

FREEDOM HARVESTERS DEMAND STATUS FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

50th anniversary of SAWP brings migrant justice supporters out in force

R.J. Pate

On the morning of Oct. 3, around 50 people gathered in solidarity against the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) and the 50 years of mistreatment towards migrant farm workers in Canada. Circled out in front of the Government of Canada's Jean Edmonds South Tower, the Harvesting Freedom Caravan finished its month-long journey for Justice for Migrant Workers, culminating in peaceful protest.

The SAWP serves as a labour-migration program across the nation that requires specific temporary foreign workers (TFW) to come from Mexico or certain Ca-

ribbean countries. This year marks the 50th anniversary of this program, which has inadvertently fostered the mistreatment of tens of thousands of Mexican and Caribbean foreign workers who bring food across the country to our dinner tables. In order to rectify half a century of injustice, the Harvesting Freedom Campaign demanded Permanent Residency Status for migrant farm workers here in Canada.

The autumn morning gathering was led primarily by Trinidad-born Chris Ramsaroop, a Justice for Migrant Workers organizer who kept spirits high and moderated between community voices on Laurier Street West.

"If you're here for an inquiry into the deaths of all migrant workers, let me

hear you!" chanted Ramsaroop. "If you're here to stop an immigration process that puts us in a category with no rights, let me hear you!" continued Ramsaroop downtown alongside a crowd of migrant workers and allies.

The Harvesting Freedom Campaign reminds Canadians of the reality of TFW and the government's legal treatment towards migrant workers under Canadian law that allows them to be exploited, injured and sometimes killed while working for Canadian employers.

"Our country is built on the back of migrant workers" an organizer continued.

On the 150th anniversary of Canada's confederation next year and with many celebrating a time of coloni-



Photo: R.J. Pate

zation, the Harvesting Freedom Campaign asks why those good enough to work for our country are not good enough to receive permanent residency status.

"50 Years of Farm Workers Resistance," read signs and voices remained heard as the morning led into the afternoon and the realities of workers in western Ontario were given a platform not only for workers and supporters but one government official, Niki Ashton of the NDP, in the nation's capital.

"We do this for all the survivors and workers who died," said Ramsaroop.

The stories of migrant workers and the corruption that exists on these farms are publicized thanks to organizations such as Justice for Migrant Workers, Coalition for Migrant Workers Rights Canada and Migrant Workers Solidarity Movement. These are organizations that continue to support TFW and the realities they face, including health concerns, payment processing, immigration and work-related disabilities.

NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED

Or, how the GSAÉD Executive paved the road to hell with good intentions

Patrick Lindstrom

The recent deliberations on Sept. 27 and Oct. 11, 2016, at the University of Ottawa, saw the Board of Directors of the University's Graduate Students' Association, the GSAÉD, vote to amend the corporation's bylaws to allow some of its executives to remain in office even though they were ineligible to do so. The debate on this point, occurring on two occasions, was emotional and filled with errors of fact but most egregious was the executive board's manipulation of the Board of Directors to extract approval for its designs.

Having observed the debates of deliberative assemblies in various contexts for years now, I have noticed that inescapable tension between executive and legislative branches of government that is perfectly evidenced in the GSAÉD's action. Where one seeks to govern, the other seeks to create and supervise rules. Their roles may, at times, be oppositional.

Having observed the debates of deliberative assemblies in various contexts for years now, I have noticed that inescapable tension between executive and legislative branches of government that is perfectly evidenced in the GSAÉD's action. Where one seeks to govern, the other seeks to create and supervise rules. Their roles may, at times, be oppositional. An executive gets things done while a legislature stands on principles that it creates. This is a tension that the United States' Constitution has inefficiently warded against; this is a tension that Canadian governments do not ward

against enough and it shows in the way in which impressionable graduate students conduct themselves.

The GSAÉD executive board's most recent scheme was to secure two of their own membership in the corporation after they had graduated from the University. The executive members' graduation rendered them ineligible to be members of GSAÉD, let alone officers, as of Sept. 1, 2016. The executive board, fearing for their friends, sought an amendment to the corporation's by-laws that reclassified the ineligible officers as members. This kind of specific inclusion to membership was highly irregular. The executive board sought to preserve "continuity" by allowing theretofore former members to remain in office. The executive, however, failed to mention in their presentation of the motion that the situation arose due to willful negligence: the executive board were aware of the requirements of office long before September. The executive board was informed in July. Rather than seeking a bylaw amendment before September, after which their fellows would be unable to maintain office, the executive waited almost a whole month before asking the Board to approve an emergency amendment.



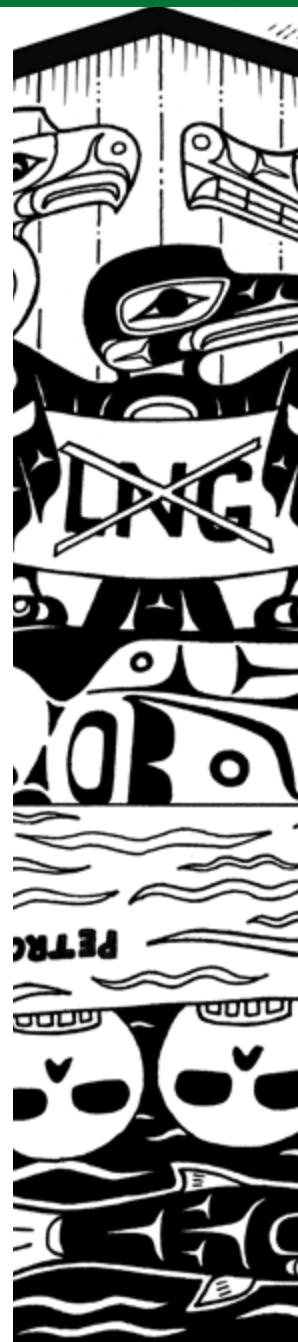
Illustration: Ami Gagne

The issue at hand is twofold and one that pits pragmatism against principle. The GSAÉD's by-laws stipulate that any amendments be approved by the shareholders, the graduate students as a whole, before they take effect. The executive member who moved the amendment had sought legal counsel on this point and cited section 129 of the *Ontario Corporations Act*. This section allows a Board of Directors to amend the bylaws of an organization without consulting the membership, subject to ratification by the membership at a later date. In effect, as the Board's Chair, Adam Gilani, helpfully stated, "The Board can do whatever it wants." It must be noted, moreover, that the Chair was of the opinion that he could do whatever he wanted. The Chair also knew well in advance that certain executive

members' membership was about to lapse and did nothing. He even allowed the affected executive members to sit and to vote at the September meeting when they were no longer voting members of the Board.

The Chair's phrasing may be put more eloquently: the Board is lawfully empowered to act in the best interests of the corporation. In this way, it is a legislature and, as a legislature, it represents the entire membership of the corporation. Its function is to defend the principles members wish to see upheld. Fortunately, these principles are codified in the corporation's bylaws. Unfortunately, the Board derogated from these principles at the executive boards' request. The Board failed in its primary legislative function: to scrutinize the application of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



FEATURE
NATURAL GAS
NIGHTMARE

PAGE 3
NESTLÉ WATER
WARS

PAGE 4
ADMIN
SQUIRRELS IT
AWAY

PAGE 5
...BUT THE LEVY
WAS DRY

PAGE 6-7
LES SANS-
CULOTTES

PAGE 12
BOYS AND
THEIR TOYS

PAGE 13
ABOLISH THE
POLICE

PAGE 14
DEAR VENUS

PAGE 15
SEXY SPIDER
DANCE

JUST WATER WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT



plants have endured what has thus far been thrown at them, an oil spill where the Energy East Pipeline would cross the Mississippi River would reach their intake flows in approximately four days.

A common pro-pipeline argument is that in this modern age, pipeline leakages should be easy to discover and locate. According to the Council of Canadians’ report, it took Husky Energy Inc. approximately eight days to isolate the source of the July 2016 leak in their pipeline and 14 more hours to even react to the knowledge of a leak (among 25 other important spills during 2016, delays in reaction time are a common trend, when the companies responsible even bother to report them). During this time, 250,000 litres of oil

contaminated the North Saskatchewan River.

As a result, water treatment plants for both North Battleford and Prince Albert, Saskatchewan were shut down, as the plants were not equipped to deal with waterborne oil slicks, depriving both of these cities of their primary source of water for close to two months.

The plants have now resumed operation, although just under half the volume of spilled oil has been deemed unrecoverable and the North Saskatchewan River still contains — as of water tests in late August — levels of the carcinogen Benzo(a) Pyrene that exceed guidelines.

Furthermore, the spill cost the city of Prince Albert “millions of dollars”

as, among other things, it had to construct two temporary water pipelines in order to keep its population hydrated, infrastructure that must now also be dismantled.

Both of these cities maintain populations that are a fraction of Ottawa’s and yet we are conditioned to remain passive and willfully ignorant to the potential environmental disasters at our city’s doorstep.

However, here at the *Leveller*, we are not willing to stand idly by. Instead, we raise our pens and our recorders and furiously type out stories to raise awareness about issues like access to clean water in Canada. In this issue, we will be featuring a story about the Mi’kmaq community in Nova Scotia that is fighting to prevent Alton Natural Gas from polluting the Shubenacadie River system, as well as covering Nestlé’s outbidding of Centre Wellington, Ontario for access to a source of drinking water.

With access to potable water so easily taken for granted, we feel these are important stories for our readership to swallow.

Well, that’s all for this issue, folks. The next time you walk to the kitchen and open your tap for a glass of water, think about where it came from...and that it may not be there forever.

Lev·el·ler
noun

- 1 Historical: During the English Civil War (c. 1649), one who favoured the abolition of all rank and privilege. Originally an insult, but later embraced by radical anti-Royalists.
- 2 One who tells the truth, as in “I’m going to level with you.”
- 3 An instrument that knocks down things that are standing up or digs up things that are buried or hidden.

The *Leveller* is a publication covering campus and off-campus news, current events, and culture in Ottawa and elsewhere. It is intended to provide readers with a lively portrait of their university and community and of the events that give it meaning. It is also intended to be a forum for provocative editorializing and lively debate on issues of concern to students, staff, and faculty as well as Ottawa residents.

The *Leveller* leans left, meaning that it challenges power and privilege and sides with people over private property. It is also democratic, meaning that it favours open discussion over silencing and secrecy. Within these very general boundaries, The *Leveller* is primarily interested in being interesting, in saying something worth saying and worth reading about. It doesn’t mind getting a few things wrong if it gets that part right.

The *Leveller* has a very small staff, and is mainly the work of a small group of volunteers. To become a more permanent enterprise and a more truly democratic and representative paper, it will require more volunteers to write, edit, and produce it, to take pictures, and to dig up stories.

The *Leveller* needs you. It needs you to read it, talk about it, discuss it with your friends, agree with it, disagree with it, write a letter, write a story (or send in a story idea), join in the producing of it, or just denounce it. Ultimately it needs you—or someone like you—to edit it, to guide it towards maturity, to give it financial security and someplace warm and safe to live.

The *Leveller* is an ambitious little rag. It wants to be simultaneously irreverent and important, to demand responsibility from others while it shakes it off itself, to be a fun-house mirror we can laugh at ourselves in and a map we can use to find ourselves and our city. It wants to be your coolest, most in-the-know friend and your social conscience at the same time. It has its work cut out for it.

The *Leveller* is published every month or so. It is free.

The *Leveller* and its editors have no phone or office, but can be contacted with letters of love or hate at editors.the.leveller@gmail.com

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Whether you’re looking to add your accent to our voice of dissent or if you’re interested in learning what it takes to get a grassroots media project up off the ground, contact editors.the.leveller@gmail.com to find out how you can get involved.

The *Leveller* is experimenting with paying our contributors, recognizing that your time is valuable and without you, the *Leveller* would cease to print.

- \$50 - Investigative pieces / Feature spread
- \$25 - Most others - campus, news, magazine, culture, comics
- \$15 - Columns
- \$10 - Comment/Opinion

To facilitate paying our contributors, the *Leveller* has created an Investigative Journalism Fund, so that we can sustain this payment model as well as fund larger investigative research projects, or perhaps even add a journalist to the payroll someday...

Contact operations.the.leveller@gmail.com to contribute any amount.

The *Leveller* acknowledges that Ottawa is on unceded Algonquin territory.

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The Leveller

“THE GLOBAL WATER CRISIS IS HERE”

Call to boycott Nestlé, boycott bottled water

Sarah Nixon

The Township of Centre Wellington has lost its bid for ownership of a major well that taps a freshwater aquifer to Nestlé Waters Canada. The sale of the well to Nestlé has resulted in rising controversy over the province’s management of an increasingly scarce and precious resource.

