

WOMEN OF THE WORLD UNITE!

Ottawa joins continental counter inauguration

Rebecca Riley

Seven thousand protesters walked from the Human Rights Monument on Elgin Street to the Bronson Centre on Jan. 21 in solidarity with the Women's March in Washington, D.C.

Locally organized by Catherine Butler, Amanda Carver and Yelu Mulop, the march aimed to challenge issues like sexism, racism and homophobia and to support people who are marginalized.

"This isn't technically an anti-Trump march but I see a lot of pussy hats. Just saying," Butler said to the crowd.

"We are marching because in the last year, there has been an unprecedented attack on

women, on racialized communities, on immigrants, on Muslims, on members of the LGBTQ community, on Indigenous people, on people living with disabilities," said Niki Ashton, the New Democratic Member of Parliament for the district of Churchill—Keewatinook Aski in Manitoba. "And today we are marching to say 'No!' to a system that holds all of us back."

Over 500,000 people attended the Women's March in Washington. Other marches were held across the US and other countries, with 31 marches in Canada.

While marching, protesters chanted phrases like "Love trumps hate," "This is what democracy looks like," and "Women's rights, equali-



Photo: Urooj Mian

ty!" while onlookers honked and waved in support.

Jason Jones, an American who moved to Canada seven years ago and currently holds dual citizenship, voted for Hillary Clinton and is now concerned about how a Trump administration will affect Americans' lives.

"The fact is that those differences [between the US and Canada] have just gotten more extreme. Not just

politically. Look at literacy, infant mortality and standard of living have continued to slide in the States," Jones lamented.

"If you look at Canada, this country has steadily moved in the direction I call progress. In the most optimistic view, the decline of rights and values and the well-being of the middle class will continue to slide and the rich people will get richer."

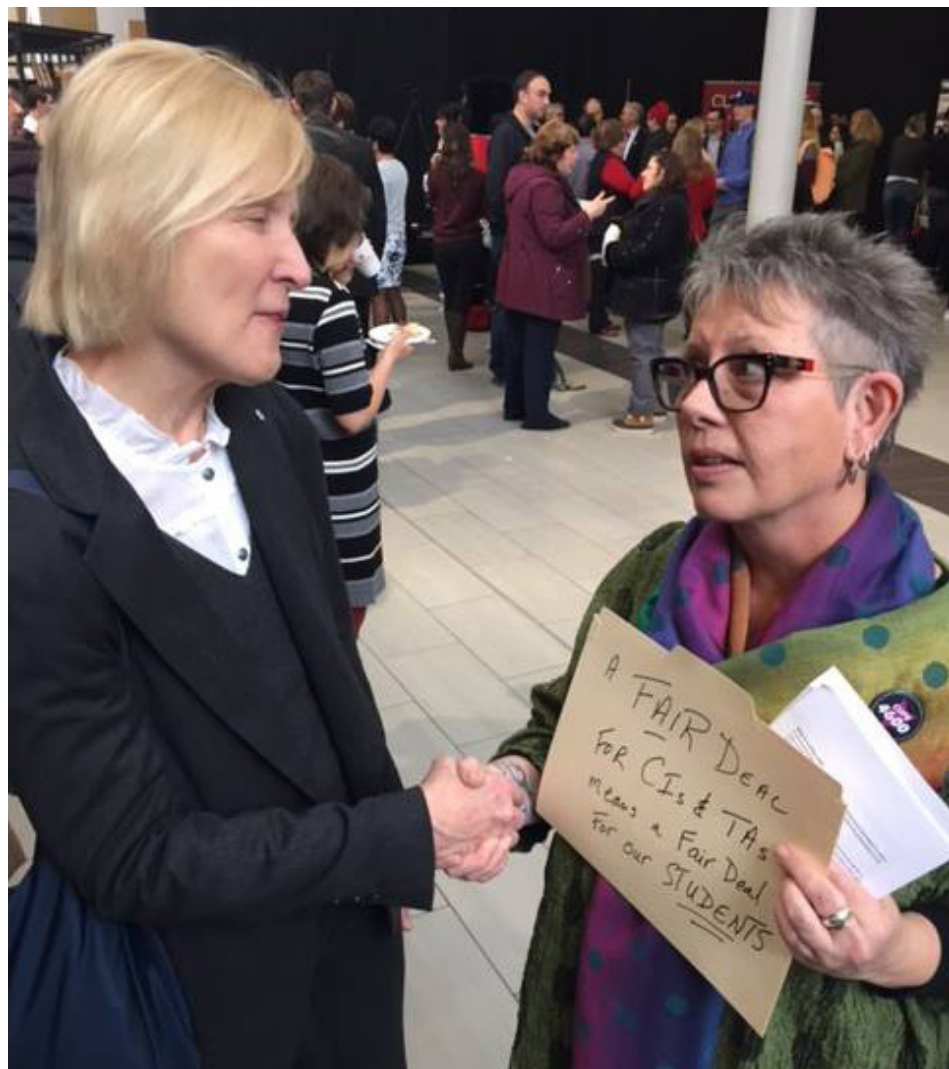
There are also many who believe that the US, following Trump's xenophobic rhetoric, will become a more threatening and dangerous place for them.

"My identity as a Middle Eastern woman is under attack a lot of the time. I feel uncomfortable in a lot of situations," said Nazanin Zaretour, who shared her experiences of racism.

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LESSONS FROM THE PAST

Strike mandates prevent strikes



CUPE 4600 supporter Janne Cleveland with Carleton President Roseann Runte

Photo: CUPE 4600

Leveller Staff

CUPE 4600 — the union representing teaching assistants (TAs) and contract instructors (CIs) at Carleton University — organized an

information picket at Carleton's 75th anniversary celebration launch on Jan. 18.

"I was out at the picket to help spread the word about the strike vote and to support our bargaining team who has been in

negotiations with the university," Jenna Amirault, CUPE 4600 member, told the *Leveller* via email.

CUPE 4600 has been negotiating new collective agreements with the university since July (Unit

1 - TAs) and August (Unit 2 - CIs). Carleton's administration called for a conciliation process before the holiday break in December, prompting CUPE 4600 to seek a strike mandate from its members.

For Kevin Partridge, President of CUPE 4600, the picket was organized to counter the university administration's spin that CIs have job security and TAs are well supported.

"Contract Instructors at Carleton are the second-lowest paid in Ontario...and are subject to arbitrary hiring and firing evaluations, including a student evaluation system that puts women, people of colour and people with accents at a clear disadvantage," Partridge told the *Leveller*. "Graduate TAs have seen their income drop precipitously over the last ten years. They now have only about \$1,500 left after paying tuition and various fees from their TA paycheques."

TAs and CIs will vote whether or not to give the union a strike mandate on Jan. 24-26.

CUPE 4600 is encouraging its members to vote yes in order to give the union a strong mandate while bargaining efforts for new collective agreements with the university administration are ongoing.

"The strike vote is primarily a tool to gauge the support that our bargaining teams have," said Partridge. "The employer has tabled a wage offer that is well under the current rate of inflation and is proposing to almost eliminate the protection that TAs have against tuition fee increases that are regularly several times the rate of inflation."

"It's important that CUPE 4600 mobilizes a strong strike vote so that the bargaining team has leverage going into negotiations," said Amirault. "Carleton has a history of rolling back workers' rights, take-home pay and working conditions in the event that a strong strike vote isn't mobilized."

Carleton's administration took advantage of a failed strike vote in 2008 to clawback tuition indexation, demonstrating the importance of obtaining a strong strike mandate during the bargaining process.

At the picket, undergraduate students were supportive of their TAs and CIs, according to Amirault.

"Many were shocked to learn just how low the take-home pay is for TAs and CIs," she said. "I think students understand that our working conditions are their learning conditions."



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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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EDITORIAL

REMEMBERING A BRILLIANT AND BELOVED LEVELLER

By Andy Crosby

Over the past few days, while putting together this latest issue of the *Leveller*, we are mourning the loss of good friend and long-time *Leveller*, Mat Nelson. Mat passed away on Jan. 17.

We dedicate this issue to Mat and celebrate his life and his accomplishments. In this issue’s feature, you will learn more about how Mat touched the lives of those around him, written by some of the Editorial Board alumni that developed profound personal connections with him.

Mat was a staunch advocate for social justice and spoke out against injustice whenever and wherever he saw it; he was a natural fit for the *Leveller*.

Mat was involved with the *Leveller* from its inception. In March 2009, Mat wrote his first article – an anti-war piece highlighting calls from peace activists and Afghan citizens demanding the Canadian military withdraw from their country. This first piece preceded a long series of articles challenging war, racism and oppression, as well as celebrating resistance and promoting workers’ rights.

During his productive and illustrious time at the *Leveller*, Mat authored at least 18 articles.

In the early days, it remains unknown if Mat had a pre-existing arrangement with the Editors to have his work continuously appear on page 5 but that seemed to be his page. That is, when his work did not appear on the cover, as his January 2010 piece on

Malalai Joya’s visit to Ottawa did, among a few others.

Here are some of the topics that Mat covered and enlightened us on: the Canadian occupation of Afghanistan; 2010 Olympics Resistance; Palestinian rights; and numerous cases of Canadian victims of the “war on terror” (to which Mat was a strong critic), including Hassan Diab, Mohamed Harkat, Mohammad Zeki Mahjoub and Omar Khadr.



In addition, Mat extensively covered union politics and workers’ rights at Carleton and beyond. Mat covered various strike votes and job actions surrounding the various union locals on campus. In particular but not exclusively, Mat provided consistent coverage of CUPE 4600 dealings with Carleton’s administration. In March 2010, Mat wrote on the expiring contracts of three CUPE locals — 910, 2424, and 4600 — at Carleton, following up that article by investigating the “chilly climate” surrounding the fight to “thaw the wage freeze” for 4600 members in the fall term. The following year, Mat covered the filing of CUPE 4600’s largest grievance in its history.

Union politics, especially surrounding CUPE 4600 — whose TA graduate student membership are also fee-paying members of the *Leveller* — were important to Mat and are important to the *Leveller*. The *Leveller* was founded by Carleton graduate students fed up with an anti-union climate and media coverage in the city and on campus surrounding the OC Transpo bus strike and failed CUPE 4600 strike vote in 2008.

is only appropriate that Mat was a part of that diverse team, instrumental in ensuring that the newspaper printed on time every issue he sat on the Board.

Reflecting on doing “production” — that is what the editors call the pre-publishing weekend marathon of furious editing, rewriting, debating, not to mention not sleeping — with Mat every issue conjures a flurry of memories and emotions. Although gruelling work, Mat ensured that production was always a pleasure.

Publishing a newspaper is a privilege, a pleasure and an honour. Publishing a newspaper with Mat is indescribable in the joy that it brought to those around him. He made it fun.

Mat brought a mixed bag of intellectual stimulation and laughter. He charmed the room with his wit and wisdom. He was unwavering in his convictions yet open to listening to others’ perspectives. He was thoughtful, patient.

Those of us privileged to have known and worked with Mat in those days have experienced a tremendous loss. At the same time, we must be inspired by Mat and what we have learned from him and incorporate it into our thoughts, praxis and how we interact with others. Mat was not afraid to express his love for those around him and of course we loved him too, very much. We will continue to keep his memory alive and make him proud in our pursuit for social justice at the grassroots level.

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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
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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

On January 12, we lost an irreplaceable soul in the struggle for Indigenous rights. The soft-spoken yet steadfast Arthur Manuel of the Secwepemc First Nation died of congestive heart failure at the age of 66.

Manuel dedicated his life to the struggle for Indigenous land and treaty rights, entering the world of Indigenous politics in the 1970s as the president of the Native Youth Association. He went on to serve as chief of the Neskonalith Indian Band and elected chair of the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council. Recently, he was a spokesperson for Defenders of the Land, an organization dedicated to

Indigenous sovereignty and environmental justice. Manuel was also the spokesperson for the Indigenous Network on Economics and Trade, a community of Indigenous organizations working to achieve recognition of Aboriginal and Treaty Rights at the international level.

In 2015, Manuel published *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake Up Call* which was awarded the 2016 Canadian Historical Association Aboriginal History Book Prize. The book calls for radically rethinking the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state.

Manuel was unabashed in his demands for decoloni-

zation and Indigenous self-determination, calling settler colonialism for what it is: the ongoing theft and plunder of Indigenous land. Manuel saw colonization as being grounded in the dispossession of Indigenous land and ongoing dependency arising from dispossession and oppression targeting Indigenous expressions of self-determination.

On the 150th anniversary “celebration” of Canada, Manuel wrote a poignant analysis of what colonization is and how it functions. We have reproduced that piece in full here.

ARE YOU A CANADIAN?

Arthur Manuel

This article first appeared in the First Nations Strategic Bulletin Volume 14 (August-December 2016).

2017 will mark the fact that we have been officially colonized by Canada for 150 years. This is an important milestone and it is time for us to decide if we want to continue to be colonized peoples or if we want to seek self-determination.

We have to face the fact that Canada is a settler state that was created by Great Britain to take over our Indigenous territories for use and benefit of Canada. This kind of human exploitation is called colonization and it is designed to give settler Canadians ownership over all Indigenous lands. Indigenous peoples basically subsidize the Canadian economy with free land and resources.

Colonization is a complex relationship but simple to understand if you know that dispossession, dependency and oppression are the consequences that it is designed to produce between the colonizer and the colonized. It is important to understand the United Nations (UN) has condemned colonization in all its manifestations because the moment you dispossess someone of their land and make him or her dependent upon the colonizer, you create a person willing to fight to be free and independent again. In this way, colonialism is against world peace.

