it wouldn't hurt them, but that is not a reason for having it," says Vanderspank, who has a farm outside Carleton Place. "If we wanted a tea party, we would bring tea."

—Hillary Bain Lindsay

Canada's Debt from p. 3»

warlords are as powerful as ever "does not justify our war fighting, or really even our presence, but the damage has been done."

"Canadians need to call for an undoing of the damage," she said.

In addition to disarmament and justice for warlords and criminals, Kolhatkar said that the US, Canada and their allies must pay reparations to the people of Afghanistan.

"We need to pour just as many billions of dollars into rebuilding the country as we put into destroying it." Kolhatkar said that Afghans need "no-strings-attached reparations, not loans."

In Afghanistan, Canada's annual military budget is roughly four times as large as its aid budget.

The aid money that is being spent in Afghanistan either "goes into the warlords' pockets, because they're the ones in charge," or it goes to expensive and often misguided Western firms or NGOs.

Kolhatkar cited one instance where a foreign NGO used aid money to dig 100 wells in the Farah province. The only problem: "within a year, the wells dried up." The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), a group that Kolhatkar works closely with, later went in to speak to farmers, who had begun fighting over scarce water resources. They realized that the best solution was to build a canal that would divert the water equitably through all of the villages.

"They built a canal with funds from donors in the US, through the Afghan Women's Mission," said Kolhatkar. "I

visited that canal last year, and now the area is getting enough water to irrigate farms that feed 35,000 people.

"Ultimately, the Afghan people know best how to rebuild their country. They don't need our expertise, they don't need our advice, but they need money.

"It's really crucial for us to figure out how we can best support grassroots organizations in Afghanistan that are doing the hard work of rebuilding."

According to Kolhatkar, there are hundreds of groups, experts and local councils that are struggling to build schools and hospitals, provide education (especially to women), resist warlords and find alternative work for farmers who are forced to grow opium poppy to feed their families.

For now, she said, the situation remains grave for the

majority of Afghans who live outside of Kabul, with literacy rates between four and ten per cent, debilitating poverty, insecurity, rule by feuding warlords and war-ravaged infrastructure.

"There is a sense that the war is over, that we just need to mop up the insurgents and that women are liberated and on their way to freedom.

"Because media coverage has gone down, donations have literally plummeted and groups have been forced to close down schools, orphanages and literacy projects," she said.

The solution, Kolhatkar told a few hundred Montrealers, is not for Canada to withdraw, but to begin to take responsibility for its actions and rebuild the country that has suffered so much at the hands of foreign powers.

War, Warlords.. from p. 15»

in Afghanistan if the country is to be reconstructed. However, the kind of security assistance they've called for is peacekeeping, not "counterinsurgency" operations, which engender "tremendous resentment" and create scores of "angry young men." According to rights groups and many other observers, what Afghanistan needs from the outside world right now is what Afghani and international rights groups have been calling for all along: an end to support for criminal warlords, an end to torture and

other abuses, respect for basic due process rights and the rule of law, support for existing domestic peace initiatives, and the commitment of a sufficient, neutral international peacekeeping force. (Troops from countries that have invaded Afghanistan should be excluded, of course, and if there is any justice, costs would be covered by reparations from those governments.)

Most of these short-term solutions involve no active effort of "aid"; they simply require the US, Canada, and their allies to stop doing harm.

Their own society on their own terms

Afghanistan's woes didn't appear out of thin air. Nor did they begin with the rise of the Taliban, nor even with the rise of the *mujahideen* warlords. Afghanistan has suffered a long history of foreign aggression and interference by Britain, the Soviet Union, and now the United States (with Canada's help) – interventions rooted in geopolitical manoeuvring and strategic interests more than in any concern for the long-term well being of the Afghani people.

Over 40 years ago, the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 2131, declaring, "Armed intervention.. synonymous with aggression." Article Six of the Resolution affirms "the right of self-determination and independence of peoples and nations, to be freely exercised without any foreign pressure, and with absolute respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms."

Like every nation, the people of Afghanistan are entitled to self-determination and freedom from aggression – the right to develop their own society on their terms.