Although Nestlé already extracts water to supply its bottled water productions from a nearby well in Aberfoyle, Ontario to the tune of 3.6 million litres — approximately one and a half olympic pools — per day, the company made a bid to purchase the Middlebrook Well in spring of 2016 in order to expand its operations. When members of the Centre Wellington community learned of this development, they acted to secure their own freshwater supply by submitting a higher bid for the well with no conditions attached.

Unfortunately for community residents, Nestlé had negotiated the right to respond to any competing bids and defeated the township’s bid by making a higher counter-offer and promising to abandon its usual tests for quality and quantity of water. In August, Nestlé’s offer for the well was accepted.

The Middlebrook Well lies nearest the community of Elora within the Township of Centre Wellington, with a population of approximately 27,000. However, this population is expected to expand rapidly in the coming decades, estimated to reach 50,000 by 2041 according to the township’s mayor, Kelly Linton. Therefore, members of the township have a critical interest in securing a reliable freshwater supply.

Robert Case, member of local community advocacy group Wellington Water Watchers, explained in an interview with the *Leveller* that the struggle against Nestlé “is about how groundwater is managed 50, 100 years into the future.” Many residents of Centre Wellington have responded by calling for a boycott of all Nestlé products. The call for boycott has also been taken up by the Council of Canadians and has spread across the nation.

Mark Calzavara, Regional Organizer of the Council of Canadians, explained the organization’s stance on Nestlé and their call for boycott: “Nestlé has a long history of buying up access to water in the face of community resistance,” he noted. “Nestlé’s money and power come from our purchases. A boycott will remind them of that.”

However, controversy raised by Nestlé’s purchase of this well extends beyond community opposition to the transnational corporation’s greed and profiteering. “Bottled water is frivolous and wasteful for the vast majority of Canadians who have access to clean, safe,

public drinking water,” Calzavara explained. As such, the Council of Canadians is calling not only for a boycott of Nestlé products but a boycott of bottled water altogether.

This call stems from opposition to the commodification of a substance essential to human and non-human life. Case echoed this sentiment, explaining that the Nestlé case is “not an anomaly.” Instead, it can be seen as an example indicative of the opposition between public good and private profit inherent within a free market economy.

Case called for the negotiation of a two-year phase out process spearheaded by the provincial government, which would see Nestlé close down water bottling operations incrementally while transitioning its employees toward jobs in other fields.

Case took on the popular argument that targeting Nestlé means targeting its employees’ livelihood and persecuting a major job creator in the province, referring to the extraction of water from aquifers as a “sunset industry” and noting that “Nestlé will eventually realize the well is no longer viable and discard those jobs anyway.”

Case also emphasized that Nestlé should be judged “not by how many jobs it creates but by what those jobs are worth in regard to climate resilience” saying that “a minimal number of jobs are being provided and we get something that we already have” – fresh water but at a much higher financial and environmental cost.

The Middlebrook Well is situated on traditional Six Nations of the Grand

River territory. In September, Council of Canadians chairperson Maude Barlow noted an estimated 11,000 members of the Six Nations cannot access potable running water. Inability to access clean water plagues Indigenous peoples on reserves across the province, while the government of Ontario massively subsidizes the cost of water for multinational corporations like Nestlé.

“Over one hundred First Nations reserves are on boil water notices – some have been for decades. At a certain point, we must recognize that this is the unofficial policy of the federal government and the continuation of colonial policies meant to destroy (or at best, assimilate) aboriginal peoples,” Calzavara explained.

At present, the Ontario government allows industry to extract one million litres of fresh water for \$3.71, a price which leaves the province operating its water quality management infrastructure at a massive deficit. A report released on Nov. 3, 2015, by then Ontario Environmental Commissioner Ellen Schwartzel, cited that Ontario recovers a meagre 1.2 per cent of its operating costs through this \$3.71 fee. Meanwhile, bottled water companies resell this resource at exponential rates of profit, individually packaged in plastic bottles that all too often end up in landfills or oceans.

Case summarized this perplexing situation by describing the water bottling industry as “very climate change intensive,” from “manufacturing of the bottles, trucking to and from the well, to shipping out to mar-

ket.” All the while, water bottling companies reap profits while the communities in which they are situated pay for upkeep of the roads upon which water is trucked and management of the waste which the industry produces, often while suffering the consequences of groundwater depletion.

In Centre Wellington, Case noted that residents of nearby Aberfoyle were “deep in a drought” when Nestlé’s five-year permit expired in July 2016. Yet, the provincial legal framework allows industry to continue extraction past the expiry of a permit, until the provincial government responds by approving or rejecting an application for permit renewal. As such, Nestlé continues to extract water from its Aberfoyle well without an active permit. Case noted “even though that is the law on the books, we say that it shouldn’t be.”

Case also criticized the provincial water extraction five-year permit system as a whole, saying, “in five years, a lot can change in terms of development pressure on water systems, growth and climate change,” yet a permit provides a free pass for industry to operate solely in the interest of generating profit and without any requirement to mitigate extraction of water during periods of drought.

Case emphasized that it is a mistake to solely blame Nestlé for water insecurity and environmental degradation that result from the water bottling industry, saying that Nestlé is simply “taking advantage of what the law allows for.” Calzavara called the permit regulation system “weak and poorly enforced

– largely due to corporate influence over government.” He called the \$3.71 charge “completely unreasonable” yet he went on to explain that “even if this fee was raised to \$10,000 per million litres, it would still only be one penny per litre – for a product that often retails for more than one hundred times as much. While the ridiculously low fees are a lightning rod for public concern, raising them is not the solution. The Ontario government must place a moratorium on bottled water takings across the province.”

“The global water crisis is here and we must prioritize water for communities and ecosystems,” Calzavara explained. “In the meantime, we are asking people to boycott bottled water and also to boycott Nestlé products.” Case also urged people across Ontario to contact

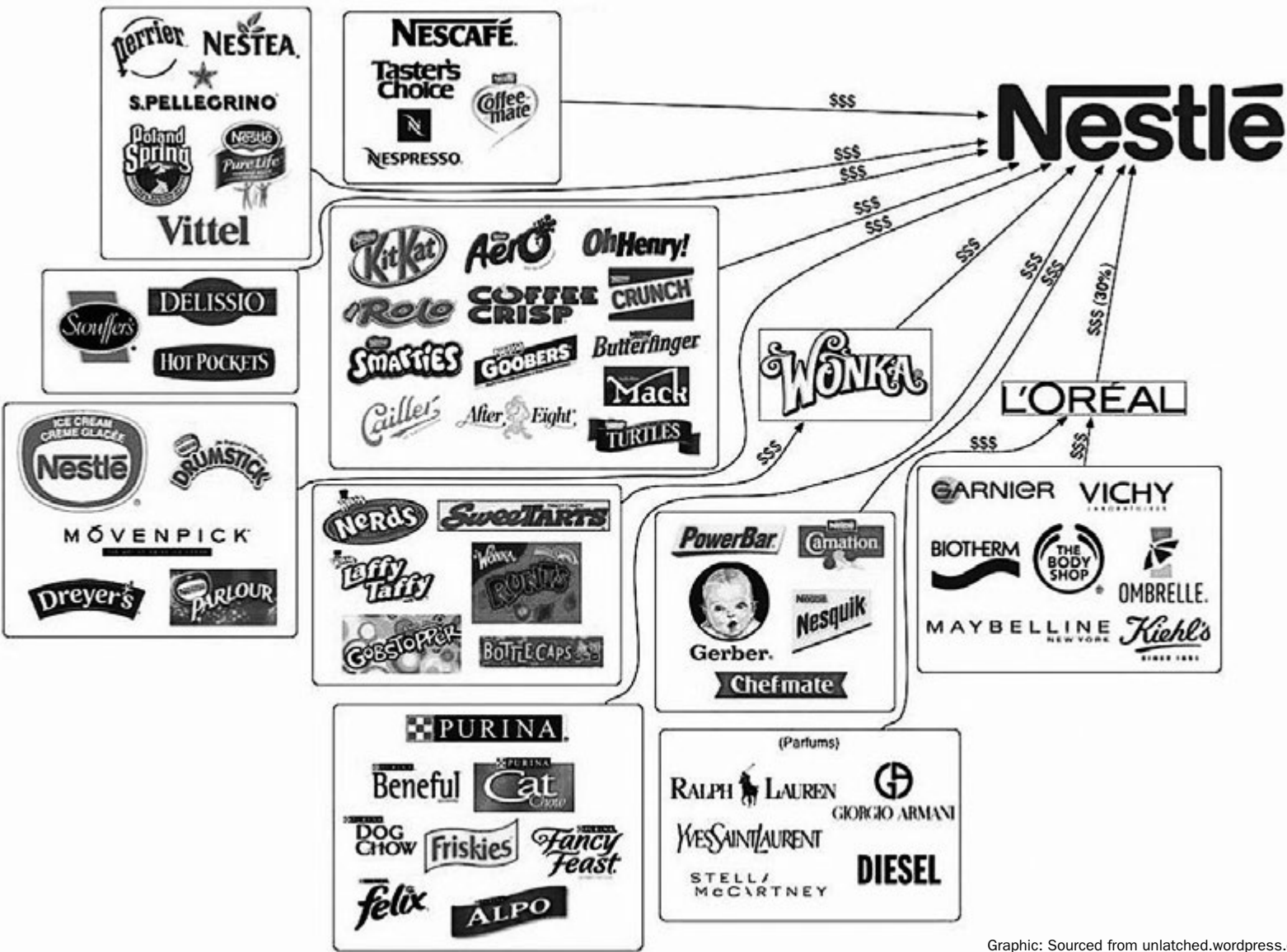
their Members of Provincial Parliament and Premier Kathleen Wynne’s office to voice their opposition to the renewal of Nestlé’s water-taking permit.

Ultimately, Calzavara explained, “we have to shake off the idea that ‘the government’ is some sort of benevolent, parent-like entity that can be trusted to do the right thing. Then, we must educate ourselves about the issues and organize with other people to hold our governments accountable. If even 10 per cent of the population decided to spend an hour per week actively engaging in issues they cared about – it would cause a revolutionary shift in our society.”

Nestlé products are sold on both Carleton University and University of Ottawa campuses. More information on the Nestlé boycott is available at canadians.org/nestle.

“Nestlé has a long history of buying up access to water in the face of community resistance... Nestlé’s money and power come from our purchases. A boycott will remind them of that.”

— Mark Calzavara, Regional Organizer of the Council of Canadians



Graphic: Sourced from unlatched.wordpress.com

SQUIRRELING AWAY MILLIONS

Former senator sounds the alarm on financial mismanagement at Carleton

Leveller Staff

Carleton's administration is "appropriating" millions of dollars so as to avoid reporting the university's massive cash surplus in its financial statements, according to a letter obtained by the *Leveller*.

The letter was sent by political science doctoral graduate Colin Cordner to the Carleton University Senate on Sept. 25. Corder served on the Senate for three years and is an outgoing member of the Senate Financial Review Committee (SFRC), a body mandated to review Carleton's budgeting process.

Cordner told the *Leveller* that he was compelled to write the letter as a result of "the continued obstruction of processes and the ongoing obfuscation regarding any information which would be useful in implementing oversight of the University administration."

Cordner claims that the SFRC has faced consistent obstruction since at least 2008 as a result of a private arrangement between then Vice President-Finance Duncan Watt and the Clerk of Senate Katherine Kelly, as Watt admitted to the Senate in May 2014.

With this admission, the SFRC was repopulated and asked to "independently investigate allegations that [Watt] had been vastly understating surplus revenues in his budget reports to Senate," the letter stated.

The Senate spent several years attempting to obtain accurate financial information from the VP-Finance. The special reserve funds were not revealed in any budget presentation given to the Senate nor the Board of Governors, according to Corder. "With one hand, the admin has been building a war chest," he told the *Leveller*. "With the other, pushing partnerships, programs and curricular changes justified by financial necessity."

While Watt publicly argued that Carleton did not have any "appreciable budget surpluses," independently audited financial reports reveal large increases in the "Special Reserve Funds," including the expansion of the "Capital Reserve" from \$43 million to \$120 million and the "Pension Liability Reserve" from \$36 million to \$90 million from 2011 to 2015.

Cordner pressed Watt whether these increases should be defined as

constituting surpluses or, rather, appropriations. In the letter, Corder claims that Watt indeed admitted that his office "had been 'appropriating' many millions of dollars for special reserves for a good number of years," which are not reported in budgets.

Corder thus charges that these "budget surpluses" are transmogrified into 'reserve fund appropriations' and are magically whisked away from view and placed in a realm beyond debate."

