

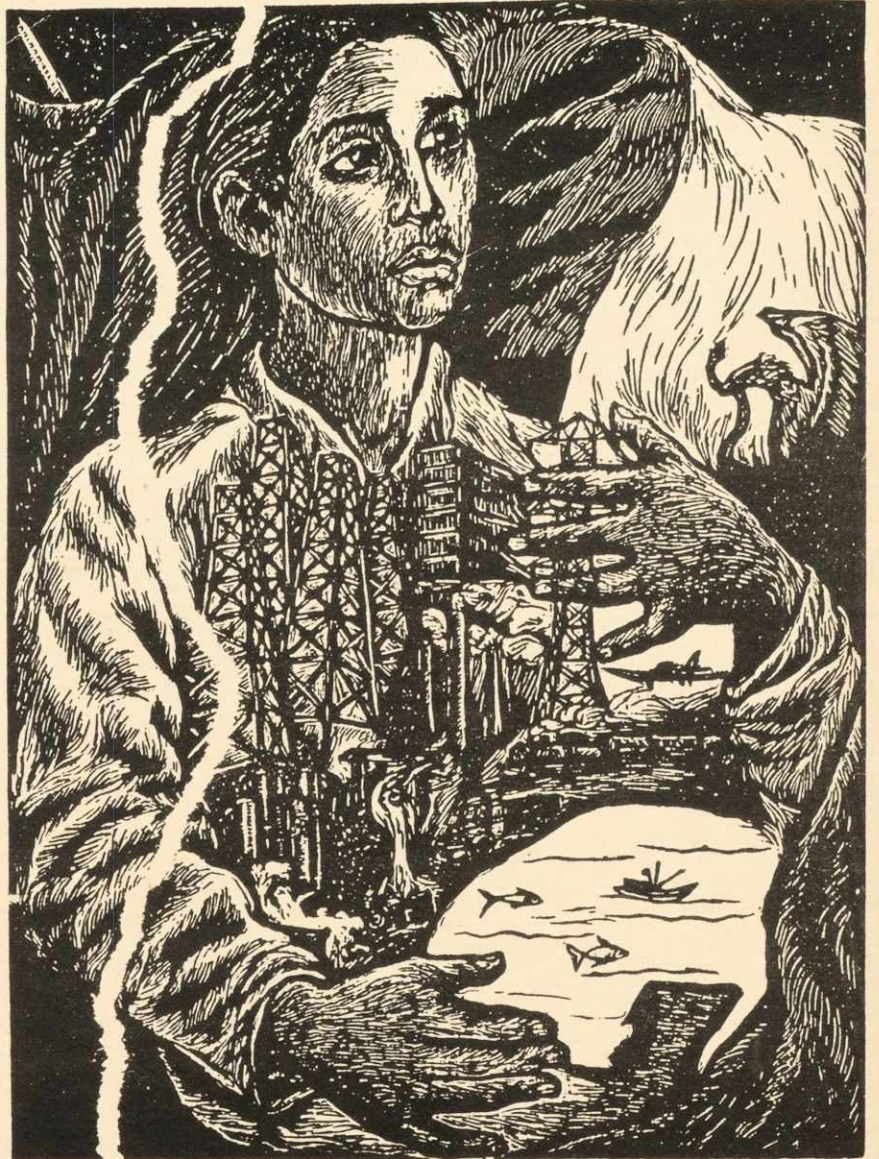
*Pilfering for profits:*

# MOTHER EARTH VS BIG BUSINESS

BY PETER MONET  
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**A** *Anna Mae Pictou, a Nova Scotia Mic-Mac woman, was murdered in February 1976. Her body was found in a remote area of the Oglala Lakota reserve (population: 15,000) in Pine Ridge, South Dakota. The summer before, she had been warned by an FBI agent that "she'd be dead within a year."*

*Anna Mae's death was one of hundreds that occurred in the Pine Ridge area. At least 342 AIM (American Indian Movement) members were killed by roving death squads aligned with and supported by the FBI between 1973 and 1976, according to Covert Action Information Bulletin, a Washington D.C. publication.*



None of the murders were officially solved though there were over 60 special FBI agents assigned to the Pine Ridge reserve. The agents were overseeing the U.S. government's take-over of one-eighth of the Lakota reserve, an area rich in uranium and oil.

Eighty per cent of U.S. uranium resources and almost 60 per cent of available energy resources lie on Indian lands.