Canadian colonialism is also based on racial discrimination, which is deeply engrained in the entire constitutional and legal fabric of Canada. Indigenous Peoples need to be careful NOT to honour the 150 years of colonization because this will validate the racism that is implicit in Canadian colonialism. Instead, Indigenous Peoples and Canadians who believe in human rights need look at Canada's 150th Birthday Party as period to undertake a commitment to decolonize Canada and recognize the right of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination.

In practical terms we need to look first at the results of colonial dispossession: the minuscule land-base that Indigenous Peoples have in contrast to

settler Canadians. Our Indian reserves are only 0.2 % of Canada's land mass yet Indigenous Peoples are expected to survive on that land-base. This has led to the systematic impoverishment of Indigenous Peoples and this impoverishment is a big part of the crippling oppression Indigenous Peoples suffer under the existing Canadian colonial system.

This 0.2% systemic impoverishment is used as a weapon by Canada to keep us too poor and weak to fight back. It is used to bribe and co-opt Indigenous leadership into becoming neo-colonial partners to treat the symptoms of poverty on the Indian reserve without addressing the root cause of the problem, which is the dispossession of all of the Indigenous Peoples' territory by Canada and the provinces.

Settler Canadians, on the other hand, enjoy and benefit from 99.8% of our Indigenous land base under the federal and provincial governments. That is what the first Canadian Constitution established under the British North America Act 1867. Our lands were put under Crown title and we were left with 0.2% of the land on our Indian Reserves. Indigenous Peoples living on “Indian Reserves” do NOT get equal programs and services that settler Canadians get. There has always been a battle between the federal and provincial governments about what order of government is responsible for programs and services on Indian Reserves. Even in these practical terms we seem to belong to neither, and the question again is “Are Indigenous Peoples Canadians?”

Does this make us Canadians when programs and services are NOT available to us when we live on our Indian Reserves? Indeed 50% of Indian people live off their Indian reserves because of the lack of land, employment and education opportunities on our existing Indian Reserves. Indigenous Peoples only become Canadians by migrating to Canada based on need and not because they want to. These 0.2% Indian Reserves are in constant turmoil with their colonial masters and this is really spelled out in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report 1996.

“Art Manuel is like a tall cedar, watching the landscape of Canadian Indian policies through time and offering sturdy and dependable resistance”
– Hayden King

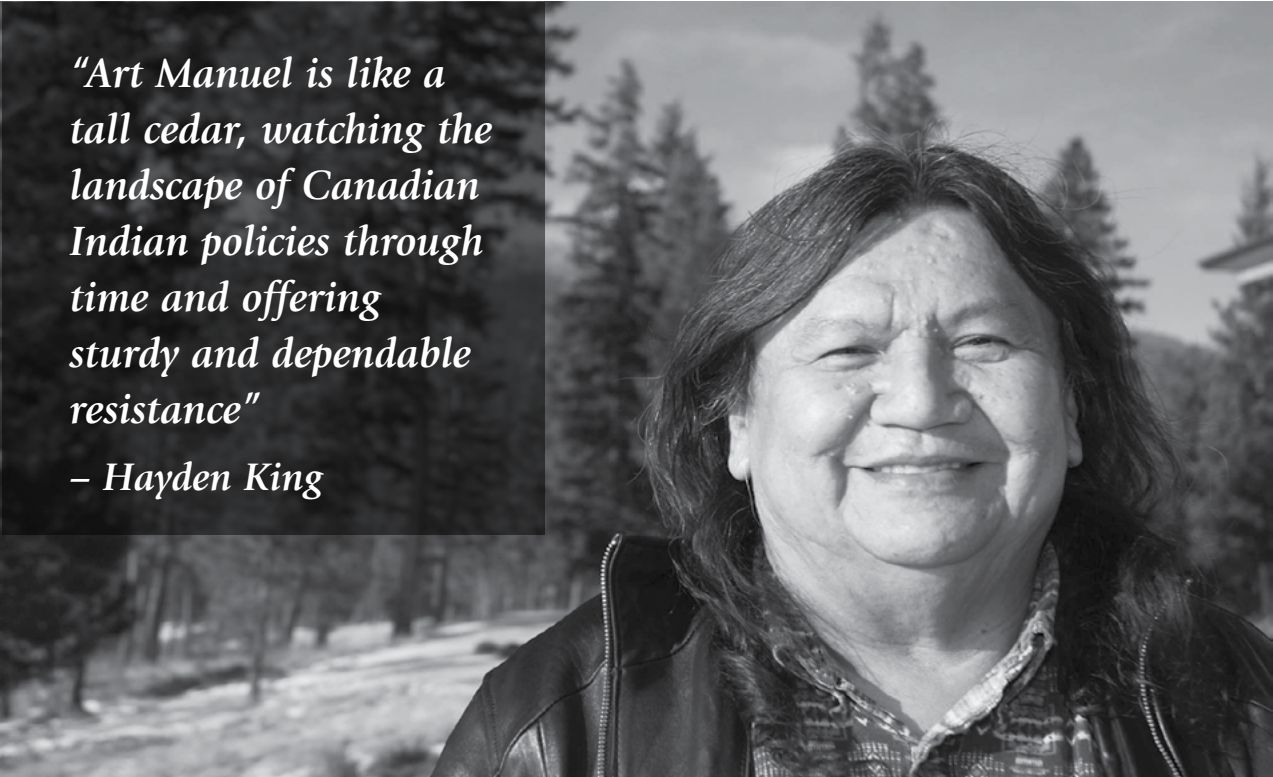


Photo: Arthur Manuel, Facebook

Canada has ignored these human rights recommendations because Canada's existing policy is to terminate Indigenous constitutional and legal rights and assimilate Indigenous peoples into Canada as a settler state.

The United Nations human rights bodies under the human rights treaties like the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) have made many human rights recommendations to Canada. Canada has ignored these human rights recommendations because Canada's existing policy is to terminate Indigenous constitutional and legal rights and assimilate Indigenous peoples into Canada as a settler state.

I was an elected 0.2% Chief of my reserve for 8 years. I found out very early how futile it is to tinker with programs and services within the 0.2% land base. Canada and the provinces have never seriously wanted to increase the land base of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and Indigenous Peoples have always had to depend on the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) to put pressure on the government to address the land issues of Indigenous Peoples. In this regard the SCC has also been very slow and expensive. The SCC only found Aboriginal Title in one case after 147 years after Canada's confederation. In 2014, the SCC found the Tsilhqot'in people have Aboriginal Title over 1,750 square kilometers.

Everyone needs to take

into consideration that Canada is the second largest country in the world with a population of 35 million people of which one million are Indigenous. British Columbia is as large as California, Oregon and Washington States combined, which have a population of more than 40 million people, and BC has a population of only 4.6 million people of which 200,000 are Indigenous people. In Canada the size, population, constitutional and legal framework could accommodate fundamental change in expanding the land base of Indigenous Peoples from 0.2% to a size that could accommodate our right to self-determination.

The new land-base has to be based on the human rights of Indigenous Peoples to enjoy self-determination as Indigenous nations. These land-bases need to be large enough to protect our languages, cultures, laws and economies. Canadians must accept that the existing 0.2% model does not work. That fundamental increase must be made to accommodate Aboriginal and Treaty rights to land. These larger land-bases will ultimately be part of Canada's economy. It will provide Indigenous Peoples with the right to make and influence economic development choices because of our increased governance over our larger land base.

These are the broad fundamental arrangements that need to be interpreted in the

context of our international right to self-determination as set out in Article 3 of UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Article 1 of the ICCPR and ICESCR. The Supreme Court of Canada must understand the international context of our Aboriginal and Treaty Rights as the grounds to decolonize Canada. The Supreme Court of Canada must take a broader view of these rights and it is up to the executive branches of Canada and provinces to manifest these legal directions in terms of consistent policies on Canada's constitution and land rights of Indigenous Peoples which were set out in section 35(1) in Canada's Constitution 1982.

These broader issues are going to manifest themselves in the struggle of Indigenous Peoples to find land settlements in British Columbia and to come to some decision regarding climate change and the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Expansion project. Canada's existing Indigenous land policies have been a failure in British Columbia and across the country. It is apparent that the Justin Trudeau government is trying to circumvent dealing with the 0.2% problem by giving more money for programs and services. This may help our Band Administrations to bandage up the 0.2% system but it will not address the root cause of the poverty the 0.2% system generates day-after-day in

our families.

The first step is to repudiate the concepts behind the Colonial Doctrines of Discovery and recognize that every Indigenous nation in Canada has underlying title to their entire territory. Plus recognize we have exclusive rights to a land base starting from 3–5 million acres so we can protect our language, culture, laws and economy. The United States was much more open in giving tribes larger Indian Reserves than Canada. The large reserves in the USA provide a greater economic independence for the tribes, but they are still part of the USA economies. Canadians need to realize that we must embark on a new direction after 150 years of colonization of Indigenous Peoples. It must be a system based on the international human rights of Indigenous peoples as nations.

I believe that under the existing colonial system in Canada, Indigenous Peoples are not Canadian because of the systemic impoverishment we are forced live in because we are alienated from our traditional territories. If we accept colonization as a foundation of our relationship to Canada we are endorsing our own impoverishment. You cannot have reconciliation under the colonial 0.2% Indian Reserve System. It is impossible. Nothing can justify that kind of human degradation. The land issue must be addressed before reconciliation can begin.

I WILL SURVIVE

Roua Aljied

My name's Roua Aljied, I am an immigrant settler living on unceded, unsundered Algonquin territory. As a poet I perform under the name Philosi-fire, but today I'm just writing as Roua. I spent the last week trying to come up with a clever way of saying how I feel in a poem, but I just couldn't be clever because I'm tired. I'm tired, and I'm afraid. And I'm even more tired of being told that my fear is not valid, or that we are not entitled to march because he's already been elected, as if that's ever stopped us before.

On November 8th I was scared, but not as afraid as I am today. Back then I was remembering that Black, Indigenous, and people of colour have overcome oppression at the hands of white supremacy for centuries, so we were going to survive this too. But now I'm realizing that not all of us did survive. Many Indigenous people did not survive when the colonizers first came to this land. Not all survived the residential school system. Not all survived the 60's scoop. Many Africans did not survive

when they were stolen from their own land. Not all survived the Jim Crow period. Not all survived the civil rights movement and like clockwork one of us won't survive in another 28 hours. So who gets to survive the revolution? Is it the 53% of white women who voted for Trump, or the remaining who will promise you they didn't but still be protected by their privilege.

I'm not marching because I want to see a new president because regardless of who's in that position people who look like me are going to die, and that's what people in positions of power and privilege never seem to understand. I'm standing here today because resistance is the only way to survive when your existence is constantly being attacked. Many of us immigrants or refugees would not even be here if home was safe enough to return to. We came here to survive, so why would we stop trying now. My parents will tell me about Sudan before the dictators came into power and years later they still want to return. I'm not sure they always realize the Sudan they remember isn't the same as the one that exists today. I



Photo: Angela Lafond

am afraid that in 20 years I will have to tell my own children that the world was never great, but because of what led to yesterday's event the world they're living in will be even safer than the one I was born into.

I'm not going to spend any time trying to convince his supporters that I am worthy of empathy, that I am human, or that I am like

them. Because I am not like them. My heart is not full of hatred for people who have not done me wrong, so they can continue to rally, but we will march in greater numbers. They can attack, but we will continue to resist. Because my revolution started the moment I was born and I'm going to continue to do the one thing that America hates most. I will survive.

WOMEN'S MARCH
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Yesterday, I spent the whole day crying because it finally became real, I will not go to the United States in the next four years," she said. "I didn't feel safe before, I don't feel safe now."

Susan Kirkpatrick, a grandmother who held a sign that stated "What Meryl Said," voiced concerns for younger people and for people she works with.

"The reason I'm marching is because I work in community health and I work with a lot of women whose voices cannot be heard," said Kirkpatrick.

"I will talk to all the women in my community who couldn't be here. They're women of colour, LGBT women who are frightened to come so I'm going to tell them what we did today."

Tanya Ruiter, who held a sign of a "narcissist's

prayer" expressed a fear about her father being a Trump supporter.

"I don't know how anyone with two daughters could look at him and think that's a good guy."

Ruiter's friend, Crystal Patterson, added that all people deserve respect.

"We want to support feminism and equal rights. Everybody deserves a say and it shouldn't just be old, white, rich men."

The current media trend has been to put a focus on the fact that more people attended the Women's March in Washington than President Donald Trump's inauguration — which also had fewer people than former President Barack Obama's inaugurations in 2012 and 2008. However, that should never overshadow the personal and political reasons, such as those above, that brought these people out in force.



Photo: Rebecca Riley

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CUPE 4600 STRIKE VOTE

All Teaching Assistants and Contract Instructors are encouraged to

VOTE YES

Jan. 24th 10am-6pm
Jan. 25th 10am-6pm
Jan. 26th 10am-9:30pm

Minto building (entrance)
Loeb tunnels (2nd floor)

UniCentre Atrium
Richcraft Hall (Main floor)

www.cupe4600.ca

CAMPUS

FRONT-LOADING TUITION

CUPE 4600 Battles Admin at the Bargaining Table

Daniel Huang

In August 2016, CUPE 4600 — the union representing teaching assistants and contract instructors at Carleton University — began bargaining for new collective agreements with management. Negotiations between the parties are ongoing and steady progress has been made. However, on Dec. 15, 2016, Carleton requested a provincially appointed conciliation officer to assist in negotiations. This indicates that Carleton wishes to conclude negotiations quickly.