Along with a motion to revise the SFRC terms of reference, a motion stifled by the Senate Executive and not allowed to be read on the floor, Corder also included with the letter the Canadian Association of University Teachers' (CAUT) September 2016 *Guide to Analyzing University & College Financial Statements*.

"The CAUT report reveals that there seems to be a common playbook circulating among university admins on how to hide financial information from their faculties and the other members of their communities," said Corder in an email to the *Leveller*.

The CAUT guide outlines the various methods employed by Canadian univer-

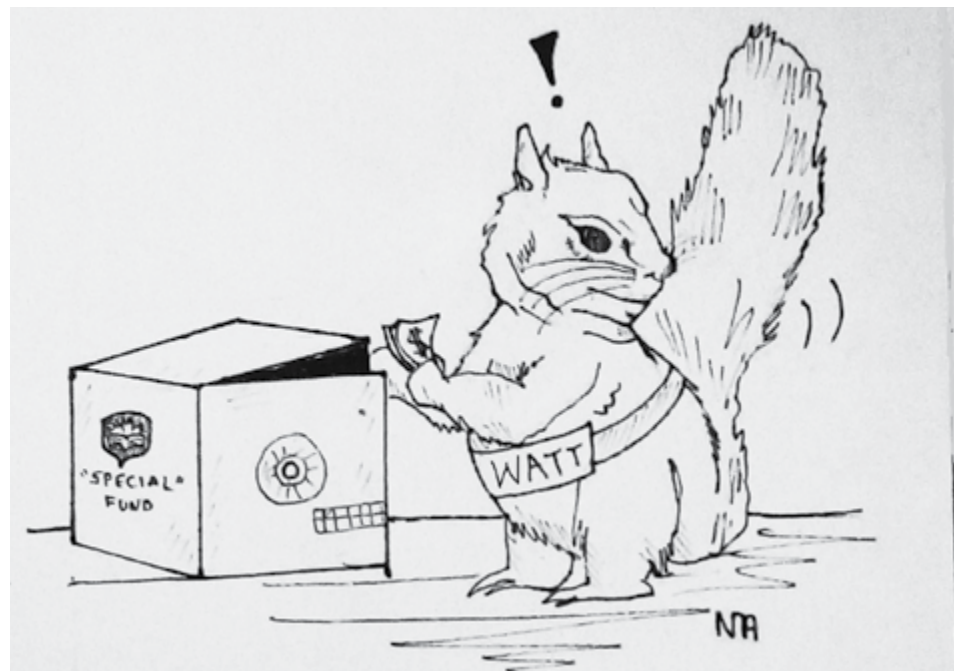


Illustration: Naheen Ahmed

sities to hide their assets but also provides instructions on how to investigate an academic institution's financial reporting.

As an appendix, the CAUT guide uses the University of Ottawa's Statement of Financial Position as an example of how to estimate an institution's unrestricted cash and short- and long-term investments.

The guide provides step-by-step instructions on how to navigate financial statements to calculate cash amounts being stashed

away by a university. In the University of Ottawa's case, CAUT determines that it has over \$330 million in unrestricted cash and investments, according to an analysis of its 2014 statements.

According to the report, the methods employed by universities like Carleton and the University of Ottawa allow for the diversion of funds that would otherwise be available for wages, research, and student support. In addition, it allows institutions to perpetuate austerity rhetoric surrounding defi-

cits, in spite of enormous cash surpluses.

Ultimately, what the CAUT guide and Corder's letter highlight is the inaccessibility of and to important documents and information that would otherwise allow for institutional accountability. When the vast majority of public companies are increasing the accessibility of their own financial documentation, it is cause for alarm that educational institutions like Carleton and uOttawa are explicitly doing otherwise.

ALL OUT NOV 2

Take action to fight for universal access to post-secondary education in Canada.

Wednesday, November 2nd

Carleton University
UniCentre Atrium, 11:00 am

Parliament Hill, 1:00 pm

Questions or want to get involved?
Email: campaigns@cfs-fcee.ca



cfs fcee

**CANADIAN FEDERATION
OF STUDENTS**

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LEVELLING THE LEVY

New policy demands higher voter turnout to receive levy funding



Photo: Kurt Xiaoyi Tang

Travis Poland

Student organizations at Carleton University hoping to receive student association levy funding may have a harder time getting the resources they need. As of Sept. 1, as part of a new agreement, the Carleton University Student Association (CUSA) and Carleton's Board of Governors (BoG) have adopted a policy to require more than twice the voter turnout threshold for levy referenda.

Michael Bueckert, former Graduate Student Association (GSA) President and current graduate student Board representative, told the *Leveller* that he noticed in the minutes of the previous Finance committee meeting that ex-VP-Finance Duncan Watt had suggested that quorum for changes to fees should be increased to 15 per cent.

According to Bueckert, for a long time, both the GSA and CUSA had a six per cent quorum for all referendum questions. These policies were determined internally by the Councils of the student associations. In the case that the referendum questions involved changes to fees, those referendum results would be passed-on to senior administration and the BoG to be approved and implemented.

Bueckert... was surprised to hear that CUSA had agreed to change its referendum policies, as CUSA Council... was never informed about the new CUSA-Carleton agreement nor about the new referendum policy.

When Bueckert inquired about this suggestion, Suzanne Blanchard, Vice President (Students and Enrolment) and University Registrar, informed him that CUSA had already agreed to this change, which is formalized in an agreement between CUSA and the administration.

Bueckert said he was surprised to hear that CUSA had agreed to change its referendum policies, as CUSA Council, which he sat on last year, was never informed about the new CUSA-Carleton agreement nor about the new referendum policy.

"Although the GSA has not been approached nor has agreed to making this change, it was made clear that the university intends

to compel the GSA to adopt the 15 per cent quorum, regardless of whether that policy is reasonable or makes any sense and regardless of whether it is consistent with the GSA constitution and bylaws," said Bueckert.

According to Blanchard, the change will go for approval at a meeting of the Ancillary Protocol Committee, which consists of one seat each for the GSA and CUSA, and two seats for Carleton's administration. This means that if CUSA decides to vote with admin, the new policies could be forced on the GSA.

Currently, almost 25,000 undergraduate students are enrolled at Carleton. The new rule means that at least

3,750 students must vote in a referendum for it to be considered valid. This is a large number compared to the previously required 1,750-student minimum.

This change impacts all undergraduate students but CUSA did not publicize the creation or implementation of the new policy. CUSA President, Fahd Alhattab, seconded a motion for the change to be implemented at an April 26, 2016 BoG meeting.

Some organizations at Carleton feel as though CUSA did not provide clubs or students with enough information before the new policy was enacted.

Carleton's Student Alliance for Mental Health (SAMH), for example, is "disappointed" with CUSA's lack of communication. SAMH President, Greg Owens, told the *Leveller* that, "The input of clubs and groups who are directly impacted by such a change seems like it would be a basic facet of making such a large decision and the lack of transparency and accountability is extremely damaging to club and union relationships."

At the time of printing, neither CUSA nor the BoG responded to repeated requests for comment on the issue.

GSAÉD
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

members' rules. In contrast, the executive board conducted itself as it should have by governing pragmatically. They inexorably moved forward with a plan: to maintain continuity by retaining executive members who had knowingly obtained office without being able to lawfully complete their term. Being pragmatic, however, the executive sought and won the Board's approval to amend the rules in order to press on with the plan.

At the heart of these events is the definition of "best interests." While the Board's action might have been lawful, was it just? Justice is a fraught term but only as fraught as the application of law: the majority sometimes applies law to quash the minority's principled objection. It is a Machiavellian way of proceeding that relies on emotion and manipulation instead of reasoned debate. The executive board presented the Board of Directors with a contrived emergency in late September. The Board was asked to approve the amendment without prior notice. It did not have the opportunity to properly consider what was being asked of it. Nor did its Directors, the GSAÉD's fiduciaries, have the chance to do their due diligence by studying the proposal in great depth. Rather, what was presented was an urgent need to approve bylaw amendments the executive board wanted in order to maintain themselves. The executive board dressed self-interested actions as a desperate need for order. The argument was that pragmatic one: continuity is essential to ensure that the GSAÉD's business does not for a moment falter. The Board voted in favour of the amendment under some duress, with many noted abstentions. The minority's position in this debate was legislative: the bylaws enshrine a series of principles all graduate students wish to see upheld. Why would the

Board take it upon itself to amend them? The minority sought to check an overbearing executive board.

The minority on the Board of Directors, however, lost its appeal to its fellows. It seemed more prudent to bend to the executive board's will than brook instability, so a bylaw was amended. The Board did whatever it wanted. It behaved like an executive and therein lies the tragedy. Unknown to the vast majority of the corporation's members, the majority of their representatives voted to break the rules.

That tension between executive and legislature was quashed by the legislature's aversion to this looming sense of discomfort. A majority of the Board of Directors, who are perfectly empowered, however inconvenient, to take a principled stand against the machiavellian designs I have illustrated, succumbed instead to fear of the unknown. Instead of placing faith in itself, the Board accepted the argument that if a position or two was vacated on the executive board, the corporation's affairs would flounder. It is an argument for the Devil you know, rather than a new demon.

If we turn at the close to the wider Canadian issue of members of Parliament, do our elected representatives not take a similar position? They respect their devils infinitely more by being on the whole meek. Their party leaders, all of whom aspire to become the executive, are serpents threatening to eat MPs for their slightest misstep. Rather than have a free debate on our behalf, MPs, like GSAÉD's Board members, quail. Theirs is a fear they might not be elected because the serpent whispers through the media in our ears, telling us we need executive government in order to have a stable nation and so we do. Though at what cost? Today, at both GSAÉD and in Parliament, the cost is an informed, robust and principled debate on the affairs that arguably affect us most.



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Partout au Canada: coule pas chez nous!



Photo: StockSnap

Jason Mogus

Cet article est paru sur ricochet. media le 23 septembre 2016

La lutte contre l'oléoduc Énergie Est a rapidement remporté la médaille de la campagne climatique la plus efficace de l'histoire du Canada. Les mobilisations au Manitoba, en Ontario, dans les Maritimes et, surtout, au Québec, ont surpris le reste du pays (et du monde). Les opposants se sont avérés des adversaires de taille pour TransCanada et pour le peu crédible Office National de l'Énergie (ONÉ).

Un reportage récent paru dans Bloomberg business est venu confirmer par ailleurs une rumeur qui circulait depuis des mois dans les cercles militants : le premier ministre Justin Trudeau veut absolument approuver au moins un projet d'oléoduc dans son premier mandant. Peu importe lequel, il lui en

faut un!

Pour ceux parmi nous qui essaient de bloquer l'autre mégaprojet d'oléoduc au pays, le projet Trans Mountain de Kinder Morgan dans l'Ouest canadien, c'est une bien mauvaise nouvelle.

Rappelons que cet oléoduc doit transporter une grande quantité de pétrole des sables bitumineux de l'Alberta jusqu'à l'Océan Pacifique, où il sera chargé dans d'immenses pétroliers au large des côtes de Vancouver et de la Colombie-Britannique.

Actuellement, la force de l'opposition à Énergie Est dans l'Est du pays laisse présager que Justin Trudeau approuvera le projet Trains Mountain... À moins que nous ne changions rapidement la dynamique politique.

TRANSCANADA S'EST MIS TOUT LE QUÉBEC À DOS

Je suis conseiller senior pour une campagne contre les sables bitumineux

depuis près de 5 ans. Lorsqu'il a été question la première fois d'Énergie Est, nous étions déjà «dans le pétrole jusqu'au cou» avec Northern Gateway, la ligne 9 d'Enbridge, Keystone XL et Kinder Morgan. Je ne peux pas dire que nous étions très enthousiastes à l'idée de nous battre contre un nouvel oléoduc.

Puis, quelque chose est arrivé. En seulement quelques mois, la géante albertaine TransCanada a réussi à se mettre remarquablement à dos «la belle province». Visiblement, la pétrolière n'avait pas appris de ses erreurs au sud de la frontière avec Keystone XL.

S'il existe un guide sur la meilleure façon pour une compagnie anglophone à l'attitude coloniale de rater complètement ses relations publiques, parions que les dirigeants de TransCanada l'ont étudié par cœur.

Désormais, ils sont persona non grata au Québec et ils le savent.

KINDER MORGAN, LE PIPELINE «RAISONNABLE»

Ça ne prend pas un génie pour comprendre qu'un Québec bleu de colère, avec ses 78 sièges, est beaucoup plus dangereux à défier qu'une Colombie-Britannique dont la population est devenue lasse de l'éternel combat contre les oléoducs et dont seuls 22 comtés seraient affectés directement par le projet Trans Mountain.

C'est pourquoi le projet de Kinder Morgan est vu désormais par l'élite économique de Toronto comme le «projet raisonnable»... Si on oublie la crise climatique, les droits des communautés autochtones et les déversements!