As a result, the U.S. government has broken all of the 371 treaties it signed with Indian nations. There are now over 300 cases in court, with claims affecting virtually every corner of the United States land base.

In the past ten years, almost 90 per cent of uranium mining in North America took place on Indian reservations. Uranium ore milled into "yellow cake" results in waste tailings containing 85 per cent of the original radioactivity. There is an estimated 300 million tons of tailings piled on reserves across the continent. The government refers to the vicinity of a uranium mine as a "National Sacrifice Area."

*"The original instructions of the Creator are universal and valid for all time. The essence of these instructions is compassion for all life and creation. We must realise that we do not live in a world of dead matter, but in a universe of living spirit. Let us open our eyes to the sacredness of Mother Earth, or our eyes will be opened for us."*

— Hopi Elders, open letter.

"The enemy's not a race or nation of people but the force of technocracy, capitalist enterprise, totalitarianism," says Wendy Rose, a Native American poet.

The Native communities at Wollaston Lake, Saskatchewan; Fort Franklyn and

Fort Rae, Northwest Territories; Lutler, Serpent River, Massey and the North Shore Region, Ontario, as well as Lakota, Laguna, Hopi and Navajo Indian communities in the U.S., are all presently being destroyed by the continued mining of uranium.

"Well I would say that what the Mother

Earth is facing is that they're really hurting this Mother Earth if her precious (minerals) is to be on top of her she'll be in pain," says Robrta Blackgoat a Navajo Elder.

A desire to retain a cultural heritage in the face of growing westernization, is also the struggle against exploitation of traditional lands by government sanctioned

corporations.

Massive development projects and a barrage of pollutants are rapidly depleting forests, hunting and fishing resources. Combined with current laws limiting their traditional hunting and fishing rights, the subsistence economy of North American natives is undermined.

## Canadian government's

# Consistent policy of injustice

Up to 70 per cent of Canada's indigenous community are dependent upon the meagre handouts of social assistance programs. A recent Canadian government task force recommended a \$312 million reduction in public spending on native housing, education and health care during the next two years.

With future prospects so limited, it is almost no wonder the suicide rate among natives between the ages of 15 and 24 is over six times the national average for the same age group.

Status Indians make up just over 1 per cent or 300,000 of Canada's population and represent 20 per cent of our prison population. These figures from Statistics Canada completely disregard non-status and metis people.

In some areas of the country the proportions are even more absurdly out of balance. In Saskatchewan and Manitoba the Native prison population hovers around 60 per cent while making up only 5 per cent of the general population. In the N.W.T., 87 per cent of the people in prison are Native, but they represent only 18 per cent of the territories' population.

### Wollaston Lake, Northern Saskatchewan

In June 1984, the Dene people of Wollaston Lake organised a four-day blockade of the gate leading to the Crown-owned Eldorado uranium mine, on their reservation. Northern Saskatchewan contains the largest and richest deposits of uranium in the world. The people of Wollaston are worried about the devastating effects radioactive "tailings" pose to their health and surrounding wildlife. (Lac Iahache Band, Wollaston Lake, Sask. S0J 3C0)

### The Grand Canal Scheme

This mega-project would involve damming the mouth of the James Bay where it enters Hudson Bay, to create a freshwater lake. The fresh water would then be pumped uphill, using nuclear power, via a series of canals to the United States and the west.

The plan is being opposed by the Cree people of northern Quebec, whose communities have already been heavily damaged by the James Bay hydro project. Premier Bourassa and Prime Minister Mulroney both actively endorse the scheme. Quebec, Ontario, and Manitoba

Hydros have already invested millions in the estimated \$100 billion project. The sale of James Bay water is considered a major bargaining chip in U.S./Canada free trade talks.

(Canadian Alliance for Solidarity with Native People, 16 Spadina Rd., Toronto, Ontario, M5R 2S7)

### Militarisation of Nitassinan

Over the past few years, NATO has been using the Innu territory of northern Quebec and Labrador as a low altitude training area for jet fighters. The exhaust and noise has disrupted the lives of the Innu people and the surrounding wildlife.

Currently the Canadian government is lobbying NATO to build an \$800 million training centre for tactical fighter weapons in Goose Bay, Labrador. The centre would involve the presence of four bombing ranges, the use of toxic defoliants, increased high-speed low-level flights and supersonic dogfighting.

The Innu of Nitassinan are campaigning to put a halt to all military war games on their sovereign territory.

(Naskapi Martagnais Innu Association, Sheshatshit, Labrador, A0P 1M0)