CUPE 4600 shares this wish with Carleton but it will staunchly defend the welfare of its members. For

teaching assistants (TAs) who bargain with the university independently from the contract instructors in CUPE 4600, the major issue at stake is a mechanism that helps keep tuition fee increases at bay, the so-called Tuition Increase Assistance (TIA).

For many CUPE 4600 members, TA wages largely offset the cost of tuition. As the vast majority of TAs are graduate students, the lion’s share of a TA’s salary returns to the university’s coffers as tuition payments. What little is left of a TA’s salary is meant to feed and shelter the student employee as they complete their program. The average net income for a TA amounts to around

\$1,500 per year.

While CUPE 4600 can fight for the pay rates and benefits of its members, the union has no say over the amount of tuition Carleton charges. In 1996, a semester in a Master of Arts program cost \$1,472; twenty years later, the cost is \$3,647.

One of the ways CUPE 4600 tries to keep higher education affordable is to protect its members from the yearly increases in tuition. Thus, one of the most significant concerns for teaching assistants is the TIA, which is meant to protect TAs from tuition increases while they are employed at Carleton.

The TIA is only available to a TA after their first year

of employment. It is designed to compensate TAs for tuition increases since their starting date. Since its inception, the TIA has been made increasingly complicated to calculate. CUPE 4600 maintains that Carleton has manipulated the tuition schedule to try and hide the increases appearing on a TA’s fee statement by adding extra costs to the first year so that overall tuition increases are maintained at around five per cent annually. This is what is described as “front-loaded” tuition in that expected annual increases are loaded onto the first year.

In 2015, CUPE 4600 filed a grievance against front-loaded tuition and the university paid back hundreds of thousands of dollars that had been withheld from TAs.

In this round of bargaining, the issue of front-loading has propped up again.

An update on Carleton’s Collective Bargaining Updates website says: “The university has tabled a proposal that would fully protect eligible teaching assistants from tuition increases from their second year of employment within their current program.” However, this statement is misleading.

The current tuition framework allows differentiation of fees based on one’s program and program year. The signif-

icant implication of this framework is that students in their first year of study will pay a different tuition fee compared to students in upper-year studies. The fact that Carleton has two different tuitions, one for first-year and one for upper-year, allows the university to perform accounting tricks that distort the actual increase of tuition fees and hold back protections bestowed by the TIA.

The most significant of these tricks is in the formula for calculating tuition fee increases. The formula for calculating increases to the first-year tuition fee is simple and predictable. The increase is the difference between the current year and the previous year’s first-year tuition fee.

Now, calculating for increases of upper-year tuition leans more toward obfuscation rather than simplicity. Here, the increase in tuition is the difference in tuition that students will pay when they move from their first-year to upper-year of studies. Carleton’s proposal will reduce the TIA to a system that would be capped regardless of how much tuition has increased while a TA works at Carleton. Put simply, upper-year tuition can increase as much as the administration wants it to so long as it does not exceed first-year tuition rates. Under this framework, Carleton can thus report that

there was no upper-year tuition increase, in spite of ceaselessly front-loading tuition.

In 2016, Carleton reported a five per cent tuition increase to the first-year tuition of a full-time domestic student in their Master’s of Engineering program, from \$3,127 to \$3,283 per term. In the same report, Carleton claimed a zero per cent increase to the upper-year tuition, even though the fee increased from \$2,979 to \$3,127 (a five per cent increase).

Under Carleton’s proposed TIA system, no student is protected from the increase in tuition in the year they enter university and all TAs enrolled in two-year programs will not receive protection from tuition increases.

Carleton proposed this new TIA along with other monetary issues, then filed for conciliation before CUPE 4600 had a chance to respond. When the parties meet again, it will be in front of the conciliator and CUPE 4600 will present its own TIA and monetary proposals to Carleton.

CUPE 4600 has represented the TAs of Carleton since 1979 and has negotiated over 15 collective agreements with Carleton without a strike or lockout and the union hopes that this round of bargaining will end in security for the welfare of the union and public education in general.

For many CUPE 4600 members, TA wages largely offset the cost of tuition. As the vast majority of TAs are graduate students, the lion’s share of a TA’s salary returns to the university’s coffers as tuition payments. What little is left of a TA’s salary is meant to feed and shelter the student employee as they complete their program. The average net income for a TA amounts to around \$1,500 per year.

SMALL VICTORY HIGHLIGHTS LARGER ISSUES AT UOTTAWA

Library regains journals, but communicating with BoG still an issue

Adam Strömbergsson-DeNora

The Association of Professors of the University of Ottawa (APUO) declared on Nov. 30, 2016, that “budget[s] are about priorities.” The not-so-implicit message is that the University of Ottawa’s Board of Governors does not “prioritize the quality of education and our ability to pursue research in the public interest.” The APUO’s point is fair, but overblown — University research is typically conducted in the private interest of individual academics.

This private interest is the point made time and again during meetings of the Senate and its Executive Committee. When the Senate called on the Board to rescind its cuts on Oct. 31, 2016, it did so out of concern for the quality of graduate education and the quality of professors’ research. An update delivered to the Senate on Nov. 28 saw the administration announce that it had created a committee to look into the library cuts, but gave no signal that the cuts would be

rescinded. This committee, along with uOttawa chief librarian Leslie Weir, has since engaged with the publishers to curb rising costs to accommodate financial pressures. The journals have, pending negotiations, been re-instated and uOttawa staff and students continue to have access.

The wider issue of miscommunication — or, in many cases, the sheer lack of communication — between uOttawa’s Board of Governors and the university’s stakeholders, regarding budget cuts, is far from being resolved. A large part of the issue is one of marketing. The necessity of budget cuts is not made clear to academics, perhaps prompting the APUO’s response that budgets are about priorities. Indeed, if the Board must prioritize cutting the library budget, it might also prioritize the act of informing the Senate and Faculty Councils. Doing so demonstrates a respect for these bodies and the academics that they represent.

On Dec. 6, 2016, the Chair of the Senate’s Executive Committee, Vice-Pres-

ident Academic and Provost, Michel Laurier, informed the Committee that the University’s Administrative Committee did not know how to proceed with the Senate’s Oct. 31 motion. The Vice-President, Governance, John Currie, clarified that the Senate’s motion was directed to the Board: it was advisory. Timothy Lethbridge, a senator and the mover of the motion, clarified that his motion expressed a political will in the Senate to move away from library cuts. A vibrant discussion ensued as to the intent of Professor Lethbridge’s motion. Professors and students in the committee agreed that both parties would be hit hard by the cuts. In short, the lifeblood of the University would be affected.

The Board’s silence begs the question: What did it do with the advisory motion? If the University’s executive arm, the Administrative Committee, did not know what to make of the Senate’s motion, is the Board—not its Chair or Vice-Chair, but the full Board—fully informed of the academic community’s response to

the announced cuts?

The Senate’s ire, replicated more stridently by the APUO, evidences the disconnect between the Board of Governors and the University community over which it lords. Professors and students sit on the Board. The majority of members, however, are drawn from outside the University. The Board’s administration is competent and informed: members take their fiduciary duty seriously. The reasoning behind the Board’s decisions is not effectively communicated to students and professors. It is not even communicated to the Senate when its political will is clearly expressed.

Between the Oct. 31 and Dec. 6 Senate meetings, the Board’s Executive Committee convened on Nov. 22, 2016. Unfortunately, that meeting is always held in secret session. The full Board’s agenda for Dec. 12 does not mention the library cuts, although an update was included in the President’s report. The two-minute update said simply that the Library is negotiating with the pub-

The wider issue of miscommunication — or, in many cases, the sheer lack of communication — between uOttawa’s Board of Governors and the university’s stakeholders, regarding budget cuts, is far from being resolved.

lishers for sustainable rates. The cuts, however, remain in effect. They are only temporarily postponed pending the outcome of negotiations.

This lack of communi-

cation between uOttawa’s governing legislative bodies is disturbing. Whether it wishes to or not, the Board appears to flaunt its authority when a more diplomatic avenue is always open.

REPEAL THE ONTARIO SAFE STREETS ACT

LAUREN SCOTT



Photo: Coalition for the Repeal of Ontario's Safe Streets Act, change.org



Art: Soup 2 Nuts MediaAct

“If you are homeless, you are exponentially more likely to be a victim of crime than if you are housed,” Gaetz says. “The irony is that we have something called the Safe Streets Act that creates more harm for homeless people who are already very vulnerable. It’s upside-down logic.”

“We don’t like that you’re homeless, so we’ll punish you for being homeless and next time you won’t be homeless.”

This is the backwards logic of the Ontario Provincial government’s *Safe Streets Act* (SSA), as explained by Toronto lawyer and activist Joanna Nefs. “You can’t fine someone out of addiction and poverty,” she says.

The SSA has ostensibly criminalized homelessness and made it nearly impossible for the homeless in Ontario to occupy public space.

In 1999, the Mike Harris Conservative provincial government enacted the *Safe Streets Act* as a direct response to the visibility of “squeegee kids.” This came after a series of mainstream news aired reports of drivers being “assaulted” by homeless and street-involved people who would work in high-traffic areas and clean car windows for money while vehicles were stopped.

Jim Flaherty, who has had a troubled history of overlooking social justice concerns over the course of his lifetime in politics, was the Ontario Attorney General when the *Safe Streets Act* became law.

“Our government believes that all people in Ontario have the right to drive on the roads, walk down the street or go to public places without being or feeling intimidated,” Flaherty said in 2000.

Toronto’s former Deputy-Mayor Doug Holyday proclaimed to the CBC in 2011 that citizens “shouldn’t have to tolerate this nonsense” and that we as a society should “give the police the power to clear these people out of the way.”

According to Canadian Observatory On Homelessness (COH) research, in the decade since the SSA was enacted, squeegeeing as a form of income is nearly invisible. In 1999, 29 per cent of COH’s street youth sample

reported panhandling and squeegeeing as a means of earning money. Compare this figure to 2009 when less than three per cent reported that they actively engage in squeegeeing and 9.7 per cent report panhandling as a main source of income.

Today, the SSA, which in its intent was trying to address aggressive panhandling and violent crime (or at least its *visibility*), is predominantly used against non-violent petty offenses. In fact, 80 per cent of SSA tickets are for nonviolent offenses such as trespassing.

The fines range from \$60 to \$500 per ticket. The COH estimates that in Toronto alone, city police handed out more than \$4 million in fines between 2000 and 2010. Incidentally, it also cost the Toronto Police \$1 million to enforce the SSA.

What happens when police issue tickets to people who cannot conceivably pay them? Exactly what you’d expect. They go unpaid. According to a 2014 study by the COH, 99 per cent of SSA tickets go unpaid.

“If you’re issuing tickets to homeless people, is there not something else you could be doing?” asked York University professor Stephen Gaetz.

Gaetz is the director of the COH and the Homeless Hub and president of the charity Raising the Roof. He argues that the *Safe Streets Act*, in its backwards logic, does the opposite of what its name suggests.

“If you are homeless, you are exponentially more likely to be a victim of crime than if you are housed,” Gaetz says. “The irony is that we have something called the *Safe Streets Act* that creates more harm for homeless people who are already very vulnerable. It’s upside-down logic.”

According to Corinne Sauve, a peer support worker at Youth Services Bureau Ottawa, the SSA pushes street-involved and homeless

people out of public spaces and into greater danger. This disproportionately affects street youth as well as young people of colour.

“I’ve heard a lot about youth being harassed by the police and a lot of that was because of where they were,” Sauve says. “Basically if you’re not in a dark alley and you’re panhandling somewhere, you’re not in the right place.”

“We are just pushing them back into marginalization and danger when we don’t allow them access to public space the way ‘normal’ people are.”

In October, Gerry Williams, a formerly homeless man living in Toronto had accumulated \$65,000 worth of tickets for “offenses” that were unavoidable in his case. Williams, who is recovering from a drug addiction, was given tickets for minor offenses such as trespassing, public intoxication and panhandling.

The Fair Change Legal Clinic represented Williams in his appeal of over 430 minor offenses. They are currently representing 15 other Toronto residents (with 10 others on the waitlist) who are fighting similar tickets that they cannot reasonably pay for.

Joanna Nefs is a lawyer and the founder of Fair Change. She spoke with the *Leveller* about what it was like fighting Williams’ case, the single largest case that Fair Change has ever taken on.

Yet, there are others who owe even more than Williams. Some are in so much debt that they have decided to give up.

“Gerry is not even the worst. I know someone who has \$300,000 worth of tickets,” Nefs says. “He won’t let me fight them because he says it’s not even worth it.”

University of Guelph professor William O’Grady is an expert on legal responses to homelessness. He says that the current legal response to homelessness is not as effective as the social infrastruc-

ture we should be building.

“Homelessness should not be a legal issue. It should be a social justice issue, it should be a housing issue, it should be a human rights issue but it should not be a legal issue,” he says. “Giving a ticket to someone doesn’t take any time at all but building affordable housing does. Politicians like quick fixes, they don’t like long-term solutions.”

Ontario’s former Attorney General Michael Bryant has been vocal in speaking out against the SSA. He said the law “criminalizes homelessness” and says he feels a great sense of personal guilt for not repealing the law while in office.

