

## WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING AT GUSTAFSEN LAKE AND WHY

Sundancers from the Shuswap and other nations have been using the site at Big Lake (Gustafsen Lake) for their sacred ceremonies for the past six years, with permission from American cattle rancher Lyle James, who claims to own this land. But this land has always been traditional Shuswap territory. For the past several years, members of the Shuswap Nation have requested that Lyle James produce a deed to prove his 'ownership', but he has failed to do so. Last year, Shuswap elder Percy Rosette, Faithkeeper of the Sundance Ceremonies, remained at the Sundance site to protect it from being desecrated by cattle. To this end, an old fence was reconstructed around a 2 square kilometre area to keep the cattle out.

This year, on June 13, 1995, before the Sundance ceremonies even began, Lyle James and twelve armed ranch hands attempted to serve Percy Rosette with an illegal eviction notice, then threatened to hang the "red nigger" and burn down his cook-house. Sundancers and supporters from the Shuswap and other nations soon arrived to help defend the elder and his family against any further threats of violence.

The sundance ceremonies proceeded peacefully, but on August 11th, two men from the camp were arrested on charges of "poaching" and "possession of illegal weapons". Several days later, someone from the camp discovered eight heavily armed and camouflaged men sneaking around in the bushes near the camp. The RCMP at first denied that these were members of their SWAT team, suggesting instead that they must be red-neck vigilantes intent upon attacking the camp. However, on August 20th, when the RCMP held their first press conference on the "situation" at Big Lake, they admitted that it was their men. Ironically, it was the RCMP who called the Defenders of the Sundance Ground "terrorists", displaying a cache of illegal weapons allegedly confiscated from the two men who had been arrested one week previously. One of the two men arrested is still being held without contact in maximum security in Prince George, so there is no way of knowing the other side of the story.

The RCMP also claimed that there had been several incidents of shooting over the past weeks which they attributed to the people in the camp. These claims have been used as justification for mounting the largest RCMP operation in Canadian history. At present the camp is encircled by SWAT teams and armoured personnel carriers. Helicopters frequently fly surveillance over the camp. With communication to and from the camp cut off, and the media and supporters not allowed within 15 kilometres of the site, the RCMP are the sole source of information about the situation.

Premier Harcourt and B.C. Attorney General Dosanjh continue to hide behind the armed might of the RCMP, maintaining that this is purely a criminal matter, not a political one. However, the people in the camp have only one demand. They have agreed to relinquish their defensive position when they receive confirmation from their lawyer, Dr. Bruce Clark, that the petition dated January 3, 1995 has been forwarded by the Governor General of Canada to the British Privy Council and the Queen. This petition demands that an independent and impartial third party tribunal be set up to rule on the question of jurisdiction over unceded native territories.

The Defenders of the Sundance Grounds are not terrorists, they are sovereigntists. After years of fighting unsuccessfully in domestic courts, they have come to the conclusion that they will not receive justice from either the provincial or federal governments. They are appealing to the Queen and her Privy Council to defend their constitutionally enshrined sovereignty, as set out in the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which guarantees that all unceded territories shall be left "unmolested and undisturbed".

This is not a criminal issue of "trespassing" on private property. It is a political issue of sovereignty and jurisdiction. Despite what the media is reporting, this is not a "rebel" group without supporters. Letters of support have been pouring in from both native and non-native groups around the world.

**PLEASE SHOW YOUR SUPPORT BY SHARING THIS INFORMATION  
WITH OTHERS AND BY CONTACTING THE PEOPLE LISTED  
ON THE BACK OF THIS SHEET.**

## END COLONIALISM

### JUSTICE FOR ALL

Acknowledgment Understanding Reconciliation

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**CONTACTS:** (for media use, interviews)

#### Traditionalist viewpoint & Gustafsen Lake issue:

Lavina White, Hereditary Elder, Haida Nation, and  
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(spokesperson for Shuswap defenders)

#### Attorney for Shuswap Defenders:

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#### Native Traditionalist viewpoint:

Lil'Wat Estken - Tsemhu7qw (Harold Pascal)  
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**NUXALK STRONG! NUXALK FOREVER!**

House of Smayusta: (604) 799-5376, Ed Moody  
(Logging Blockade near Bella Coola)

#### non-native. Gustafsen Lake issue:

Sue Cameron: (604) 926 5079 ph/fax ;  
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John Shafer: (604) 721 8701 ph  
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(also send cc's, support letters)

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#### Internet postings:

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#### NEW WEB SITE ON GUSTAFSEN LAKE:

*Gustafsen Lake and Ipperwash posts are archived at:*

<http://www.islandnet.com/~jwright/enviro/Sundancefrm.html>

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*For Ipperwash information call:* 519-243-8565  
CASNP - 416-972-1573; fax 416-972-6232  
Canadian Alliance in Solidarity with Native Peoples

also:

Mohawk Nation News Service  
P.O. Box 333, Kahnawake  
Mohawk Territory (Quebec, Canada)  
(514) 635 8696 fax (514) 635 8693

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*Shame on these people:*

Solicitor General of Ontario - 416-326-5000  
Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) - 519-786-5445  
Ipperwash OPP, Sgt Babbitt - 519-243-3491  
(John Carson commander at checkpoint)

#### **BUG THESE PEOPLE WITH INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE:**

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Prime Minister Jean Chretien  
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Queen Elizabeth II  
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**B.C. Premier Mike Harcourt**  
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**B.C. Attorney General, Ujjal Dosanjh**  
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**B.C. Minister of Aboriginal Affairs,**  
**John Cashore (still in hiding)**  
<jcaulfield@galaxy.gov.bc.ca>

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**Solidarity with the Mohawk, Shuswap, and  
all indigenous sovereign nations!**