Ailleurs au Canada, on ne cesse d'entendre des choses comme : «ce n'est que le doublement d'un pipeline existant!» (le projet doit en fait tripler la capacité de l'oléoduc et multiplier par 7 le nombre de pétroliers sur la côte ouest); «Le pipeline est opéré depuis 50 ans sans ac-

cident» (on ne compte probablement pas les 1,5 million de litres déversés depuis 20 ans); «On doit aider nos amis albertains» (en dépit des faibles prix du pétrole et de l'accord de Paris).

POURQUOI TRUDEAU VA APPROUVER KINDER MORGAN

En vérité, Ottawa, Victoria et Edmonton planifiaient depuis longtemps l'approbation du projet Trans Mountain de Kinder Morgan. Et les événements de la dernière année semblent appuyer cette thèse.

Alors que Trudeau faisait campagne, il a promis une reprise depuis le début de la totalité des processus d'évaluation des pipelines en cours à l'ONÉ. Cette déclaration a d'ailleurs été enregistrée. Malheureusement, ce n'est pas exactement ce qui s'est passé.

Ce printemps, le gouvernement a plutôt annoncé un processus d'évaluation «supplémentaire» où un panel de

trois personnes avec absolument aucun pouvoir (mais dont la présidente a travaillé pour Kinder Morgan et est lobbyiste pour l'industrie du gaz naturel liquéfié a été mandaté pour une série de consultations publiques avec les citoyens écartés par le processus régulier de l'ONÉ.

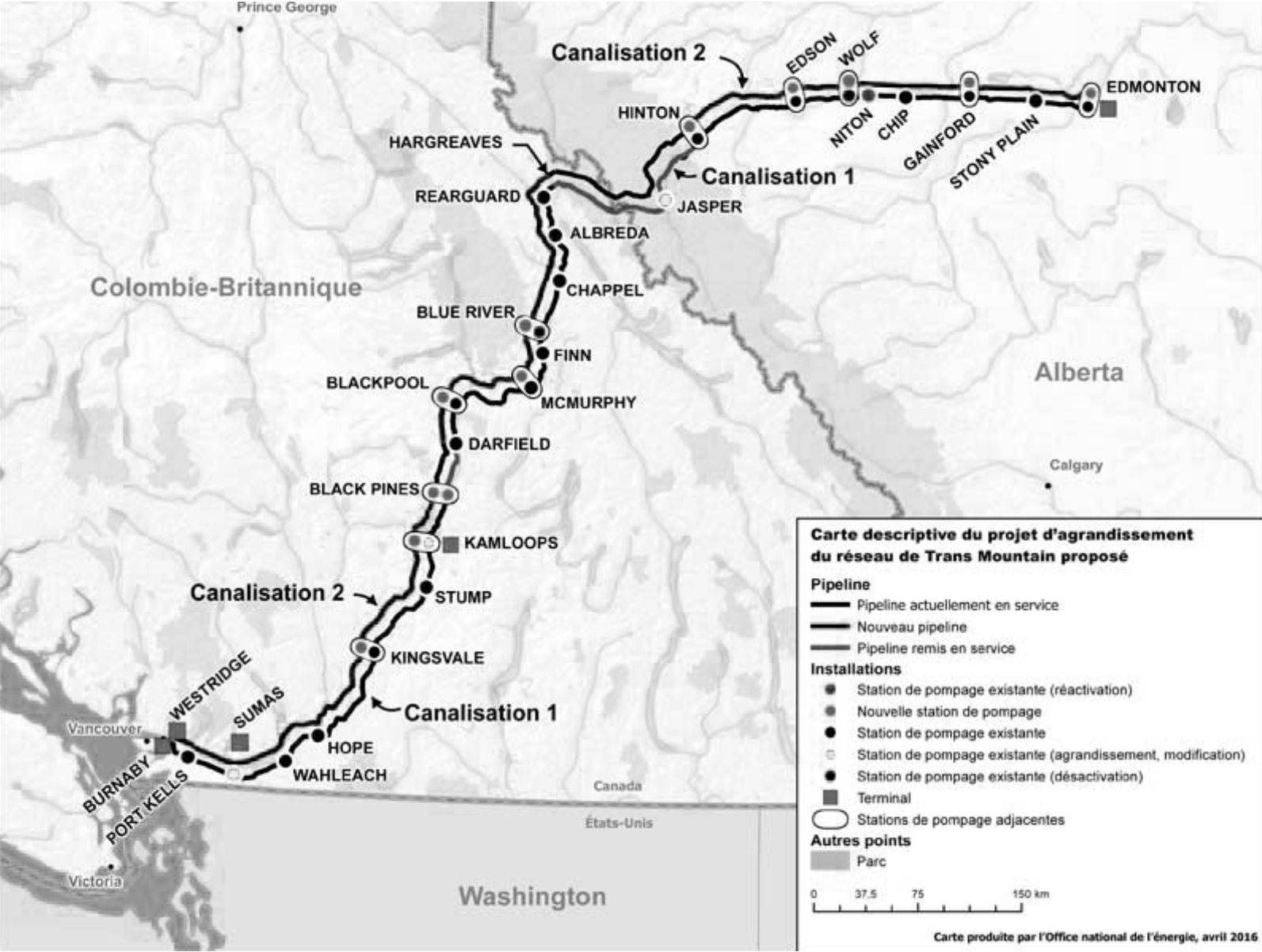
Malgré l'improvisation manifeste du gouvernement fédéral, les citoyens de la Colombie-Britannique ont participé aux consultations et ont clairement fait savoir qu'ils étaient opposés au projet Trans Mountain (91% des participants au total, 100% pour Burnaby, North Vancouver, Vancouver and Victoria).

Cela dit, la présidente du panel a indiqué au *Globe and Mail* que le message numéro #1 des consultations était «l'impatience de l'industrie par rapport aux processus d'approbation trop longs». Voilà comment on peut travestir les résultats d'une consultation lorsqu'aucune trace de ce qui y a été dit n'est conservée.

À sa décharge, le gouvernement fédéral va annoncer à l'automne un moratoire sur les pétroliers le long de la côte nord de la Colombie-Britannique, ce qui pourrait enterrer pour de bon le projet d'oléoduc Northern Gateway d'Enbridge. Malheureusement, Ottawa a également indiqué que ce moratoire faisait partie d'une «stratégie côtière pour protéger l'environnement, tout en utilisant les ports de la côte ouest pour dynamiser l'économie nationale». Il a été aussi mentionné à plusieurs reprises à quel point, le port de Vancouver était important et sécuritaire. Cela n'augure rien de bon.

Alors que Kinder Morgan et le gouvernement fédéral travaillent fort pour «consulter» les communautés autochtones sur le tracé du pipeline, ils travaillent encore plus fort pour minimiser une autre de leur grande faiblesse : les déversements — fréquents, toxiques, coûteux et difficiles à nettoyer.

Il y a deux semaines, un investissement de 200 millions \$ a été annoncé par le Western Canada Marine Response Corporation (en part-



Le Canada, l'Accord de Paris et l'AÉCG Il faudrait applaudir?



Photo: Gabrielle Brassard-Lecours

Si Trudeau veut d'un autre dossier brûlant dans son rétroviseur, tous les éléments sont en place.

ie détenu par Kinder Morgan) afin d'améliorer les interventions sur la côte en cas de déversement. Le hic? Cet investissement verra le jour seulement si le projet Trans Mountain est approuvé!

Encore une fois, cela apparaît bien raisonnable... Si on ignore le fait que le pétrole des sables bitumineux a tendance à couler au fond de l'océan et qu'il ne peut être récupéré avec les technologies actuelles — ou que l'industrie considère que récupérer 15 % d'un déversement est un exploit de classe mondiale.

ALORS, COMMENT STOPPER CE PROJET AVANT DÉCEMBRE?

Une coalition très efficace de groupes citoyens et environnementaux, de communautés autochtones, de municipalités et de gens d'affaires travaille d'arrache-pied pour stopper Kinder Morgan depuis des années. Jusqu'ici, nous avons mené une campagne efficace, mais nous arrivons maintenant à la manche finale.

L'industrie pétrolière est pratiquement aussi proche du gouvernement fédéral qu'elle ne l'était à l'époque de Harper. Qu'importe le coût, il nous faudra aussi faire entendre notre opposition à Ottawa par des pétitions, un lobby citoyen et d'autres actions.

Plusieurs militants ont réalisé depuis belle lurette que les dés étaient pipés et se sont préparés à une escalade des moyens — du genre de ceux qui ont mené aux arrestations spectaculaires à Burnaby Mountain en 2014. Selon des rumeurs, une ONG internationale aurait déjà une liste de 400 personnes prêtes à des actions de désobéissance civile contre le projet Trans Mountain et aucune annonce n'a encore été faite publiquement de la part du gouvernement. Si Trudeau veut d'un autre dossier brûlant dans son rétroviseur, tous les éléments sont en place.

Dans les prochaines semaines, nous continuerons de conscientiser les gens de la Colombie-Britannique sur cet enjeu et de faire pression sur notre première ministre pour qu'elle se montre ferme au sujet des conditions imposées par la province à Kinder Morgan. Vous entendrez également de plus en plus parler de la dernière population d'orques de la côte sud de la Colombie-Britannique et de

la manière dont une multiplication par 7 du trafic des pétroliers dans la mer des Salish conduira à leur disparition certaine.

Mais cela risque de ne pas être suffisant.

NOUS DEVONS FAIRE FRONT COMMUN CONTRE LES OLÉODUCS

Quiconque porte attention à la vitesse à laquelle le climat change sait qu'il est suicidaire de construire de nouvelles infrastructures pétrolières, alors que l'on doit déployer des efforts colossaux pour réduire nos émissions de GES, dès maintenant. Juillet et août derniers ont été les mois les plus chauds jamais enregistrés. N'est-ce pas suffisant pour réveiller un premier ministre qui a indiqué aux délégués à la Conférence de Paris l'an dernier que le Canada était prêt à en faire davantage en matière de climat? Justin Trudeau croit-il vraiment qu'on s'occupe de climat en construisant de nouveaux pipelines?

Nous avons un dernier espoir : que les militants du Québec, des maritimes et de l'Ontario intègrent Kinder Morgan à leur combat contre Énergie Est. Stopper Énergie Est ne sera pas une vraie victoire si cela se fait aux dépens de la Colombie-Britannique et échange de l'approbation de l'oléoduc Trans Mountain.

Ce qui changera le calcul politique à Ottawa, c'est l'avènement d'un front uni de Canadiens et de Québécois, rassemblés derrière le leadership des peuples autochtones contre les oléoducs. Un mouvement pancanadien de résistance qui dit «aucun pipeline après Paris, point final. Pas dans ma cour. Pas dans la cour de personne».

Si Trudeau et son secrétaire principal Gerry Butts commencent à voir l'approbation de Kinder Morgan non seulement comme électoralement dommageable en Colombie-Britannique, mais partout au pays, cela pourrait changer la donne. Et sauver les côtes de la Colombie-Britannique de l'appétit insatiable de l'industrie pétrolière.

Jason Mogus est conseiller senior pour une campagne regroupant 60 groupes environnementaux et autochtones visant à freiner le développement des sables bitumineux au Canada.

Catherine Caron

Cet article est paru sur *ricochet.media* le 11 octobre 2016

Voilà qu'il nous faut applaudir : le Canada a ratifié l'Accord de Paris le 5 octobre dernier. Et le 27 octobre prochain, lors d'un sommet Canada-Union européenne (UE) prévu à Bruxelles, on attendra aussi de nous qu'on applaudisse à la signature de l'Accord économique et commercial global (AÉCG ou CETA en anglais) entre le Canada et l'UE, sans voir là la moindre contradiction. Eh bien non, nous n'applaudirons pas.

Car il est plus que temps que nos gouvernements accordent les violons du commerce avec ceux du climat. On ne peut pas, d'un côté, prétendre lutter contre le réchauffement climatique et, de l'autre, conclure une entente comme l'AÉCG. Dans une lettre intitulée «Si le CETA passe, l'Accord de Paris sur le climat trépasse», des représentants de divers mouvements altermondialistes et écologistes le rappellent : «Ratifier le traité commercial entre l'Europe et le Canada reviendrait à clamer haut et fort que la COP21 n'a rien changé et que la transition énergétique n'est

pas pour demain». La même semaine, Greenpeace Pays-Bas ajoutait un chapitre à la saga du dévoilement des TISA Leaks, en rendant publics de nouveaux documents liés à l'Accord sur le commerce des services (ACS ou TISA en anglais).