“I failed. I am accountable. I have no excuses,” Bryant said at a news conference in 2014.

Bryant, along with O’Grady, Nefs and Gaetz are founding members of the Coalition for the Repeal of Ontario’s Safe Streets Act (CROSSA). Nefs says that their efforts have since stalled, as there seems to be no interest from the provincial government to act.

“It’s clear that it’s not a priority for the provincial government. We had meetings with them and they said they would have follow-up meetings and those meetings just never materialized,” said Nefs.

O’Grady says that this means we, as a society need to stand up to this injustice. While sharing stories like Williams’ \$65,000 of tickets can be helpful, it will take more than just reading. More than just little newspapers like this one. It will take **action**.

“I think it needs to be more than a one-by-one basis...If it is more organized, then there would be more power behind it than just a paper picking up on the odd case where this happens,” says O’Grady. “I think if there was a collective action in support of this, it would turn more heads.”

If you or someone you know has been affected by the *Safe Streets Act*, please contact the Ticket Defense Program Ottawa to fight the unfair fines in the Ottawa Area. 613-744-2892 x 5366, with bi-weekly drop-ins at the Ottawa Mission and Centretown Community Health Centre.

They also offer free legal consultation to anyone looking to fight tickets they may have received, on the following dates:

February 10th

12:00-14:00 Shepherds of Good Hope // 233 Murray Street
14:30-16:30 Salvation Army // 171 George Street

February 17th

11:00-13:00 Odawa Centre // 510 Rideau Street
13:30-15:30 Centre 454 // 454 King Edward Street

February 24th

12:30-14:30 Centre 507 // 507 Bank Street

You can also contact your local Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) and ask for the repeal of the SSA.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi, MPP (Ottawa Centre) 613-722-6414 or ynaqvi.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org

Hon. Bob Chiarelli, MPP (Ottawa West—Nepean) 613-721-8075 or bchiarelli.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org

Hon. Nathalie Des Rosiers, MPP (Ottawa—Vanier) 613-744-4484
NDesRosiers.mpp.CO@liberal.ola.org or NDesRosiers.mpp@liberal.ola.org

Hon. John Fraser, MPP (Ottawa South) 613-736-9573 or Jfraser.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde, MPP (Ottawa—Orléans) 613-834-8679 or mflalonde.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org

Hon. Jack MacLaren, MPP (Carleton—Mississippi Mills) 613-599-3000 jack.maclarenco@pc.ola.org

Hon. Lisa MacLeod, MPP (Nepean—Carleton) 613-823-2116 or lisa.macleod@pc.ola.org

État du monde : diagnostic et perspectives pour 2017



Photo: International Detention Coalition, Flickr

Alexandre Lévesque

Cet article est paru sur *ricochet.media* le 17 janvier 2017

Alors que les cendres soulevées par le passage destructeur de l'«*annus horribilis*» entament lentement leur descente, il semble tout naturel de se projeter vers l'année subséquente avec espoir. Après tout, comment 2017 pourrait possiblement être pire que sa prédécesseuse? Cet optimisme est des plus compréhensibles. Il relève davantage de l'indispensable instinct de survie que de la déplorable naïveté. Or, le doux confort de l'illusion est un luxe inabordable pour tout esprit alerte et ouvert sur le monde. Ami-e lecteur-ice, réfrène cette puérile envie de réconfort, car 2017 s'annonce tumultueuse.

D'emblée, une telle appréhension découle du lourd climat politique international qui sévit actuellement. Si 2016 a comporté son lot d'événements déroutants, force est de constater que son crépuscule ne signifie pas pour autant l'interruption de leurs impacts réels, qui se matérialiseront plutôt, dans certains cas, dès l'aurore de 2017. On pense notamment à l'entrée en fonction officielle de Donald Trump ou aux démarches pour concrétiser le *Brexit*. Toutefois, au-delà de tous les épisodes marquants que nous pourrions également mentionner – le coup d'État en Turquie, la destruction d'Alep, les attentats terroristes, etc. –, l'héritage le plus crucial à retenir de cette année consiste davantage en un phénomène global : l'érosion sans précédent de l'ordre mondial tel que nous le connaissons depuis les années 1990.

UN PASSÉ GLACIAL QUI RESSURGIT

Au moment d'écrire ces lignes, l'administration Obama vient d'annoncer de sévères mesures au relatif de guerre froide visant à châtier le gouvernement russe pour son ingérence alléguée dans la campagne électorale de 2016. En re-

vanche, le président Vladimir Poutine a affirmé avoir écarté la possibilité de réciproquer les sanctions et se dit enthousiaste à l'idée d'un nouveau départ pour les relations russo-américaines dès l'inauguration présidentielle de Trump. Ce dernier, rejetant catégoriquement les conclusions des services secrets américains sur les cyberattaques russes, a applaudi cette paisible réaction. Toutefois, derrière ces délicatesses diplomatiques, le portrait de la situation est nettement plus alarmant.

D'une part, si un président Trump voulait renverser les sanctions, il se heurterait irrémédiablement à une levée de boucliers de la part de son propre parti, les sénateurs républicains John McCain et Lindsey Graham ayant même promu un durcissement des mesures punitives. En outre, les 35 diplomates expulsés et les 2 sites fermés par la Maison-Blanche étaient, selon elle, liés aux services secrets russes et donc potentiellement nuisibles à ses intérêts sécuritaires. Considérant également les manifestations inédites des Américains après son élection, comment Trump pourrait-il sérieusement songer à faire marche arrière une fois au pouvoir? Il paraît ainsi évident que le risque politique d'une telle initiative surpasserait les bénéfices espérés sur la relation entre Washington et Moscou. Décidément, Obama a préparé un accueil des plus épineux à son successeur.

D'autre part, fruit de son indignation contre les dernières activités militaires de l'OTAN en Europe de l'Est, Poutine a déclaré, le 22 décembre, son intention de renforcer son arsenal nucléaire pour le rendre apte à percer n'importe quel bouclier antimissile. Cette fois-ci, Trump n'a pas hésité à s'opposer au chef du Kremlin, laissant entendre que les États-Unis emboîteront le pas dans la course à l'armement. Que faut-il en penser? D'un point de vue réaliste, les installations antimissiles atlantistes compromettent la capacité de dissuasion

nucléaire des Russes. Cette surenchère nucléaire était donc relativement prévisible. Il ne s'agit pas ici de condamner l'un ou l'autre des empires, chacun réagissant aux provocations de son adversaire. Or, nul besoin d'étudier les relations internationales pour saisir à quel point est redoutable la possession mutuelle d'une arme d'annihilation aussi absolue qu'impossible à contrer, et ce, par deux grandes puissances aux antipodes et reconnues pour leur politique étrangère musclée. D'autant plus que le dirigeant de Moscou a démontré une imprévisibilité agressive à maintes reprises, tandis que le caractère impétueux du prochain occupant de la Maison-Blanche n'est guère plus rassurant, au contraire.

Cela dit, ne nous confondons pas pour autant dans le pessimisme à outrance. Le scénario d'une guerre nucléaire demeure et demeure longtemps hautement improbable. L'objectif poursuivi en discutant de cette crispation symptomatique de la relation bilatérale est plutôt de faire état d'une des facettes majeures de l'effritement de l'ordre mondial en place. Cette désagrégation ne peut toutefois être comprise sans discuter d'un autre acteur incontournable qui, à l'instar de la Russie, profite du désengagement international des États-Unis d'Obama pour proposer une vision alternative du système global.

LE TROISIÈME PÔLE ASIATIQUE

Forte de sa croissance spectaculaire depuis sa libéralisation économique des années 1980, la Chine jouit désormais d'une influence dominante sur la scène internationale, en raison notamment de son modèle diplomatique sans attaches qui suscite un intérêt général grandissant. Celui-ci consiste, par opposition au modèle occidental et libéral, à faire affaire avec des gouvernements – surtout du tiers monde – sans conditions préalables ni jugements de valeur sur

leurs politiques intérieures. Qu'il s'agisse d'un État dictatorial ou oligarchique, petit ou grand, sous-développé ou industrialisé : tous sont de potentiels candidats aux yeux de l'Empire du Milieu. Sa position prépondérante sur l'échiquier mondial semble d'ailleurs durablement consolidée avec ses projets titanesques que sont la Banque asiatique d'investissement dans les infrastructures – rivale du FMI dominé par l'Occident – et la Nouvelle route de la soie.

Si la politique étrangère du dragon chinois fut longtemps passive pour permettre son réveil, l'intensification récente de ses velléités territoriales controversées en Mer de Chine ainsi que ses investissements militaires substantiels suggèrent, entre autres indicateurs, une volonté claire de durcir son action internationale. À quoi faut-il s'attendre en 2017? Rien n'est moins sûr. Un incident en Mer de Chine, somme toute probable en regard des nombreux exercices militaires multiétatiques qui s'y donnent, pourrait potentiellement déclencher une dégringolade armée si les dirigeants concernés perdent leur sang-froid. Un simple accident suffit. Il est permis de douter que la Chine privilégierait une réponse violente advenant un tel scénario. Le pacifisme constitue un des piliers de sa politique étrangère depuis des décennies. Cependant, qui donc, déjà, s'apprête à gouverner un acteur étatique de premier plan dans ce conflit territorial et qui détient la plus puissante armée de l'Histoire? Prodige d'un destin à l'humour sombre, Trump est déjà à couteaux tirés avec Pékin dans la foulée d'un certain appel téléphonique en provenance de Taïwan. La patrouille récente du porte-avion chinois à quelques kilomètres seulement de l'île de Formose est lourd de sens quant aux tensions actuelles.

ET AILLEURS?

Enfin, histoire d'enrichir par rafales ce portrait préoccupant, mentionnons également l'appui inconditionnel et réactionnaire de Trump envers Israël, qui contribuera vraisemblablement à l'enlissement des conflits sanglants au Moyen-Orient. Quant au dénouement de la tragédie syrienne, il signifie non seulement une victoire prestigieuse pour la Russie et l'Iran, mais aussi un nouvel échec cuisant des Nations Unies. Plus localement, les mouvements d'extrême droite auront encore le vent dans les voiles, surtout en Europe où ils continueront de voguer sur les eaux troubles de l'euroscepticisme et de la xénophobie.

PERSPECTIVES FINALES

Si 2016 fut une année consternante, ses événements affligeants sont, par-dessus tout, le prélude plausible d'une nouvelle ère. La pérennité du système international libéral et unipolaire, consolidé sous l'égide des États-Unis depuis quelques décennies, semble de plus en plus compromise. En témoigne particulièrement l'élection par les Américains d'un pourfendeur résolu des principes libéraux tels que le respect du droit international, la coopération interétatique, le recours aux institutions multilatérales pour gérer les conflits, etc. Jamais ces valeurs, pourtant instituées pour protéger l'humanité d'elle-même en réaction aux massacres des grandes guerres, ne furent autant contestées soit de l'intérieur, par le chauvinisme occidental, soit de l'extérieur, avec la montée en puissance d'États réfractaires.

Deux certitudes se dégagent de cette réflexion. Premièrement, bien que

le bouleversement discuté soit indéniable, la forme, le *modus operandi* et le moment exact de son aboutissement sont fort nébuleux. Une transition pacifique, quoique improbable, n'est certainement pas exclue. Deuxièmement, le système international libéral, malgré le fait qu'il repose sur un idéal vertueux qu'il ne faut jamais écarter, est tout sauf une apogée. Les multiples exactions de ses promoteurs – pensons notamment au fiasco en Irak –, ses dysfonctions telles que les déconvenues onusiennes, ou encore le succès du modèle chinois en attestent. Tout empire finit inévitablement par s'effondrer. Or, comment se réjouir du changement lorsque celui-ci est incarné, d'un côté, par des régimes reconnus pour leur conception particulière des droits de la personne ou, de l'autre, par les promoteurs de l'isolationnisme?

Sous un autre angle relativement plus optimiste, peut-être qu'il serait dans l'intérêt du Canada d'éviter de diaboliser les régimes éloignés de ses valeurs comme le veut la tradition libérale, une pratique qui semble antagoniser davantage les États entre eux plutôt que de favoriser le bien commun. Sans renier ses précieuses alliances occidentales, une diplomatie aussi neutre que possible lui permettrait, face aux futurs conflits potentiels, d'exercer à nouveau son rôle internationaliste de médiateur qui était tant sollicité pendant la Guerre froide. Certes, une telle retenue pourrait être considérée comme immorale. Mais pour la puissance moyenne qu'est le Canada, quel autre choix que le compromis peut-elle vraiment envisager face à l'horizon orageux qui se dessine?

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.

Le Leveller étend ses branches!

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

The Leveller

A LEVELLER LOVED

IN MEMORIAM: MAT NELSON

MAT NELSON – FORMER *LEVELLER* EDITOR AND CO-PRESIDENT OF CUPE 4600, CARLETON PHD CANDIDATE, OTTAWA ACTIVIST, FRIEND, AND COMRADE – DIED ON JANUARY 17, 2017, AT THE AGE OF 35, AFTER A LONG ILLNESS.

MAT WAS A LEVELLER. HE SAW WHAT NEEDED TEARING DOWN AND WHAT NEEDED BUILDING UP. HE SOUGHT TO BRING DOWN THE STRUCTURES THAT CAST DARK SHADOWS ACROSS THIS WORLD. HE FOUND THE ROOTS BENEATH THE MUCK OF AGES AND BEGAN NURTURING THEM TO THE SURFACE, TO BLOOM AND LIVE FREE.