De fait, l'AÉCG comme l'ACS contiennent le même cocktail corrosif pour l'environnement, entre autres. Tous les carburants — les nocifs comme les plus verts — y sont considérés comme étant égaux! Voilà le principe de non-discrimination cher aux technocrates du commerce poussé à son extrême au point d'en devenir climaticide. Accepter cela, sans qu'aucune disposition ne permette de limiter l'exploitation ou l'importation d'énergies fossiles, c'est agir en faveur du pétrole ultra-polluant tiré des sables bitumineux, et en faveur du gaz et du pétrole de schiste, pas en fonction des objectifs de l'Accord de Paris.

L'AÉCG comme l'ACS et les autres ententes du même acabit limiteront le pouvoir de réglementer des États (interdire la fracturation hydraulique, favoriser des fournisseurs publics ou locaux d'énergies renouvelables, etc.). Ils empêcheront que des services privatisés (dans le domaine de l'énergie, de l'eau, etc.) puissent

Car il est plus que temps que nos gouvernements accordent les violons du commerce avec ceux du climat.

être renationalisés.

Avec ces ententes, nos gouvernements continuent aussi de se ligoter les mains de façon à ce que la moindre de leur politique puisse être contestée par des multinationales s'estimant lésées dans leur capacité de faire du profit, une situation contre laquelle s'élèvent de nombreuses voix ici comme ailleurs, incluant celles d'élus.

Dans ce contexte, les partisans de l'AÉCG — les Pierre-Marc Johnson, Jean Charest, Philippe Couillard, Manuel Valls, etc. — se feront entendre dans les prochains jours à la Chambre de commerce et au Conseil des relations internationales de Montréal, notamment. Ils tenteront de faire croire que ses principaux irritants — soulevés depuis des années des deux côtés de l'Atlantique — ont été neutralisés. Une déclaration rassurante est même prévue, que la section européenne de Greenpeace, qui en a ob-

tenu le projet final, n'a pas tardé à critiquer vertement. Cette déclaration contient, en effet, la même propagande de riche en demi-vérités que celle qu'on entend depuis des années. Surtout, elle ne modifie pas légalement les dispositions de l'accord ; l'avocat spécialisé en droit commercial Steven Schrybman est catégorique à cet égard. Et ces dispositions, scrutées entre autres par une douzaine d'experts canadiens et européens dans le rapport *Making sense of CETA. 2nd edition*, n'ont rien de rassurant.

Que le gouvernement canadien n'ait toujours pas tenu le vaste débat démocratique transparent et rigoureux sur l'AÉCG qui est exigé depuis des années avant de le signer est un scandale qui doit nous faire prendre ses prétentions écologiques pour ce qu'elles sont pour le moment : un écran de fumée.

Le Leveller étend ses branches!

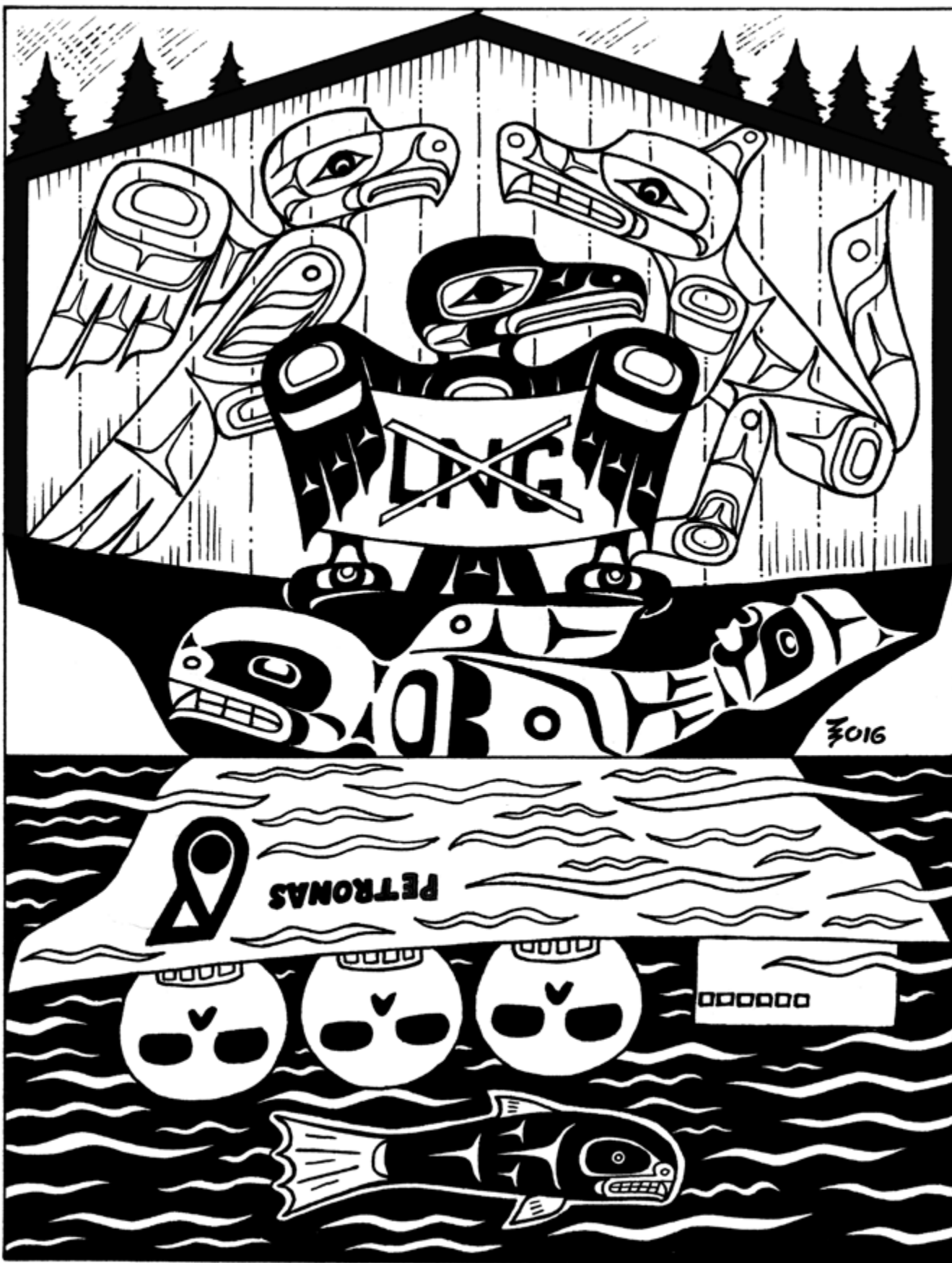
Nous acceptons actuellement des articles en français pour la prochaine édition du *Leveller*.

Envoyez vos articles à **editors.theleveller@gmail.com**, et aidez-nous à diversifier notre contenu!

Si vous avez de l'expérience dans la révision de textes en français, contactez-nous!

The Leveller

Les Sans-Culottes
Les Sans-culottes étaient les révolutionnaires radicaux pendant la Révolution française (vers 1789). Leur nom émanait des pantalons qu'ils portaient au lieu de la culotte courte et des bas, portés par les nobles et les bourgeois.

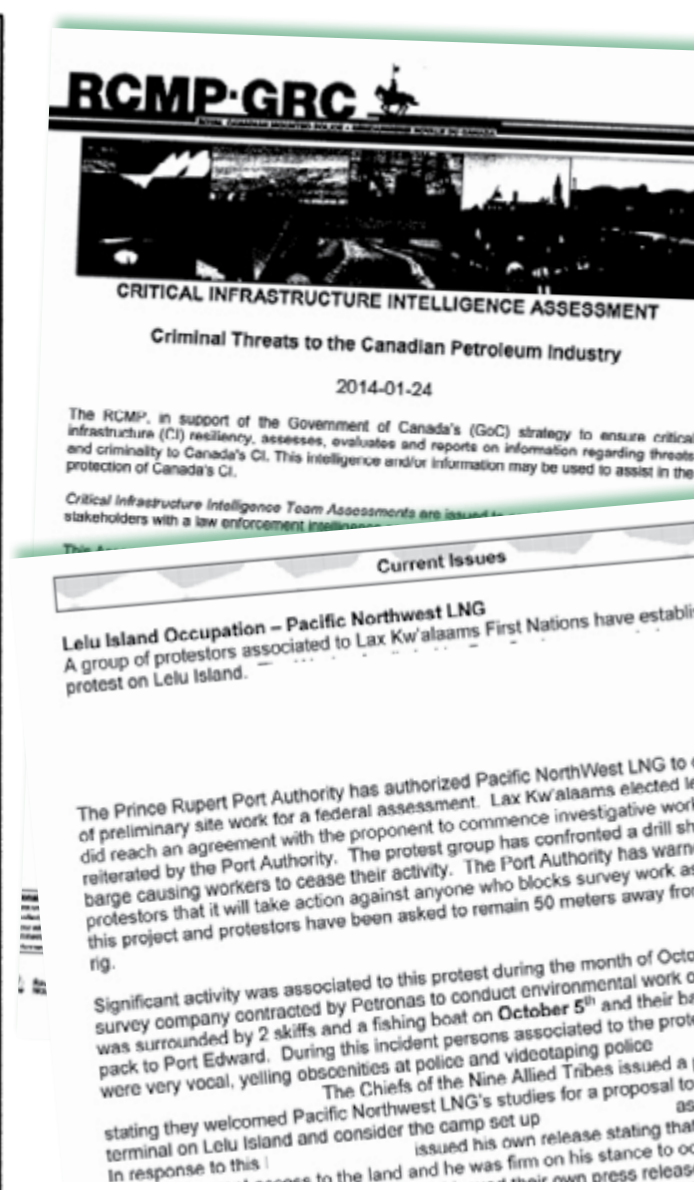


NATURAL GAS NIGHTMARE

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES OPPOSING CANADA'S ENERGY AGENDA UNDER INCREASING SURVEILLANCE

BY ANDY CROSBY

On the East Coast, the Mi'kmaq are actively opposing the Alton Gas project, while on the West Coast, the provincial and federal Liberals enthusiastically announce the approval of the Pacific NorthWest LNG pipeline project. Meanwhile, the RCMP pay close attention.



SETTING THE STAGE: ELSIPOGTOG ANNIVERSARY

October 17 marked the three-year anniversary since the paramilitary raid on a Mi'kmaq-led anti-shale gas camp near the Elsipogtog First Nation in New Brunswick. A force of 285 RCMP officers, including Emergency Response Team (camouflage-clad with assault rifles) and tactical units (riot police), enforced a court injunction filed by SWN Resources Canada, a subsidiary of Houston-based company Southwestern Energy, whose equipment had been blockaded since late September, preventing SWN from carrying out seismic exploration activity for natural gas. The RCMP were met with stiff resistance, which included hundreds who rallied from the reserve as the Mi'kmaq Warrior Society faced the assault in the early morning. In the aftermath, 40 arrests were made and six RCMP vehicles torched. The fierce resistance was successful in thwarting the New Brunswick government's aspirations to develop a fracked gas industry in the province. The water protectors won that battle but the struggle continues.

ALTON GAS PROJECT OPPOSITION

A Mi'kmaq community in Nova Scotia is fighting a separate battle and a different company – but over the same coveted resource. Their fight has spanned the past two years.

The Alton natural gas storage project has received government approval with an environmental assessment allowing for the construction of 18 caverns. Alton Natural Gas Storage LP, a subsidiary of Calgary-based AltaGas, aims to hollow out at least two underground salt caverns to build underground storage containers near Fort Ellis, less than an hour north of Halifax. The 1.3 million cubic metres of brine (a slurry of highly concentrated salt water) would then be gradually released into the Shubenacadie River system, which the company claims would not adversely impact the river nor its aquatic life.