IN THE FOLLOWING REFLECTIONS, FORMER *LEVELLER* EDITORS PAY TRIBUTE TO A MAN WHO ENLIGHTENED, ENTERTAINED, AND ENERGIZED US.



DOUG NESBITT

I met Mat a decade ago when he got involved in anti-war and socialist activism on campus. He wasn't afraid to get his hands dirty. Armed with a petition or a syllabus, Mat was an effective activist and educator. I remember when we'd petition for troops out of Afghanistan and have to deal with the little tinpot Tories running around campus. He'd disarm them with a grin and a laugh, and proceed to win over the audience gathered around for the impromptu debate.

It was in those sprawling, rollicking discussions at Mike's Place where you experienced how deeply passionate Mat was about learn-

ERIN SEATTER

Mat's intellectual fervour didn't rest. A few years ago we went to Montreal's Osheaga music festival, and he brought a knapsack filled with books and articles. Astonished, I asked when he thought he was going to have a chance to read. Later he took to carrying a book by anarchist philosopher Peter Kropotkin in his pocket, ever ready to pull it out for a discussion of mutual aid.

At times, Mat was gregarious and silly. Full of jokes and pop culture quotes, he could work a crowd in a bar. But in other moments, Mat had a calming sense of stillness and capacity for reflection that riveted me. I peppered him with questions on academic trea-

SAMANTHA PONTING

I met Mat when we were members of the International Socialists and the Student Coalition Against War. It was the Bush era, and we were united in our vehement opposition to the imperialist wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Mat always looked back fondly on those times, and would reminisce about our occupation of the intersection of Sussex and Rideau and the "die-in" in front of the US Embassy.

Mat hated violence with every fibre of his being. He was disgusted by Islamophobia and the racist attack on civil liberties, as witnessed through the implementation of security certificates and the extradition order of Hassan Diab. He attended Hassan's hearings and wrote about them in the *Leveller*, letting the facts speak for themselves.

AJAY PARASRAM

I met Mat in an intellectual and activist space, a class called "Other Worlds, Other Globalizations" in 2006. I was not a particularly bright student, and listening to Mat's words about Foucault, Marx, and others whom I'd never heard of made my head spin. When I didn't understand what he was explaining, he'd steer the conversation towards something more immediately relatable: *Slayer*, *Seinfeld*, and *The Big Lebowski* more often than not.

We were classmates in study, friends in life, comrades in activism, co-conspirators in

DAVID TOUGH

I was very sad to hear that Mat Nelson had died, because he was a kind and thoughtful person who lived his life in pursuit of a better world, and, though I knew he'd been sick in the past, I expected he would live to have an important impact on the thinking of race in Canada through his dissertation-cum-book.

We met in early 2009 at Carleton, probably at Mike's Place as the *Leveller* was first coming together in the aftermath of the disastrous strike vote in the CUPE 4600 contract negotiations of that year. We had actually been in Politics at Trent at the same time, he as an undergrad and me as TA, and I had done my MA in Canadian Studies with Mat's brother

ing. I once lent him a pamphlet on the NDP from a Marxist perspective. A few years later, I saw the pamphlet in his apartment, with at least two-thirds covered in highlighter. I asked him why so much highlighter, and he laughed. “Those are the important parts!”

When I moved to Kingston in 2009, we stayed in touch. Mat sending video clips from *Kids in the Hall* and other absurdist comedy sketch shows was a common treat.

When I moved back to Ottawa for a year of union organizing work, I got to spend more precious time with Mat. Only then did I come to really appreciate how important he was to my own education—that rich, informal, collective learning we did together outside the classroom. We’d hang out at greasy spoons, or share

tises and historical events, and he responded with a rare and genuine patience and respect, which I often thought would distinguish him as a professor.

A passion for history, along with an abhorrence of war, violence, and oppression, came together in Mat’s academic work as he parsed Canadian history to understand how race and racism took shape in our country. He was thoughtful about what it meant to be a white man in this endeavour, and his appreciation of the importance of social location was exemplified in the interest he took in his family background. He loved talking about what particular relatives in Canadian history had done and what his family’s Quaker heritage meant. He spoke about it not with undiscerning pride, but with a measured assessment of

He donned a picket sign well. He was proud of his high school days, when he joined striking teachers on the line, forced out by then-premier Mike Harris. He later hit the picket lines in defence of OC Transpo bus drivers, postal workers, and Carleton’s campus security. When I started my master’s at Carleton, Mat was president of our TA union, CUPE 4600. I asked, “How do I get involved?” He said, with that wacky smile of his, “Well, you should become a steward!” He facilitated my entry into union activism, as I imagine was the case for many others.

Mat loved nerding out on radical politics. Once, Doug Nesbitt submitted a piece to the *Leveller* on hockey and community power, and Mat lost his shit. In the editors’ comments section, he wrote something like, “This is perfect. Dougie is amazing.” While the reaction wasn’t particularly useful in helping the team prepare the piece for publication, we laughed

independent journalism, and colleagues in academia at the boundaries of our student lives. I didn’t realize until far too late that for Mat, it would be the boundary of life itself. It strikes me as profoundly unfair that Mat will not be “corrupting the youth” in the important years of struggle to come, but it would not be an exaggeration to say that his contributions exceed what many can achieve in fuller lifetimes.

Our conversations in the last few years reflected where we were both at—the painstaking tail end of our PhDs, which were both grounded in colonial histories that kept us reeling from the crucial points of oppressive

Dan, but we were unaware of each other until Carleton. The following year we were in the Political Economy doctoral seminar with fellow Leveller Daniel Tubb, and that, I believe, is when I first heard of Mat’s research.

Mat and I first worked together closely on the Leveller editorial board in 2010-2011, which had an extremely effective but uniquely intense format: Erin Seatter, Sam Ponting, Mat Nelson and I would sit around Sam’s dining room table and go through articles word by word and sentence by sentence, often effectively re-writing copy collectively, and arguing out our editorial stance for hours and hours. In this often exasperating hothouse environment, Mat was as funny as he was well read and politically astute, and while all three were assets, the first was es-

cigarettes and coffee if I was working in Centretown near his apartment. In between his goofy jokes and puns we would talk about what we could do to rebuild an Ottawa workers’ movement, share our love for 1980s hardcore punk, and have long discussions about our formative years in the 1990s. Things would invariably descend into a back-and-forth of *Simpsons* and *Seinfeld* quotes.

I always loved how Mat got excited to talk about his doctoral work because we shared an odd passion for the history of class, race, and state formation in 19th-century Canada. He wanted us to write a People’s History of Canada when we finally finished our degrees, and I hope to accomplish this one day.

Losing Mat is damn hard. I miss him a lot.

where he came from.

Mat held many kinds of pain. He experienced severe physical agony and existential anguish, and he was also unsettled by the torment of the oppressed. His life was marked by brilliance, a true heart, and the pursuit of justice in a world unfit for many of us. “That being ahead of your time means suffering much,” wrote Otto René Castillo in a favourite poem of Mat’s. “Before the Scales, Tomorrow” points to the future impact of actions today, the triumphs we fight for that will emerge when we are no longer here, seen only by those who come after us. Now I see the poem as a reflection of Mat—he is gone, but the vivid meaning he brought into my world and others’ glows. I wish he could see it.

at Mat’s enthusiasm.

Mat’s fierce commitment to the working class gracefully aligned with his peaceful nature. He was kind, loving, and, as many have pointed out, absolutely hilarious. He loved to share comedy, always sending his friends YouTube clips. He knew we were living in an absurd world, and sometimes the theatrics of it all brought him bellows of laughter, from the character tropes on *Storage Wars* to the faulty logic of George Costanza.

He was incredibly humble for a man so brilliant, and he built connection with others effortlessly through his warm personality, openness, humour, and down-to-earth working-class swagger. Mat, your departure from this earth has left many of us heartbroken. You are so dearly loved, and we will honour you by embracing the beautiful struggle you’ve embodied.

continuity since the 19th century. He was always excited to deconstruct and never essentialized a single issue as many activists and scholars are inclined to do. He carried the burden of his genius with considerable grace, always generous, fiercely undisciplined, and brilliantly rhizomatic.

Mat wrote some of the finest investigative journalism pieces the *Leveller* has published, and lived a life of praxis. In closing, it seems appropriate to cite Marx’s 11th thesis on Feuerbach, which aptly describes the Mat I miss: “Philosophers have hitherto only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it.”

pecially valuable.

The importance of activism in Mat’s intellectual work was clear in the very syntax of his thinking. You see it in videos of Mat speaking, where he starts off remarking that what he’s saying is also being said by others. There’s a humility there, but it’s not just humility: it’s a placing of himself inside of a movement of thinkers. His thoughts aren’t his thoughts; they’re thoughts he’s carried for a while, in his mind and in his words; they began and they end as our thoughts, our shared thoughts of a better world.

His death is a loss not only because of what he brought to the world he lived in, but because of what he would have created in the future had he lived. He will be missed by a lot of people.



BLOOD OF EXTRACTION

Book Release Exposes Canadian Imperialism in Latin America

Sarah Nixon

From 2009 to May of 2014, at least 23 people were murdered in relation to conflicts with Canadian-based mining companies in Latin America. This is only one of many astounding facts revealed in Todd Gordon and Jeffery R. Webber's new book, *Blood of Extraction: Canadian Imperialism in Latin America*, published on Nov. 1, 2016. Gordon, Assistant Professor of Law and Society and Social Justice and Community Engagement at Wilfrid Laurier University authored *Imperialist Canada*, published in 2010, and Webber published *Red October: Left-Indigenous Struggles in Modern Bolivia* in 2011. Their new book exposes Canadian state and corporate imperialism in Latin America on a massive scale.

At a book launch on Jan. 11 in Ottawa, Gordon stressed that although Canada may not be an international superpower, its imperial interests are nonetheless formidable and undeniable. In fact, Gordon explained that although Canada places behind the United States as the second largest foreign investor in the Latin American economy, proportionally to the size of Canada's economy, we are investing much more heavily than our American counterparts. Alongside these foreign investments in mining comes the often violent suppression of human rights and extensive pollution of land and water supplies in the name of astronomical private profits.

Gordon and Webber explained in an email with the *Leveller* that they sought to

"develop a more systematic analysis of Canada as imperialist, showing the structural roots of Canadian imperialism, [and] its connect[ion] to the system of global capitalism" through the publication of this book. They also noted that "[m]any of the big Canadian companies violating Indigenous rights abroad got their start in Canada on Indigenous land. That provided the platform for them to grow in the first place and become internationally competitive companies." The link between settler colonialism at home and imperialism abroad is a key feature of the authors' analysis throughout the book.

In the book, the authors delve into Canadian mining projects in six Central and South American states: Bolivia, Peru, Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala and

"Many of the big Canadian companies violating Indigenous rights abroad got their start in Canada on Indigenous land. That provided the platform for them to grow in the first place and become internationally competitive companies."

-Todd Gordon and Jeffery Webber

Panama. Gordon and Webber place a significant focus on "the voices of people resisting Canadian practices in Latin America," revealed through dozens of interviews conducted across the continent. Those who oppose Canadian mining imperialism, therefore, are "not treated as passive victims but as active agents of resistance," as the authors explained.

To write the book, the authors relied upon Access to Information documents provided by the Canadian government. Gordon explained at the book launch

that these documents revealed an unanticipated level of collaboration between many government departments in order to facilitate and support Canadian corporate interests in Latin America, including Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, the Ministry of Natural Resources and even Health Canada.

When asked what Canadians can do in order to combat state and corporate imperialism in Latin America, Gordon and Webber responded by stating: "knowing that people are resisting Canadian practices abroad

is very important; and where possible forging links with them, finding ways of supporting their struggles. One thing at home is to support efforts to create legislation that provides meaningful accountability measures on Canadian companies that violate human and environmental rights abroad. That won't be done without a movement of people that can create sustained pressure on the government."

Copies of *Blood of Extraction* can be purchased at Octopus Books, 116 Third Avenue or online at fernwoodpublishing.ca.

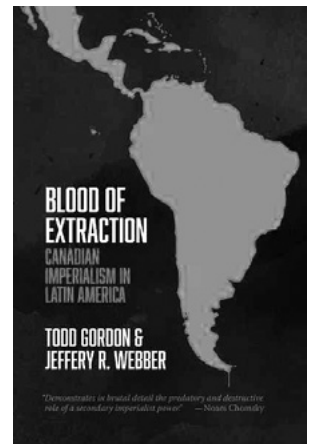


Photo: stopthegreatlakesnucleardump.com

"ALMOST UNIMAGINABLE"

Nuclear waste dump disaster in the making

Travis Poland

Nuclear power generation accounts for 60 per cent of Ontario's power supply, according to the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO). While nuclear power is often touted as a clean and efficient source of electricity, there is one problem with this approach: nuclear waste.

A proposed nuclear waste storage site is one kilometre inland from Lake Huron beside the Bruce Nuclear Generating plant near the town of Kincardine. Currently, the development plans — put forth by Ontario Power Generation (OPG) — is under review by Minister of the Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna and there is no proposed start date for construction.

The site, known as a Deep Geological Repository (DGR), is drawing staunch opposition from locals, Indigenous communities and groups like Stop The Great Lakes Nuclear Dump Inc (ST-GLND). Spokesperson for ST-GLND Beverly Fernandez has made appearances at numerous panels and consultations concerning the proposed site and the group has also created an online petition directed toward McKenna to enforce

their concerns of having a nuclear storage facility so close to one of the continent's largest sources of fresh water.

"We are opposed to the project because OPG plans to bury and abandon their radioactive nuclear waste about a kilometre from the Great Lakes, the drinking water for 40 million people in two countries," Fernandez told the *Leveller* via email. "No scientist or geologist can provide us with a 100,000 year guarantee that this nuclear waste dump will not leak and contaminate the Great Lakes."

OPG, however, maintains the site's safety.

The DGR would bury nuclear waste for long-term storage within limestone 680 meters below ground, with the hopes that the natural rock formations will aid in creating a secure storage environment.

Though it will not be housing high-level nuclear waste — such as spent fuel rods — the DGR will be used to contain intermediate- and low-level nuclear waste. Intermediate-level nuclear waste — such as old reactors and air filters — has been exposed to radiation or contains radioactive material that requires isolation and

containment beyond several hundred years, according to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. However, most of the waste will be low-level, such as mops, tools and clothing used within nuclear facilities.

According to pamphlets published by OPG, Kincardine and surrounding communities are willing to host the DGR.

In exchange for community approval, according to a public document on the Kincardine website, the OPG would provide Kincardine with a Property Value Protection Plan, "a lump sum payment to Kincardine and surrounding communities," and a cooperative effort to "establish vocational schools and a centre of energy excellence," among other things. This agreement would expire in 30 years.

Larry Kraemer, Kincardine mayor during the 2013-2014 DGR public hearings, dismissed the risks surrounding the DGR as being "so low as to be almost unimaginable," according to a 2013 CTV article. This view seemed to be reflected by his constituents, as the aforementioned document reported an approval rating of 60 per cent amongst vot-

ers over 18.

However, this belief does not appear to be validated by the current reputation of the world's other DGRs.

"There are only three deep nuclear waste dumps on our entire planet to have held nuclear waste," said Fernandez. "They have all failed and leaked."

The three sites mentioned by Fernandez are the Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP) in New Mexico and two German sites, Asse II

and Morsleben, both former salt mines.

The most recent failure was New Mexico, according to Fernandez. "The WIPP nuclear waste dump there was to have contained its deadly waste for 10,000 years," she said. "Despite scientific assurance to the contrary, a mere 15 years into WIPP's operational phase, a container exploded, spewing its deadly contents up to the surface, contaminating 22 workers and travelling into the biosphere and down to the next town."

The New Mexico site reopened in January 2017.

Furthermore, the Asse II site is at risk of collapse and has had water leaching into the facility where low- and intermediate-level nuclear waste is stored about 750 metres below ground. Germany's Federal Office for Radiation Protection is worried that improper storage of waste in the 1970s may cause nuclear contamination in the region. To avoid a catastrophe, officials are in the process of retrieving the waste, a task destined to be long and difficult in order to avoid further contamination of the site. Even more daunting is that a retrieval

of this magnitude has never been done before and natural geological shifts have changed the layout of the repurposed salt mine.

The Morsleben site has also had issues similar to Asse II but not to the same extent. The German government is now in the process of decommissioning the site, hoping to avoid long-term environmental issues.

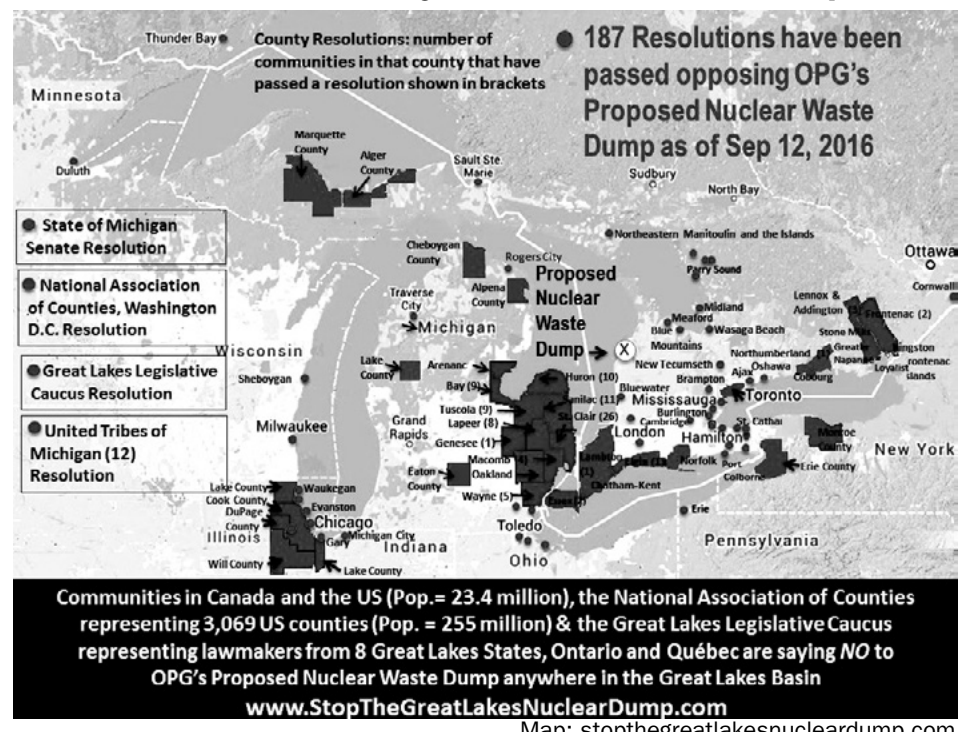
While three failed sites may not seem like many, Fernandez accurately reminds us that this literally means "there is a 100% failure rate for nuclear waste dumps."

The biggest threat will be groundwater seepage, which can transfer and spread radioactive particles from the Great Lakes and, ultimately, to faucets at home.

While OPG works to pacify any doubts and to push its plans through the approval phase, Fernandez presses the point that "We cannot take this risk with the Great Lakes; they contain the largest supply of fresh water on the planet."

"Would you bury poison beside your well?"

To find out more about this issue and to sign the STGLND petition, visit stopthegreatlakesnucleardump.com.



VAL D'OR, INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND POLICE SEXUAL ABUSE

37 Cases and No Justice

Trycia Bazinet

A group of settler allies supported by Algonquin drummers from Barriere Lake held a rally outside of the Sûreté du Québec (SQ) detachment in Val d'Or on Jan. 3. The rally was organized in response to a lawsuit launched by 41 SQ officers against the news outlet ICI Radio-Canada for airing the testimonies of Indigenous women denouncing sexual violence perpetrated by local police. The demonstration was also in response to a pro-police march in Val d'Or on Dec. 11.

The following was sent to the *Leveller* by Trycia Bazinet, organizer of the rally:

Content Warning: Police violence, Sexual Abuse, Violence against Indigenous Women

Once you have driven for three hours through the Parc de la Vérendrye, you reach the region of Abitibi-Témiscamingue. One of the bigger towns you will first come across when coming into the region from the south is Val d'Or. Every town is quite far away from one another. You need to calculate about one hour of travel time between the larger communities.

What else do you need to know? Well, in October 2015, you might have heard for the first time the testimonies of local Indigenous women, which were aired on the show "Enquêtes" by Radio-Canada. The show featured Indigenous women speaking

about the various sexual assaults and physical abuses perpetrated by some police officers.

One of these abuses is known as a starlight tour. This is a form of police abuse specifically targeting Indigenous folks. It consists of driving an individual to an isolated area in the freezing cold and leaving them there. The tours are well documented in Saskatoon. This is done under the pretext that "walking home will sober them up."

I have never heard of this being done to a white person.

Whether a person has taken substances or not should not come into the equation of attempting to justify this present-day colonial torture. Everyone deserves shelter, care and respect, no matter what state of lucidity they are in.

In the case of Val d'Or, these instances also come with sexual abuse and humiliation. What happens in Val d'Or is symptomatic of white settler colonial occupation and it is not an isolated case. It is the backbone of the nationally acknowledged crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.

The calling out of this systemic oppression does not require much analysis, skepticism or nuancing; it is so blatantly spilled out in front of all of us. At least that is what I thought.

In total, 37 complaints of sexual abuse led to only two charges being laid (against retired officers no

longer in Val d'Or). Once that decision reached the public, the show J.E. by the Québécois news outlet TVA, gave a platform to some police officers to "break the silence" and give their "side of the story."

When I first came across a preview of that show, it struck me as extremely disrespectful. The background music had a theme of suspense, which gave the show an allure of a fictional crime show designed for entertaining the public, asking "On which side are you?"

What is most harmful in giving such a platform to the police officers is that it can re-traumatize the women, while deliberately seeking to "win back" the reputation of rapists and sex offenders.

Forty-one police officers are now suing Radio-Canada for \$2.3 million for having aired the testimonies of those women. This means that even those with influence who attempt the bare minimum — listening to and covering what the women are saying — are also at risk of being harshly punished.

This also means that even though people claim that "it's only some police officers," the vast majority of officers behind closed curtains are complicit because they care more about protecting their institutions than confronting their colleagues.

It does not end there. Residents of Val d'Or, including the mayor, have organized and publicly marched in support of the



Photos: Damiano Torre

police officers, as if they were the true victims of substantial loss and abuse. Meanwhile, Cindy Rupert-house, a local Indigenous woman, has been missing since 2014.

The message is clear: there will be consequences if you speak out against sexual abuse and colonial violence, especially if you

are an Indigenous woman. This is why I asked allies, especially white allies, to show up in support of the Indigenous women at the police station in Val d'Or on Jan. 3.

I plan to launch a blog to post one letter of solidarity a week. Grassroots support and pressure will be crucial in demanding accountability,

whether a provincial inquiry takes place or not. Many cannot afford to wait for more proof and "publicly respectable" findings investigating why this is happening. Unfortunately many do not expect anything more than a watering down of the concerns raised by those who were and are the most affected.

We 
The Leveller



HOUSING IS A RIGHT, NOT A COMMODITY

Espoir Manirambona

Homelessness sucks. Imagine for a minute that you didn't have a place to call home. You didn't have a warm place to go to on a cold night. You're struggling to find a place to sleep or even just rest. The police and other unsavory characters regularly harass you and tell you to "get lost." People routinely look down on you because of the way you're dressed. You can't shower anywhere so you don't smell like other people expect you to.

This is the life of many of our fellow citizens. Even on a warm-ish night, being homeless is a challenge but in a place like Canada — with below 0 temperatures — it's a death sentence.

Countless Canadians have called for an end to homelessness over the decades but after 150 years, we've yet to ensure a healthy home for all. What is the root of this failure? Why can't we seem to end homelessness? What are the systemic forces that have been overlooked, preventing us from solving this issue?

On Nov. 18, 2016, housing activists gathered in Toronto to demand the Trudeau Liberals fulfill their campaign promise to introduce a National Housing Strategy. This national day of action was organized by the Right to Housing Coalition, an alliance of community organizations.

In the past, this coalition brought federal and provin-

cial governments to court arguing their failure to address Canada's homelessness crisis is a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and international law.

Indeed, Canada has ratified a number of binding UN agreements that recognize the right to housing such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These documents have been ratified by Canadian institutions and are therefore binding.

The coalition is calling for more public investment to guarantee everyone access to housing, especially more money for social and cooperative housing, which are by far the most affordable.

While calling for affordable housing is important, we need to remain mindful of what that means. Affordability essentially means cheaper, ensuring that rents are low enough that people earning low or no income can pay for them.

There is an assumption that everyone has money, however little. The truth is, many people are moneyless. Many homeless people don't have any money at all, or if they do, it is simply not enough to cover all expenses for basic goods.

A guaranteed income would make sure that people have money for housing. But first, perhaps we should ask, why do we need to pay any-

thing for housing? If housing is a right, not a commodity, why is it being bought and sold like one?

Before colonialism was established in Canada in the 17th century, land was shared collectively by different First Nations. The concept of rent, property and even money was foreign to Canada's Indigenous peoples. When the white man came and introduced these liberal concepts, the Indigenous peoples had a hard time understanding these fundamentally individualistic values. As such, rent is merely a legacy of colonialism.

The settlers who came here brought with them ideas of private property and the tenant-landlord relationship. In Europe, feudalism had dominated economic relations for many generations. The Crown owned the land and lords managed it on behalf of the monarchy. Peasants, the vast majority of people, were landless and forced to work for the landlords to survive. In exchange for relative protection, the peasant tenants were forced to pay rent with whatever means they could. This rent-seeking was so outrageous that the landless peasant class in France demanded an end to this oppressive system. These events culminated in the French Revolution, a process which is still ongoing.

The merchants took advantage of the social upheaval and ironically became the bourgeoisie of the new sys-

tem. Capitalism, while doing away with some elements of feudalism, maintained this tenant-landlord relationship and the source of its power: rent. Landlords are, in many ways, the original capitalists.

Today, large sums of money are transferred each month from tenants to landlords in the form of rent. Often, the landlord does little work to maintain the units to receive this rent. Collecting rent is imposed through fear; if the tenant does not pay, they are evicted through the use of state-sanctioned force. The capitalist state therefore maintains this exploitation and serves the interests of landlords.

Reform-oriented Liberals in the post-war welfare state invested in social and cooperative housing. This was due to the New Deal climate favouring public investments, strong labour and social movements and international pressure from state capitalist regimes like the Soviet Union that did provide free housing and other basic goods. The subsequent rise of neoliberalism (trickle-down economics) led to social spending cuts, especially for housing.