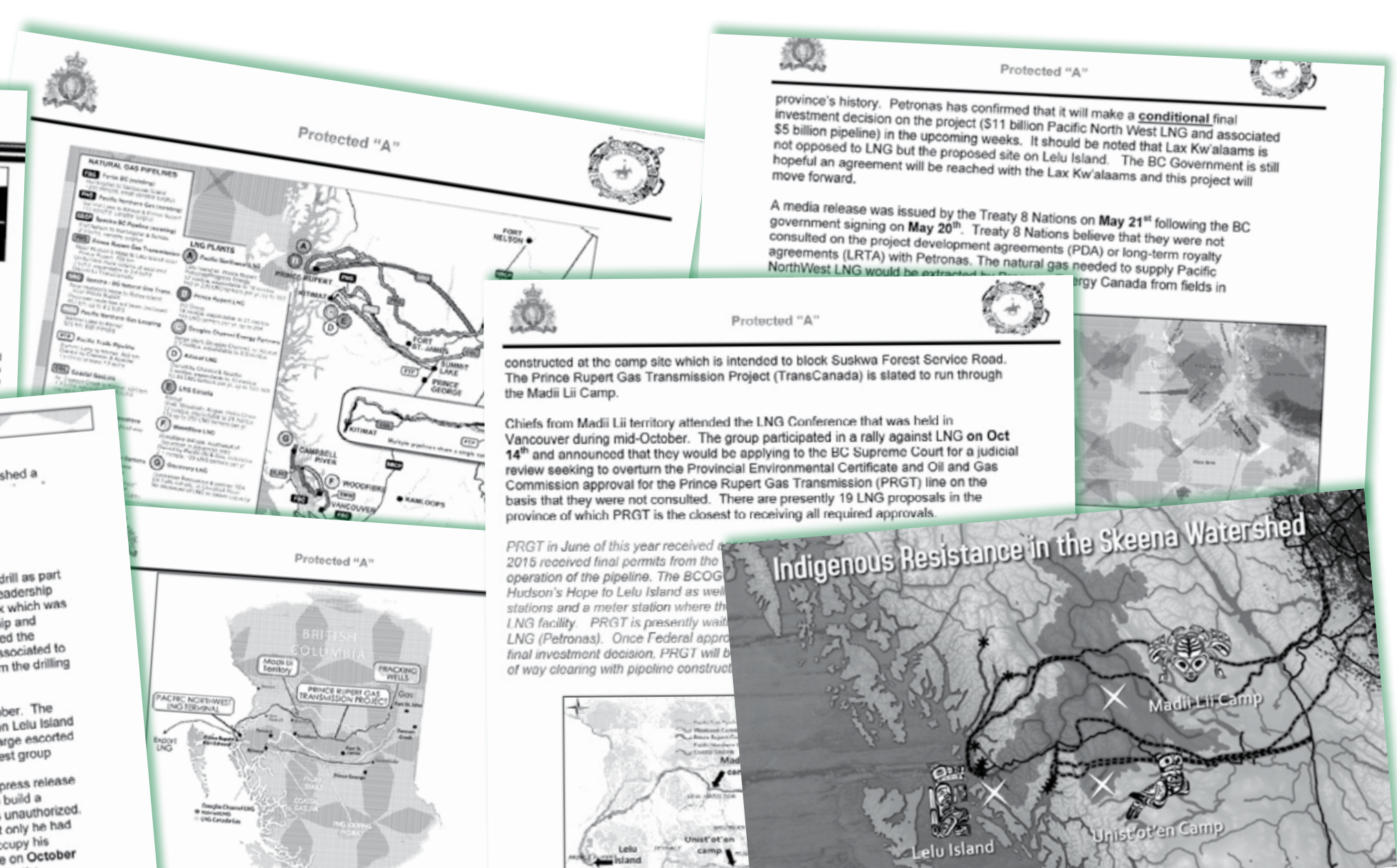
In late September, members from the Sipekne'katik First Nation established a blockade at the work site, preventing entry to the site.

"To allow climate change research to be done and to protect species and habitat for the Bay of Fundy species – salmon, eel, bass – we ask that all permits be stopped until the full legal appeal process is complete," said Cheryl Maloney, a former Sipekne'katik band councillor, at a Sept. 26 news conference. "There's too many things wrong with this project."

The blockade was prompted by threats made by the company to sue the Mi'kmaq who had laid eel traps in the river to demonstrate their treaty rights, guaranteed by the Peace and Friendship treaties signed with the British crown in the 1700s.

According to Maloney, the company made various promises including jobs and scholarships conditional upon the Mi'kmaq removing their traps and ceasing opposition to the project, as reported by Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN).

"The threats of arrest are a direct violation of the Mi'kmaq covenant of treaties to fish unhindered," she said.



“Don’t force the Mi’kmaq people who had to go to the Supreme Court of Canada and fight for hundreds of years for our treaty rights to be recognized, the treaty right to fish and put the eel traps in the water; don’t use that as a negotiation tactic against our people,” said Maloney. “That’s wrong; it’s bad business.”

Nova Scotia’s Premier, Stephen McNeil shot back against the opposition, noting in a statement that he is “confident that the Crown has met its obligation to consult with the Mi’kmaq of Nova Scotia and others on this project.” The Nova Scotia Supreme Court is expected to hear the Sipekne’katik’s appeal to the government’s granting of project permits in November of this year.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST LNG PIPELINE PROJECT

As opposition against natural gas continues to swell in the Maritimes, the B.C. and federal Liberals enthusiastically announced on Sept. 27 that the long-awaited \$36 billion Pacific NorthWest LNG pipeline had been approved.

The project includes a 900 kilometre pipeline to be built by TransCanada and a large processing facility on Lelu Island (known as Lax U’u’la) for which the main funder is Petronas, a Malaysian gas corporation.

The project has been met by ongoing opposition.

“Just over a year ago, the Tsimshian of Lax Kw’alaams set up camp on Lelu Island, which is just off their village near Prince Rupert,” Gord Hill of *Warrior Publications* told the *Leveller* via email. “They’ve been there since and have disrupted exploratory drilling and survey work by contractors over the past year.”

Although B.C. Premier Christy Clark declared that the project would create thousands of permanent jobs in an interview with CBC Radio’s *The House*, Pacific NorthWest LNG’s website specifies that only 330 long-term jobs are forecasted.

Lax U’u’la is adjacent to Flora Bank, considered to be the second largest sockeye spawning ground (after the Fraser River) and crucial to the Skeena River ecosystem. The LNG facility would bring with it “the imminent decimation and extinction of the Skeena River sockeye salmon fishery,” said B.C. Union of Indian Chiefs Grand Chief Stewart Phillip in an interview with *Ricochet*.

In addition to concerns over salmon habitat and Indigenous sovereignty, the carbon footprint of the project will be enormous, the equivalent of a “carbon bomb,” as declared by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in a submission to the environmental assessment. According to the draft environmental report, the project would add estimated total emissions upwards of 17.2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year, adding almost 10 per cent to B.C.’s total emissions.

The Liberal announcement came on the heels of the Royals’ visit to the province and meeting with B.C. First Nations, which was shunned by the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs. Grand Chief Phillip referred to the ceremony as an “empty symbolic gesture” and “public charade” amidst ongoing Indigenous conflicts with the Crown.

Construction on the project will commence once all of the necessary environmental certificates and permits are obtained from the provincial and federal governments, according to Pacific NorthWest LNG’s website.

A CLOSER LOOK AT ALTON AND PACIFIC NORTHWEST LNG SURVEILLANCE

The major concerns of government and law enforcement regarding Indigenous dissent to Canada’s energy agenda are two-fold: the threat of localized protests drawing outside support and protests disrupting industry activity.

A plethora of documents obtained via Access to Information legislation in recent years details an elaborate surveillance regime in place to monitor and mitigate Indigenous resistance to resource development projects on disputed land.

A primary concern stemming from the RCMP’s raid on the anti-shale gas camp in 2013 was the potential of an “Idle No More-like movement” emerging in its aftermath, as described by Public Safety Canada’s Government Operations Centre (GOC). Documents obtained by the *Leveller* reveal that multiple government departments and security agencies tracked associated solidarity protests which included a phone call from the GOC to the Department of Homeland Security’s Senior Watch Officer warning that “this movement could spread in the US.”

Speaking to the incessant fears of the colonial authorities, Maloney expressed at the Alton blockade site that this was not only a localized issue.

“And I think they want to take a step back and see who’s here. We have treaty beneficiaries from all over Atlantic Canada, from as far away as Boston, Newfoundland and Cape Breton,” she said. “People have been coming here to support us.”

Further documents obtained by the RCMP reveal that the RCMP’s ‘H’ Division’s (Nova Scotia) Criminal Analysis section closely followed Mi’kmaq opposition in 2014. The files are heavily redacted but note that following the commencement of drilling, an October protest halted development.

In particular, the RCMP’s ‘H’ Division was interested in the presence of the Mi’kmaq Warrior Society (MWS) who had been instrumental in leading resistance efforts to disrupt SWN’s efforts near Elsipogtog. The MWS had organized a protest at the Canso Causeway on Sept. 13 with other Cape Breton First Nations opposing oil and gas exploration.

On Oct. 8, the RCMP noted a press release issued by the Sipekne’katik First Nation asking AltaGas to cease operations, noting that they are prepared to take action to protect treaty rights.

The RCMP, in addition to tracking protests, monitored community meetings and a “fishing derby.”

On the opposite coast, the RCMP’s ‘E’ Division (B.C.) Criminal Intelligence unit of Aboriginal Policing Services produced monthly Strategic Outlook Reports monitoring development projects in B.C. and various Indigenous opposition.

Each report contains a section dedicated to liquid natural gas (LNG), noting that the provincial government has “great hopes” to develop the industry. By late 2015, the National Energy Board had approved nine of 14 LNG export license applications so far, with the Petronas project being the largest, according to the reports. The RCMP note that the B.C. and federal government have introduced tax breaks and other incentives to fast-track development.

In May 2015, the RCMP report noted that the Lax Kw’alaams Band was offered over \$1 billion, 1,500 hectares of crown land and other incentives to consent to the Pacific NorthWest LNG Terminal on Lelu Island. Although “the

community unanimously voted against the offer,” the report notes that an agreement was signed between Petronas and the B.C. government on May 20, 2015.

The October 2015 report noted “significant activity” related to Pacific NorthWest LNG protests, including the construction of a cabin on Lelu Island to prevent the Petronas facility from being built. “This camp has received support from the Unist’ot’en and Madii Lii who have constructed similar cabins on their traditional territories to prevent industry from accessing their land.”

Other protest activity occurred at the Prince Rupert LNG Office, as well as on northern B.C. coastal waters. Noting that the Prince Rupert Port Authority has authorized drilling as part of preliminary site work for a federal assessment, the “protest group has confronted a drill ship and barge causing workers to cease their activity.”

ANTI-PETROLEUM EXTREMISM

Indigenous opposition to Canada’s energy agenda has prompted the security establishment to pay close attention.

The RCMP’s Critical Infrastructure Intelligence Team produced an intelligence assessment, entitled “Criminal Threats to the Canadian Petroleum Industry,” on Jan. 24, 2014, a few weeks after SWN packed up and left New Brunswick. The Indigenous-led anti-fracking resistance in New Brunswick served as the catalyst for producing the report and was described by the RCMP as “the most violent of the national anti-petroleum protests to date.”

The report’s key findings further note that “violent anti-petroleum extremists will continue to engage in criminal activity to promote their anti-petroleum ideology” and that “these extremists pose a realistic criminal threat to Canada’s petroleum industry.”

The RCMP do acknowledge that many resource development projects are happening or proposed on disputed land, the crux of the ongoing conflict between Canada and First Nations. However, Indigenous people who go beyond engaging in nonviolent “traditional protest activity” are labelled by the RCMP as “violent aboriginal extremists.” Thus, protests associated with Indigenous land protection become blurred with terrorism, evidenced in the report’s reference to Canada’s Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its section on Domestic Issue-Based Extremism.

While the report indicates that New Brunswick and B.C. face the “most significant anti-petroleum criminal threat,” increased criminal activity is expected on a national scale as pipeline and other energy projects continue to be green-lighted by the federal and provincial governments.

Back at the Alton blockade site, Kevin Isaacs from Six Nations, sporting a camouflage jacket with a Mohawk warrior flag sewn on the front pocket, spoke to APTN.

“We’ve got to get serious about this, if we don’t, [Trudeau] is just going to push us aside,” said Isaacs.

“We have to make a major disruption, I’m sorry to say it,” he said. “That’s the only way they’re going to notice us.”

And notice they do. Rest assured, any threats of a “major disruption” are enough to pique the interest of the security and intelligence community, as well as bureaucrats from a variety of departments operating in the colonial centre.

The Alton Gas and Pacific NorthWest LNG projects are only two of many that will continue to be the focus of the RCMP mandated to fulfill the settler colonial project of unfettered economic expansion on stolen Indigenous land.

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cupw.ca/PostalBanking

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FIGHTING COLONIALISM IN CANADA'S CAPITAL

Mancini Ho

A small group of students gathered on Oct. 4, 2016 at Carleton University for a panel discussion on "Fighting Colonialism in Canada's Capital," organized by Stop Windmill activist group, Student and Labour Allies for Akikodjiwan.

The panel discussion, sponsored by the Carleton Graduate Students Association (GSA), the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 4600 and the OPIRG working group Stop Windmill, discussed the impetus behind the Stop Windmill Campaign Against the "Zibi" Condominium Project on Sacred Algonquin Land.

Windmill and Dream Corporation's Zibi project, as it stands, is set to be finished over the next 10-15 years at the blatant disregard of countless Indigenous peoples who have an incontrovertible attachment and right to the Chaudière Islands and surrounding areas. The Stop Windmill Campaign is gaining momentum, giving rise to one of the largest protests surrounding Indigenous rights in the region.