The Chrétien/Martin governments made huge cuts to investments in social housing, which lead to a shortage of units, long wait lists, higher rents and lower quality. These same governments gave hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks to corporations and the wealthy; wealth was

quickly transferred from the masses to the elite.

Homelessness is a choice. Capitalist governments choose to ignore their legal obligations so they can support their financial backers at the expense of the rest of us. The lack of social housing affects everyone. There is less public housing available, meaning that more people are forced to rely on the private housing market. This increase in demand for private housing increases the price and makes housing more expensive for everyone.

In addition, private housing markets are highly unstable as demonstrated by the 2007/08 US subprime mortgage crisis which led to widespread foreclosures. Even in good times, speculation and the profit motive causes gentrification, which turns working-class neighbourhoods into havens for the rich. Markets favour those with money; the poor lose out and are subsequently evicted.

Free housing that's accessible to all is the only way to truly guarantee the right to housing. Everyone that needs a home can get it, regardless of whether they have a paying job, are on social assistance or have no money at all. This process of decommodification would mean that housing becomes a public good; the costs are covered through public finance. Instead of spending billions on war, we can use that money to make sure everyone has a

home. Instead of investing in police brutality, we can divest and put those resources into social housing, ensuring everyone has some form of stability, thus reducing crime as a result.

The Government of Libya provided free housing to its citizens before the country was bombed by NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) members, including Canada. If a much poorer country like Libya was able to do it, then surely we can, too. We can examine ways to cut costs, reduce high salaries in the public housing sector and focus on building smaller, environmentally friendly homes that require fewer resources and labour. The next step would be teaching and empowering people to build their own homes, learning from Indigenous people who've been doing this since antiquity.

Housing activists need to remain fearless and call for free housing. As long as we put a price on housing, those with money will get it and those without won't. It's really that simple. All that is required is the will to be bold. While I'm an eternal optimist, the Liberal Party as a whole is too tied to big business and the wealthy to be expected to introduce free housing. The Party has a tendency to support public-private partnerships that only help to perpetuate the capitalist system — the very system that creates homelessness in the first place.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT



OPIRG Carleton
Research, Education, Action

The Threat Environment at Carleton:
IRRG & Freedom of Speech

WEDNESDAY
FEB 8

Gendered Violence on our Campus?
Keynote Address by Farrah Khan

THURSDAY
FEB 9

Workshop: Mental Health in the Black
Community with Muna Mohamed

MONDAY
FEB 13

Prison Abolition and Black Liberation
with Che Gossett

THURSDAY
FEB 16

Workshop: Healing Justice for the Black
Community with Yamikani Msosa

TUESDAY
FEB 28

Visit our website at www.opirgcarleton.org or
facebook.com/OPIRGCarleton for more info, time and locations

INCONSISTENCY JUST RHYMES WITH IMMIGRATION POLICY!

Golbon Moltaji

One of the Liberals’ well pronounced platforms while campaigning in 2015 was repealing the Conservatives’ Bill C-24, also known as the *Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act*. To that end, the Liberal government introduced Bill C-6, which would amend Bill C-24 and revert many of the requirements to become a Canadian citizen to what they were prior to the Conservatives’ intervention.

Some of these amendments are certainly a step in the right direction. For example, there is a proposed reduction to the amount of time permanent residents are required to have lived in Canada in order to become eligible for citizenship, from four out of six years to three out of five years. Supplementing this amendment is a measure to credit time spent in Canada on temporary status — such as on a work or study permit — as a portion of the three-year requirement. In addition, the new legislation would repeal the contentious provision that allows for the revocation of citizenship for terrorism, high treason, treason or spying offences.

However, during the Bill’s second reading in the Senate on Dec. 15, 2016, the eagerly-awaited Bill C-6 wound up being referred back to committee,

postponing its enactment. What is more interesting is that the Liberal government has been “aggressively” enforcing Bill C-24, setting targets to strip 40 to 60 Canadians each month of their citizenship. To date, the Liberals have managed to strip 206 individuals of their citizenship since May 2015 — about 18 people per month. It seems safe to say a Canadian is not a Canadian unless born as one.

In June 2016, C-6 passed the House of Commons by a vote of 218 to 88. Nevertheless, the Liberals seem to be too lax when it comes to pushing Bill C-6 through the Senate. The irony here is that Bill C-24 could cost even Minister Maryam Monsef her citizenship, due to the accidental misrepresentation of her place of birth.

During the Dec. 15 Senate readings of Bill C-6, proponents of the Act — including Senator Omidvar — focused on romanticizing the concept of citizenship, fueling their pro-C-6 arguments with personal tales of belonging.

To quote Omidvar, “Before we get to the substance of the bill, I would like to start with some poetry, because if ever there is poetry in legislation, then I think it is in the lofty aspirations of citizenship.”

Perhaps there is some nobility in this but is wax-

ing poetic really the best argument against right-wing speculations concerning potential foreign threats and terrorism should citizenship restrictions be lessened?

If anything, Senator Omidvar’s poetic portrayal of what being Canadian means to her (and apparently must mean to all of those who settle in Canada) merely emphasized the nationalistic and exclusionary outlook of citizenship, that Canada is a “protective” house for people to be welcomed into. Instead of elaborating on her own personal memoirs of emotional belonging, while making “mountains of a very

strange Canadian culinary confection called peanut butter and jelly sandwiches,” perhaps it would have been more to the benefit of Bill C-6 to dwell on the economic and social benefits that loosening citizenship requirements would incur.

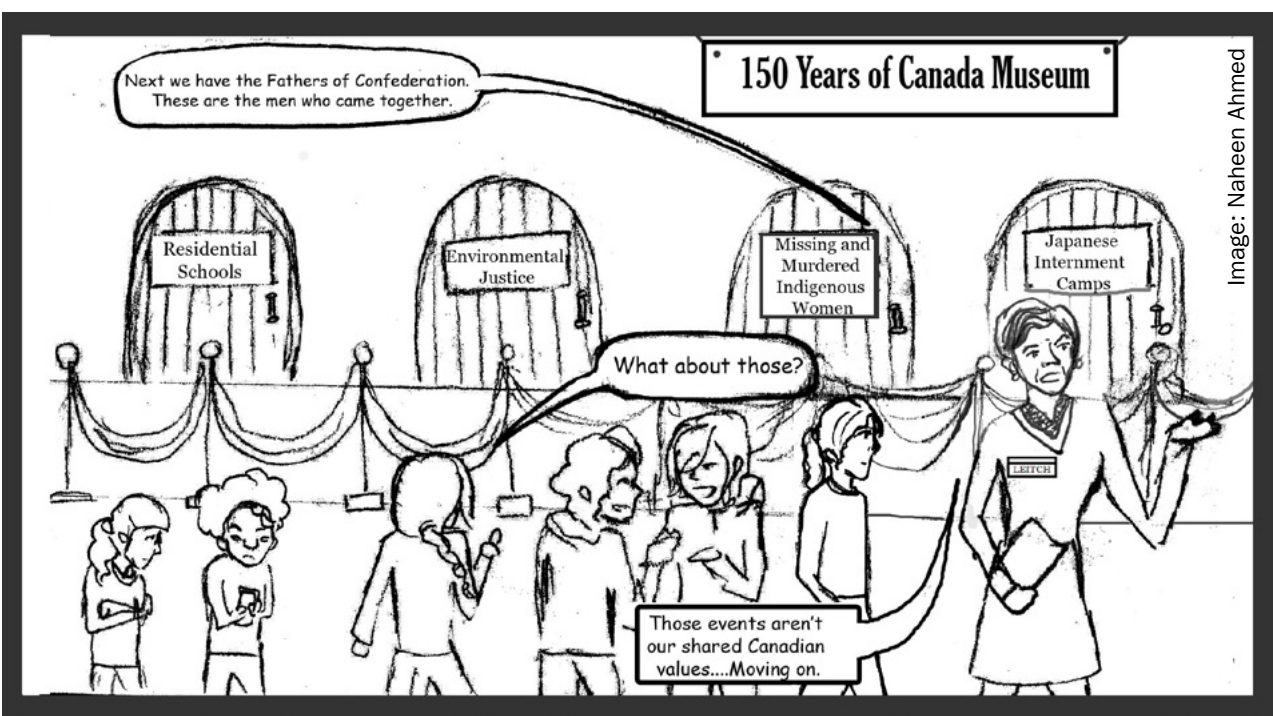
Let’s face it; Canada is not this saviour that welcomes everyone to its home. This country is a colonial state that has a far longer history of imperial trade than it has in empowering minorities. Now, accordingly, if the way forward is to showcase this country’s ability and willingness to do the latter, those who support Bill C-6 and identify Bill C-24 as a law rooted

in Conservative xenophobia might want to consider changing their sympathetic and poetic discourse towards newcomers and their struggles; that their rhetoric only re-establishes the patriotic viewpoint that advanced Bill C-24 in the first place.

In the meantime, Bill C-6 sooner or later becomes irrelevant for many of those who could benefit from its amendments as they will have passed the Conservative-established four-year mark. The likely fact remains that some of those awaiting eligibility for citizenship surely resent the ongoing efforts they must put forth to prove them-

selves to be “contributing subjects” while managing and surviving the indescribable stress from the threat of “losing status.”

The top-down view of current Senators towards immigrants, dual citizens and future citizens belongs in the past and does not describe the situation of the generation that Minister Monsef comes from. Demanding the state sticks with its promises does not require glorifying what struggles the “second-class citizen” goes through. It requires voracity and strength — the two things the Liberals and their independent senators have been particularly lacking.



WHODUNIT ?

IN MEMORY OF MAT NELSON

A. “I don’t fear death; I fear remaining silent in the face of injustice. I am young and I want to live. But I say to those who would eliminate my voice: I am ready, wherever and whenever you might strike. You can cut down the flower, but nothing can stop the coming of the spring.”

B. “You said it man. Nobody fucks with the Jesus.”

C. “My art has been commended as being strongly vaginal, which bothers some men. The word itself makes some men uncomfortable. Vagina.”

D. “3000 years of beautiful tradition, from Moses to Sandy Kaufax, you’re god-damn right I’m living in the f***ing past!”

E. “The history of progress is written in the blood of men and women who have dared to espouse an unpopular cause, as, for instance, the black man’s right to his body, or woman’s right to her soul.”

F. “I’m The Dude, so that’s what you call me. That or, his Dudeness, or Duder, or el Duderino if you’re not into the whole brevity thing.”

G. “Could you tape the rest of *The Pigmen and the Women Who Love Them* discussion, and I’ll listen to it the next time I’m here. I gotta go find a mohel.”

H. “I’m a great quitter. It’s one of the few things I do well. I come from a long line of quitters.”

I. “You can’t fight violence against women with racism because racism is likely to strengthen patriarchal currents in communities under siege.”

J. “The mutual aid tendency in man has so remote an origin and is so deeply interwoven with all the past evolution of the human race, that it has been maintained by mankind up to the present time, notwithstanding all the vicissitudes of history.”

- The Dude aka Jeff Bridges, who will abide.
- Jesus Quintana aka John Turturro, controversial bowler
- Maude Lebowski aka Julianne Moore, artist
- Emma Goldman, anarchist
- Elaine Benes, aka Julia Louis-Dreyfus, thumb-based dancer
- Malalai Joya, Afghan activist
- Walter Sobchak aka John Goodman, Vietnam vet and bowler
- George Costanza aka Jason Alexander, struggler
- Pyotr Kropotkin, anarchist
- Sherene Razack, scholar

“WE ARE HUMAN, SO WE FAIL”

Impressions of Roxane Gay's *Bad Feminist*

Bad
Feminist
Essays
Roxane
Gay

Tiffany Isele

Before I leave my house on any given day, I'll look for a playlist so I can listen to music while walking to the bus stop and on the ride to my destination. Sometimes I'll download a movie or an episode on Netflix so I can distract myself while on the bus. A lot of the music I listen to or the movies I watch play into certain tropes. They insult women, show racism, homophobia, transphobia, promote being skinny; these displays can be subtle or overt, depending on the singer, rapper, movie or show. But the thing is, I love these forms of art, I love listening to rap even when they say *bitches* every three seconds. I love watching *Drop Dead Diva* even though the show is so anti-fat.