William Felepchuk, Vice President-Academic of the Carleton GSA and PhD student in the School of Indigenous and Cana-



Stop Windmill (Facebook)

dian Studies, chaired the discussion alongside Brian McDougall, adjunct professor of the School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies and Anishinabekwe Digital Media Educator, Monique Manatch.

A few notable moments were led by Mariah Miigwans Smith Chabot, second-year undergraduate studying human rights with a minor in Indigenous Studies who is from the Algonquin First Nation of Kitigan Zibi, who voiced her opinions on the Zibi project on several occasions.

In an email to the *Leveller*, Chabot said: "When I initially found out about the 'Zibi' project, I can honestly say I was beyond baffled and

very disappointed, not only in those who 'approved' the idea but for the Algonquin leaders who agreed to this project... Our culture should not be exploited like this and our culture is so much more than just smudging, opening prayers and honour songs."

Liberal Member of Parliament and Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna, whose riding includes the Chaudière Islands is one of the direct targets of the Stop Windmill Campaign. Activists are adamantly refusing to vote and urging others not to vote for McKenna or any Liberal party candidate who supports the Zibi condo developments in

the 2019 election.

A similar panel discussion took place on Oct. 13, 2016 at the University of Ottawa.

The group is urging Ottawa residents to visit stopwindmill.ca and sign a pledge form to tell Prime Minister Justin Trudeau you will not vote for Catherine McKenna or other Liberal MPs if his government consents to allow Windmill and Dream Corporation's Zibi condo project to proceed.

The Stop Windmill Campaign is gaining momentum, giving rise to one of the largest protests surrounding Indigenous rights in the region.

WHAT I FOUND AT THE PUNK OTTAWA FLEA MARKET

Scratching the surface of Ottawa's anti-pop culture



Photo: Ronnie Safarov

Ronnie Safarov

In today's digitized, hyper-connected world of hyperlinks, retweets and Facebook likes, we still often feel alienated from one another. As social interaction slowly but surely migrates onto this virtual plane, localized happenings that bring like-minded people together become all the more important.

Last month, the annual Punk Ottawa Flea Market was held at the Bronson Theatre. The Punk Ottawa Flea Market is a truly unique chance for local artisans, memorabilia collectors, record sellers and all other anti-pop culture-related folks to meet, hang out and chat about favourite bands, books and shows.

This is the second year in a row that I have gone to this event. I am not only a big alternative music fan but also an avid animal rights supporter, so I love attending. Some of the donation-based generated revenues go to animal welfare charities, the food is vegan friendly and I always make a lot of new connections with people who are on the same wavelength.

As I slowly made my way around the Bronson Theatre Hall area, checking out old punk fanzines, Ramones LPs and Terry Pratchett books, I constantly found myself chit-chatting with other people who stood around the booths, looking for a rare LP or a comic book. At the same time, I also got to speak with the vendors and

learn a bit more about their ideologies, aspirations and concerns.

Quinn Riding of Troublemaker Print, after showing me his shop's DIY-made t-shirts with various words of contemporary wisdom written on them, told me a story of how he made friends with Fat Mike, a renowned bassist and vocalist for the punk band NOFX, at a Bad Religion show once. As usual, when names of seminal punk-rock musicians are being mentioned in a conversation, I was all ears. Then he told me a completely different story of becoming disillusioned with a provincial grant that was intended to aid his little student enterprise but the money failed to reach him, so he was left to his own devices. Thanks to events like the Punk Ottawa Flea Market, he is able to spread the word about Troublemaker Print.

L7's "Pretend We're Dead" was blasting from the speakers in the hall when I stopped near the vending table occupied by Ottawa-based jewelry brand, Shameless Envy. Its leading artist, Robin von Dostaler, presented her handcrafted items to at least half a dozen people who crowded around the table. She uses ethically sourced animal remnants to create gothic, Victorian-inspired jewelry: pendants with butterfly wings, earrings with golden beetles, small animal bones encrusted with crystals. "Ethically sourced" means the living beings that she uses in her beautiful pieces

were not specifically hunted for this purpose but died a natural death and then were memorialized in von Dostaler's artworks.

I was fascinated by von Dostaler's pieces and we struck up a conversation. We spent at least 15 minutes talking not just about her jewelry but about animal rights and the phenomenon of killing animals unnecessarily. We both found out we share an insurmountable disgust for trophy hunting and for those hunters who kill animals for no reason, as opposed to sustainable hunting carried out by First Nations, for example.

"I met a guy at one event who told me he can supply me with skulls of critters he kills," von Dostaler told me. "I asked him, 'Do you hunt them for food?' and he said, 'No, I just like to shoot them.' And he teaches his kids and nephews his bloody ways."

On my next lap around the hall, I viewed extravagant soaps of various colours and shapes by Soaps & Such and vibrant, crazy-coloured, acid-reminiscent clothes and fabric by Perhaps She'll Dye before stopping for a good 40 minutes near the table with second-hand vinyl records.

At 4 p.m., the flea market ended, vendors packed up their merchandise and I needed to head back to the outside world as well. I went out of the Bronson Theatre with a D.O.A. album on vinyl, a "Communism Rocks" t-shirt and at least ten new phone numbers in my old SonyEricsson.



BURSARY APPS

DUE NOVEMBER 18

OPIRG-Carleton is a campus-based not-for-profit organization that works to create and sustain student and community-based engagement through research, education, and action on social justice and environmental issues. OPIRG-Carleton uses an anti-oppression framework, consensus-based decision making processes, operates in a non-hierarchical setting, and supports multiple working groups struggling for social change.

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BOYS AND THEIR TOYS

The paradox of play and privilege

Jay Ramasubramanyam

A little over a week ago, I was biking past my neighbour’s house. The kids, who are just about six or seven and are white, brandished their toy weapons and proceeded to “shoot me” with very cinematic voice overs. With shootings dominating the news, I couldn’t help but feel a tinge of abhorrence to kids playing with toy guns. Since the shooting of Tamir Rice in 2014 in Cleveland, Ohio to scores of other similar incidents which have led to the spread of movements like Black Lives Matter, my concern for toy guns as tools of imaginary play has amplified. However, this opinion of mine is not about shootings per se but about the pervasive power and privilege that mandate play in an environment of pre-existing racial divisions.

Growing up as a non-white kid in India, toy guns were far from a normal plaything. However, the observable normalization and ubiquity of guns in the U.S. and Canada raises the question whether violence

is inherently normalized in society. If so, do toy guns represent a microcosm of such normalization? To what extent does race, privilege and the inherent power structures in our society act as a barometer of this so-called normality?

As bizarre as it may sound, despite my awareness of pre-existing power structures and white privilege in our society, it wasn’t until the day I was confronted by six-year-old white kids with toy guns that made me realize how embedded they truly are. This incident took me back to the video of the shooting of Tamir Rice in November 2014. A 12-year-old Black kid in a public park pointing his toy gun at passersby is an aggressor in the eyes of the “law;” however, the actions of my neighbours’ children wouldn’t be mistaken for legitimate violence, would they?

White privilege is something that only non-whites identify as a characteristic in a society, since many of those who hold such privilege are oblivious to its existence. Such obliviousness leads to perpetual racial divides and, among oth-

er things, gives white kids the right to brandish toy guns at passersby with no calamitous consequences whatsoever.

The implication of all this is how strategies of awareness at home concerning behaviour and play with faux weaponry have had to transform to adapt to such challenges. While children today are being educated to embrace racial forms of diversity, among others, a contradiction may also be presented simultaneously that alludes to the fact that our society may not be as accepting of diversity as we would like to believe.

Parents of non-white kids can no longer afford to preserve their children’s innocence and not discuss events of horrific shootings of Black youth and children, as their lives could depend on them having this information. Needless to say that inherent racial biases have for long characterized perceptions of criminal intent. The shooting of Terence Crutcher in Tulsa, Oklahoma, who was described as a “big bad dude” by the police officers in the helicopters as officers on the ground



Photo: Katerina Dudova, flickr.com

Growing up as a non-white kid in India, toy guns were far from a normal plaything. However, the observable normalization and ubiquity of guns in the U.S. and Canada raises the question whether violence is inherently normalized in society.

were pursuing him, is a testament to race and “hypercriminality”, which has for long “justified” police malfeasance.

Initiating systemic changes in power structures continue to be the responsibility of the marginalized and the aggrieved. Racial biases in ownership of weap-

onry, both faux and otherwise, cannot be viewed as just being a part of academic rhetoric. Biases coupled with paranoia that a Black kid with a toy gun is a greater threat, is not only flawed but is also dangerous. As long as prejudicial views exist that imply that young white kids playing cops and

robbers with toy guns are fun-loving, whereas kids of racial minorities involved in similar activities are predisposed and indoctrinated to commit violence, we will continue to see incidents that overtly exhibit power and privilege that comes with being of a dominant race.

Who’s dressing up as STEPHEN HARPER this Halloween?



Justin, you said you’d be different! Why are you...

- supporting CETA and the TPP?
- selling weapons to Saudi Arabia?
- not revoking Bill C-51?
- using Harper’s carbon emission targets?

- supporting the ‘Zibi’ project on sacred Algonquin territory?
- not supporting Indigenous post-secondary education?
- resisting calls to raise the federal minimum wage?
- still pushing the Conservative agenda when bargaining with public service workers?



THE TIME IS NOW TO ABOLISH THE POLICE

Espoir Manirambona

There's an important discussion taking place around the relationship between democracy and policing. Fearful of losing their privileges, the ruling class is using mainstream media to argue for putting more resources into security, policing, surveillance and militarism. Under the guise of protecting the public and fighting terrorism, the real policy objective is to maintain the status quo, a task becoming more challenging due to the crisis of capitalism and shifting geopolitics. History teaches us the poor masses inevitably rise up to challenge inequality. Democracy, rule of the people, and capitalism, rule of capital, are incompatible.

Movements like Black Lives Matter are raising awareness about the draconian policing and incarceration practices in the U.S. and inspiring similar movements in Canada, Brazil and around the world. Police reforms like body cameras and community control are important and need to be implemented. The time has come to take the next step and call for abolition. We need to challenge the basic assumption that communities cannot protect themselves and must depend on others to protect and serve them. A discussion around what causes unwanted behaviours, community care solutions and police alternatives needs to be fostered.

Modern policing in North America is rooted in colonialism and slavery. In Canada, the Northwest Mounted Police (now known as the RCMP) was created to protect European colonies and industries from Indigenous peoples' struggle to take back their lands and resources. The Mounted Police would often kill Indigenous people in this effort. In the U.S., many police departments, especially in the south, morphed from the slave patrols who were used to intimidate the enslaved Africans, prevent revolts and capture those who escaped. They would often kill the Africans trying to break free. The murder of Indigenous, Black and other peoples oc-



Photo: Veronique Taylor, Flickr.com

Under the guise of protecting the public and fighting terrorism, the real policy objective is to maintain the status quo...

curing today by police is therefore rooted in history.

The widespread killing of Black people is part of an ongoing policy of genocide. Recognizing the mass awakening taking place, "the powers that were" are scared and desperate to take out all opposition to their rule. Using the police, the elites are killing Black people and trying to intimidate marginalized peoples to keep us from rising up to challenge their draconian vision of total control. Thankfully, people are fearlessly continu-

ing to oppose these powers and demanding democracy now. A constant barrier to empowerment remains the police departments, institutions precisely designed to disempower. That is why we must demand more than reform; we must demand abolition.

We can live in peace without the police. We can imagine ways to improve our relations with one another. Building self-sufficient communities that guarantee rights like housing, food and other basic

necessities. We can raise awareness, educate and promote mental well-being. We can learn how to de-escalate situations and how to resolve conflicts using community-based non-violent means. We can focus on community care and transcend the structures of oppression like capitalism and colonialism that generate false consciousness and violence in our communities. Now is the time to abolish the police and build communities free from state violence and free from fear.

LETTERS



Photo: Drummond Wilson, Flickr.com

Prince of Wales Bridge Fence Partially Dismantled

Heya *Leveller* peeps, the Prince of Wales Bridge was made accessible last night after some people did a thing and access to Lemieux Island has also been restored. There is no comparable space in this city that offers a connection with the river as this bridge and there is a strong local history of human bonding and community-building that the bridge has been a conduit for. The gate will not stand. It will be dismantled again and again, until the city realizes that it is not their space to encroach on, that they cannot restrict access to this space and that their ability to manage this city is completely subject to us, the people, granting them permission to do so and violations of this relationship may result in our representatives' removal from office (as is the democratic process, sometimes [often] leaders need a reminder of who they are there to serve). We hope you can pass this message along... :), so that the bridge can continue to be a source of beauty and a conduit for community in this town. Have a wonderful day <3 What you all do is very much appreciated.

— The Bridge Itself




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SEND IN YOUR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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VENUS ENVY ADVISORY:

SEXUAL HEALTH & PLEASURE ALERT

Welcome to the *Leveller's* newest column focussing on sexual health and pleasure. We've teamed up with our good pals at Venus Envy and are providing you, our valued readership, with a forum to ask questions related to those quirks, queries, and curiosities you've always harboured and didn't know whom to ask. Well, now is your chance! Please submit your questions to editors.the.leveller@gmail.com.

Q: Dear Venus, as a cis-gay man, safer sexual practices are very important to me. Unfortunately, most organizations around Ottawa think that condoms are the only freebies worth distributing. As such, I often have to resort to buying lube. Could you elaborate on the importance of lube and what each kind is for?

—Chafing in Chinatown

A: Dear CiC, thanks for the opportunity to talk about lube, it's one of my favourite topics! Like many people, the first lube I ever used was a bottle off the drugstore shelf that enticed me with its promise of exciting new sensations. My partner and I eagerly added some, hoping it would bring sex to a new level. Instead we were left with a gross, sticky, burn-y mess. I put it back in the cupboard and didn't touch another lube until I started working at Venus Envy.

Here, I discovered that a good lube was a world away from the irritating kind of my past. A great lube can enhance all kinds of sex and change the way things feel for the better. For bodies and body parts that aren't self-lubing, adding some slip is necessary for safe and pleasurable play. Practically-speaking, lube reduces friction and the chance of anal and vaginal tearing, meaning it also decreases the chance of STI transmission and condom breakage.

Of course, not all lubes are created equal – so how do you pick the one that's right for you? Here are some things to consider:

Oil-based lube can include everything

from organic, fresh-pressed coconut oil to good ol' canola oil. Oils are handy because they're long-lasting and easy to find, making them great for a handjob on a student budget. Unfortunately, they aren't always body-friendly, and they will definitely eat through latex. So oil should be avoided when you're using latex barriers.

Silicone lube is a nice alternative to oil because it's as long-lasting and latex-safe. Its staying power is great for anal play or a marathon sex session. It also stays slippery in water, so you can use it during an extra steamy shower. Of course, it's not always the best choice for a quickie and it will damage your silicone sex toys.

Water-based lube is the most common kind of lube and varies widely in flavour, texture, thickness, quality and staying power. Some even have a little silicone added to make them last longer than other water-based lubes. These hybrids are white and have a lotion-like feel – so they look a little bit like cum. I mention this because it's as much a turn-off to some as it is a turn-on for others!

Make sure to read your lube's label and check out the ingredients. When practicing safer sex, you may want to be especially wary of propylene glycol. This ingredient sometimes causes irritation and small tears in the vaginal or anal canal and both of those can increase the risk of STI transmission.

This column just skims the surface of what we know and lube research is getting better every day. To geek out more about lube, visit any education-oriented sex store with knowledgeable staff.

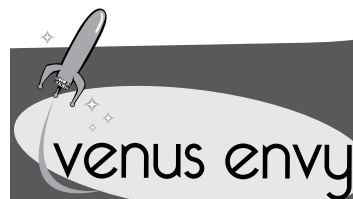


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- ✦ Blasting Off: Going Down and Eating Out, November 14 at 6:30pm

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PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION
SPECIAL ISSUE

WHODUNIT?

MATCH THESE WORDS
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PUBLIC FIGURE!

- A. "In fact, take a Tic Tac and grab them by the pussy is the closest thing to a plan Donald Trump has described this entire election."
- B. "Anybody who complains about the microphone is not having a good night."
- C. "Everything HRC touches she kind of screws up with hubris."
- D. "My mic was defective within the room... I wonder, was that on purpose?"
- E. "Ugh...it must be so hard to make 24 hours of television without saying the words cunt, snatch, cooter, silk purse, spicy taco, lady-pocket, waikanaloo, hoo-hoo, trim, vajayjay, bearded clam, front bottom, nether regions, sin grotto, chocha, red lobster, beaver, fur-burger, yoni, downstairs retreat, honeypot, inner sanctum, sugar walls, peach blossom, lady treasure, roast beef curtains, grey gardens, oh, and I almost forgot the most important one: box. Well, that was literally a vagina monologue."
- F. "Fuck Billy Bush! Fuck that guy! Fuck him! Fuck him! And not just for laughing along. It is gross enough that he's serving as Donald Trump's hug pimp, but let's not gloss over the fact that he just said: 'How about a little hug for the Bushy,' a phrase that, if it's not already, should be a felony offence in all 50 states."
- G. "If not paying taxes makes him smart, what does that make the rest of us?"
- H. "Go and register, make sure you get out and vote November 28th."
- I. "A national disgrace and an international pariah... If Donald were to somehow win, by the end of the first week in office he'd be saying 'What the hell did I get myself into?'"
- J. "These elections are a charade... and are in place in order to give Americans the illusion that they have freedom of choice. You don't really have choice in this country."

1. John Oliver,
Political satirist
2. Colin Powell,
American statesman
3. George Carlin,
Comedian/social critic
4. Hillary Clinton,
American politician/
presidential nominee
5. Donald Trump,
American businessman/
presidential nominee
6. Samantha Bee,
Canadian comedian



HOROSCOPES

XL Petite

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Scorpio, have you ever considered attaching flu vaccinations to your jagged tail so that people would see your attacks as beneficial rather than dangerous? They'd be all like, "Aaah I got stung by a scorpion... right on!"

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Would it be awkward if you were milked? Because I know you're a human on top but on the bottom, you're bovine. I'm not being offensive, just trying to think sustainably.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
Well Capricorn, your birthday will herald a new American president. This will either be awful or doomsday. Here goes!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
Stop sniffing before every point you make, like Donald Trump. You don't have to advertise your destroyed olfactory bulbs. Just stop it.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
As Honest Abe once said, "The president shall not be the shiniest of two turds." goo. gl/kaqfNb

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
Those are some fantastic purple sweatpants you got from Costco. While I appreciate the colour, it is insufficient to make them fashionable enough for daily outings. Daily. Often times they match your socks, it's true — but pull yourselves together Aries, or we're through!

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
If someone identifies as a doctor during a medical emergency, you would listen to them, right? Even if they are black and ovary-clad? #dafuq #whatadoctorlook-slike

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
Oh heyyyy, those pants are smoking hot, oh, wait, no, it's just that Samsung Note 7 exploding.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
Haikuroscope for you this autumn:
Have you ever smelled
The sweet colours of fall leaves?
Red, yellow, decay.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
Nothing says flu season like you, Libra. Keep your Neti pot close and grandpa's cough medicine even closer.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
Halloween is around the corner, Leo. As it's a week before the US election, I bet the orange carrot stalker will be a popular costume this year.

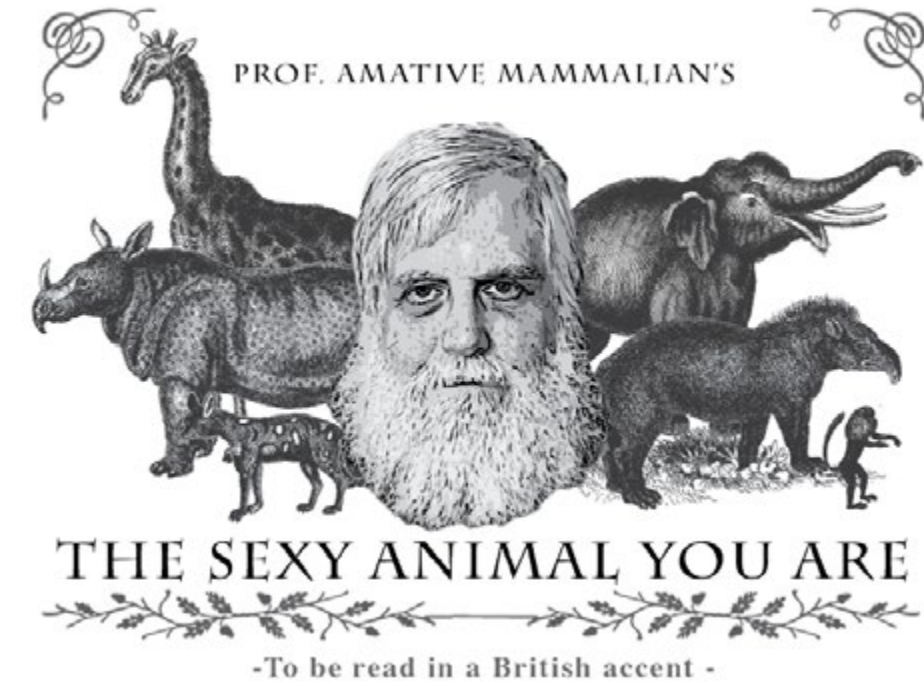
VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Next time you're trying to order a "green" tea in Moncton, make sure you say yes when they ask if you want it "black" or they'll put milk in it. Srsly.





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Ve are not perfect. I think we can all agree that knee joints could have been better designed, but evolution has given us quite a lot to work with. Unfortunately, we squander so much of our human potential sitting around staring at screens like moths to a flame. Thankfully, all is not lost as we are not alone on this blue planet. In an effort for us all to better ourselves, let us turn to our animal friends for some advice on how we may turn the tide in this battle against civilization in order to find what it is we lost.

MY SPIDEY SENSES ARE TINGLING!

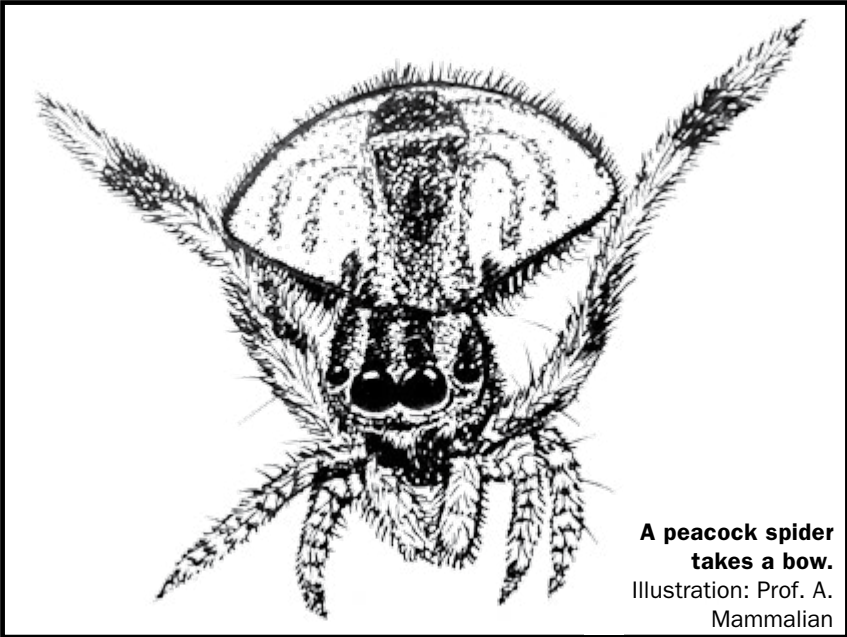
While an aged man such as myself may not get out much, but when I do I'm sad for evolution's sake. Millions of years of human evolution have given us extremely fine motor skills, deep emotional intelligence and rhythm. Throughout human history, we've danced but for some reason, the dance floors of nightclubs, house parties and street corners are showing a steady descent into arrhythmic monotone gyrations. What happened to dance?

Many young people seem to have lost touch with, or have never found, the joy and skill of dancing. For some, it's simply an involuntary body convulsion brought on by having a few too many drinks. For others, it comes naturally but rarely goes beyond stepping side-to-side and bobbing your head to something close to the rhythm of the beat. Lucky for us, all that dancing isn't intrinsically pivotal to the process of courtship, sex and furthering the presence of humanity, because if it was, we may soon die off.

Thankfully, there are people in the world who wander through the forests of Australia staring at the ground. These arachnologists recently discovered seven new species of peacock spiders, an impressive lot of three to five milimetre long dancing spiders with beautiful colours. Their continued existence is based on impressing the other with their dancing, even channeling their bodily beats through vibrations across the ground to titillate their potential mate's spidey senses.

Of the 45 known species of peacock spider, each one has its own dance that involves waving their legs in the air and shaking their fan-shaped bums to their own unique rhythms. I highly recommend you look them up as they will enthrall you with their insect sense of rhythm.

While I don't recommend you adopt the same moves, I think the peacock spider has come along at an important time to remind us all that we should all aspire to be such great dancers.





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Peace and Environment News