It's hard. It's hard to be a feminist. To reconcile my need for equality and my joy when I hear a new Kanye West album is being released. I am what Roxane Gay refers to as a bad feminist and, in a way, we are all bad feminists. We look away or actively engage in the toxic nature of pop culture. We say, "Don't believe in gender roles!" but we look

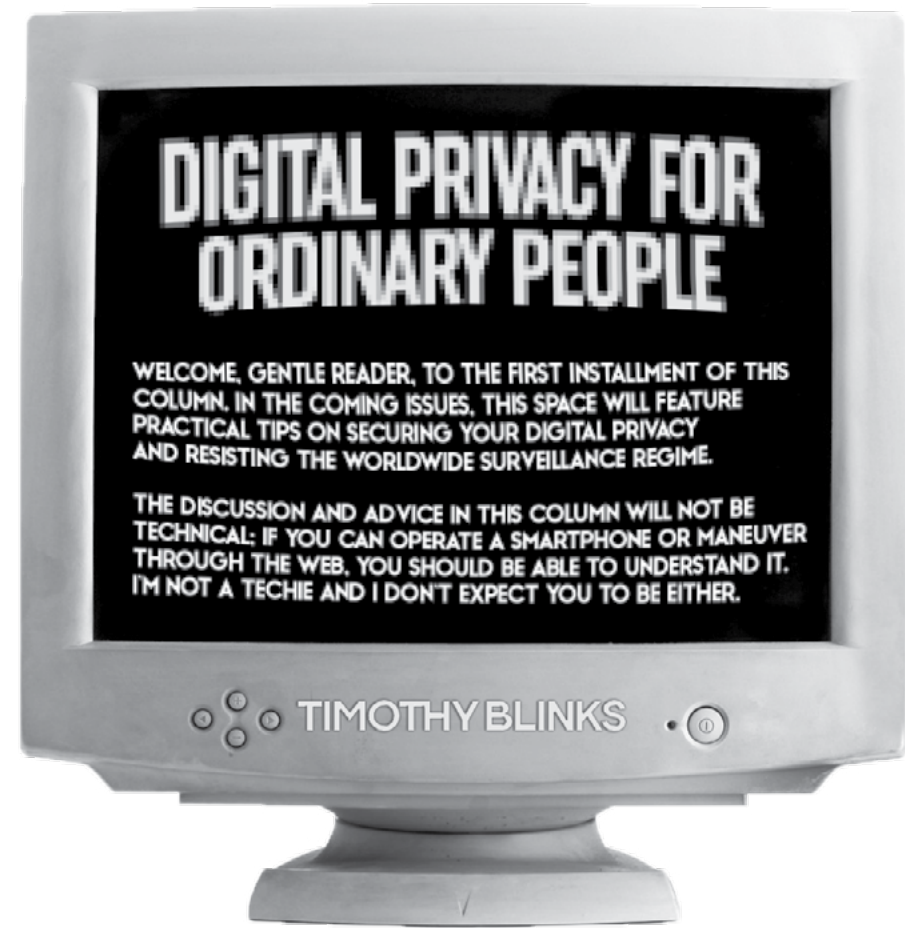
for partners that fit into those roles. We are human, so we fail; we are full of contradictions. *Bad Feminist* highlights all the ways in which we fail as a society and it becomes a mirror so we can self-reflect.

In this series of essays, Gay talks about nearly every feminist issue that causes a ruckus. Gay talks about rape (of herself and of others) and rape culture, mansplaining, performing gender, being fat and the stigma of being fat, coming out, domestic violence, reproductive rights, respectability politics, writing as a woman, racism in films and intersectionality. Every essay is thought provoking; some are more relatable than others, which is expected since all the essays are very personal.

Gay does not pretend to be better than any other feminist; she acknowledges her shortcomings. She writes like a human, not a better-than-you feminist scholar. We read a heartbreaking story of how she was gang raped. We see that she is more open to race discussions when they do not come from a white person. We learn that she enjoys rap music that often degrades women. But for the most part, we see her anger, her

rage at the world. *Bad Feminist* is not just any feminist book, it makes us look and it says things we're too ashamed to say in public because we are scared we are not good enough at being feminists.

The book is not perfect; sometimes we are left with more questions than answers. Essays end without closure and some arguments feel very absurd. There are some parts that make you angry at yourself, then angry at her for pointing out your shortcomings. And somehow through it all, Gay finds a way to make thought-provoking statements and questions. She leaves you wondering, how can I change this little thing in world? How can I create a balance between the feminist and the anti-feminist within me? Gay does not look to answer these questions and I do not think that the answer can be a one-size fits all. But I must hope, like Gay, that one day, "a mess of contradictions" will find a way to create balance within ourselves and in our worlds. For now, I'm okay being a bad feminist, I'm okay being a flawed feminist, because, like Gay, I am human and humans cannot be perfect.



Before we launch into the nuts and bolts of digital security, I want to describe the context and rationale for this column.

In the wake of Bill C-51 and Edward Snowden's revelations, it's clear that much of what we do online or with our phones is being tracked, stored and shared by security agencies in Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. This is done without any meaningful accountability to judicial or elected officials. No real distinction is made between terrorist plots and legitimate political dissent and environmental and Indigenous activists have been targeted in particular.

In point of fact, even the NSA admits its enhanced cyber-surveillance has not prevented a single act of terrorism. "Terrorism" then has been used to excuse a democratic coup, where all citizens are subjected to a 1984-style surveillance regime.

These levers of power are already starting to fall into the hands of demagogues with fascist tendencies.

In the past decade or so, long-established rights — to privacy, to protest, to free speech and, in particular, to freedom from arbitrary arrest and warrantless surveillance — have been systematically dismantled in the name of security. One might say that while we were busy updating our Facebook status, liberties that were bought with blood and revolution have since evaporated.

Though I'm describing this in stark terms, all of it is common knowledge. Usually when we hear these facts discussed, we might 'tut-tut' at best, and feel helpless at worst.

Helpless, of course, is how those in power would like us to feel.

This column will not be like that. This column is about fighting back. It's about practical ways we can reclaim our privacy and our rights.

TIMOTHY BLINKS FARMS AND EDITS IN THE LANARK HIGHLANDS, HAVING GROWN UP IN OTTAWA AND GRADUATED FROM CARLETON UNIVERSITY. HE FANTASIZES ABOUT TECH-FREE LIVING AND ECONOMIC APOCALYPSE BUT HAS SETTLED FOR WRITING THIS COLUMN AND TRYING TO START AN ECOVILLAGE IN THE MEANTIME.

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SYMMETRY'S OVERRATED



**WE THOUGHT BEING MORE CONNECTED
WOULD MAKE US FEEL LESS ALONE.**



MOONFRUITS



Photo: Moonfruits, facebook.com

Caroline Rodriguez-Charette

If you regularly attend some of the more musically-inclined rallies and solidarity movements, then you have no doubt run into the local band, Moonfruits. From showing their support for numerous social groups — such as the Industrial Workers of the World, \$15 and Fairness and Workers Action — to standing against Kinder Morgan, this pair of banjo-wielding, bilingual singers is not afraid to show their political colours.

To bandmates Alex Millaire and Kaitlin Milroy, interaction with local social movements is an integral part of the give-and-take relationship that comes with being songwriters.

According to Milroy, to be a songwriter is to be “kind of like a barometer for social issues, in a way to talk about things that are, sometimes, not always easy subjects to broach,” she told the *Leveller* in an interview.

Furthermore, she adds, music has a unifying power for the band, one that brings people together and “invites them to live in a more politicized space, to see themselves as part of a community.”

To this end, they also un-

derstand they have a responsibility to the people who come to listen to them, since, as Milroy commented, their music — and their band — is a “reflection of ideas.”

The pair always takes their time when working on things, since, in their understanding, art is a crucial piece of social well-being and a platform for addressing important social issues.

A group they were especially happy to have shown their support for is the Good Food Markets, which is an initiative to sell high quality produce and dry goods in various communities around Ottawa at a more affordable price.

“There’s something particularly heartwarming about having a bunch of radishes put in your guitar case or some carrots, pastries and things as your form of payment,” said Millaire.

Millaire and Milroy will keep supporting all of these organizations wherever and whenever they can. Although it is becoming more of a challenge as they continue to pursue their lives as musicians, they are always happy to donate their time for important social causes.

“We want to live in a better world and we want to help

build it in our small way and when we see people working towards that end, we feel a sense of duty to also take part,” said Milroy.

Not too long ago, Moonfruits launched a crowdfunding kick-off party to raise money for their next album at Bread by Us — the band’s favourite local bakery.

“The crowdfunding kick-off was amazing. The place was packed for hours,” said Millaire. “It was Kaitlin’s idea, to kick it off with the band rather just an online thing.”

The band has surpassed their goal of \$5,000 with their crowdfunding, and with additional support from the Ottawa Arts Council and the City of Ottawa, the band is able to take on their next recorded album.

Their next album, performed entirely in French and with the theme of fighting isolation with compassion, comes out in May 2017. It will be about a village “making a hard go of it in the here and now,” according to an update on their GoFundMe page. While parts of this village will stem from the band’s imagination, much will also be based off the experiences they have shared, their travels and all the incredible people they have met along the way.

HOROSCOPES



XL Petite

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) Well Aquarius, the bad news is that Donald Trump is indeed the president of the nukes. But, at least Richard Spencer got elbowed in the temple. Perhaps the stars of 2017 have a few tricks up their (burning hot) sleeves.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) Pisces, in case you missed it amidst the hullabaloo about the circus down south, there was an awesome UNDRIP-demanding selfie attack on Trudeau by some rad students in Halifax last week. Check it: goo.gl/nOSQnW

ARIES (March 21-April 19) When you’ve been away, and then you come back and your plant, Rapunzel, has lost some leaves, don’t beat yourself up. Take its arms from the wall and wrap them around itself like a hug.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) Nothing says “Welcome, Mr. President” like a plane soaring through your hometown, flying a banner reading: “We outnumber him! Resist!”

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) So Gemini, let me tell you about retrogrades. It’s a lot like those transition sunglasses, you know the type. But not the full ones, I’m talking those old school Versace style, that are only shaded on the bottom. Except with gravity. Shade yourself in gravity this fortnight.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) If you’re waiting for the final episode of Sherlock Holmes, I won’t spoil it for you, but, ol’ Benetton Splishnsplash’s cheekbones are still fantastic!

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) This new moon, take it upon yourself to wonder: how could any person of colour be on the side of Kelly Leitch, aka Muslim-hunter McGee? Remember her? She’s the one who wants you to evaluate your Canadian values.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) The Russians infiltrated my horoscopes, contaminating one with their shoeless hippy nonsense. Can you find it? Da.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) Some Canadians hunt for moose, others for Muslims. Which one are you, Libra? Because Shark Man O’Leary is a-coming, and Kelly Leitch is going to have to up her game.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) Time to celebrate, Scorpio! 150 years! It’s a big one, momentous occasion! A century and a half since Marx published *Das Kapital*, where does the time go?

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) There was. When will there be again? Search the dark side of the moon for answers.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Haikuroscope for you Capricorn! Where are the nuke codes? Asked not enough people Oh god, oh god, oh -




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LISTINGS

CUPE 4600 STRIKE VOTE: Jan 24-26. cupe4600.ca

THINK KINK WEEK: Jan 23-30. Womyn's Centre Carleton for Event Details,

WED JAN 25

DIALOGUE: The Ghomeshi Effect. Margins to the Centre. Gladstone Theatre. 5pm.

SING: Just Voices weekly environmental choir rehearsals. Bronson Centre 222. 7pm. Every Wed.

THURS JAN 26

WORKSHOP: BDS 101. SAIA. OPIRG, 326 UC, Carleton. 4pm.

DIALOGUE: The Ghomeshi Effect. The Impact of Cyberviolence. Gladstone Theatre. 5pm.

ORGANIZING MEETING: \$15 & Fairness. 251 Bank St. 6:30pm.

BOOK LAUNCH: Songs Upon the Rivers w/ Sébastien Malette. Octopus Bookstore. 7pm.

FRI JAN 27

TALK: Eva Bartlett. on Syria. Fauteux 147 UOttawa. 7:30pm.

DIALOGUE: Ghomeshi Effect. Improving Sexual Assault Legal Resources. Gladstone Theatre. 5pm.

WORKSHOP: Apartheid 101. SAIA. 326 UC, Carleton. 5pm.

SAT JAN 28

CONFERENCE: Thought for Food. FSSS Bldg, UOttawa. 9am-4pm.

FUNDRAISER: Fried Bread for Canadian Roots Exchange. St. Paul's Eastern United Church. 5pm.

SUN JAN 29

MEETING: Ottawa Quakers - Largely silent mtg for worship, 91A Fourth Ave. Newcomers welcome!. 10:30am. Every Sun.

TUES JAN 31

THE TAKE-OVER: CKCU 93.1 FM. 11am. Every 2nd Tuesday.

OPIRG CARLETON ROOTS RADIO: CKCU 93.1 FM. 12pm. Every 2nd Tuesday. www.ckcufm.com.

BOOK LAUNCH: Your Right to Privacy w/ authors. Octopus Books. 116 Third Ave. 7pm.

WED FEB 1

Megaphono: Cody Coyote, King Kimbit, more. Minotaure. 8pm.

THURS FEB 2

PROTEST THE BoG: "Noisy Persons Unite" Carleton University. Richcraft Hall. 4pm.

SCREENING: The Prison in 12 Landscapes w/ Director. Alumni Auditorium UOttawa. 6pm.

MEET-UP: Are you tired of being black? Hosted by the Blackest Eye. Steacie103, Carleton. 6pm.

SAT FEB 4

CAPITAL SLAM: Featuring Philosi-fire. The Origin Arts & Community Centre. 5pm.

TUES FEB 7

BOOK CLUB: Worldly Goods by Alice Pattersen. Octopus Bookstore, 116 Third Ave. 6pm.

WED FEB 8

TALK: The Threat Environment at Carleton: The IRRG and Freedom of Speech. 2203 Dunton Tower, Carleton. 6:30pm.

BOOK LAUNCH: Hope has Two Daughters w/ Monia Mazigh. 251 Bank St. 7:30pm.

THURS FEB 9

KEYNOTE: Gender Based Violence on Our Campus? opirg-carleton.org

NON-HETERONORMATIVE VALENTINE CRAFT NIGHT. Kind Space. 6:30pm.

FRI FEB 10

HIP HOP NIGHT: by OPIRG-Ottawa with MC Omar Saghir. Café Nostalgica, UOttawa.

SUN FEB 12

COMEDY FUNDRAISER: Slut Talk. \$\$ for OCTEVAW. Yuk Yuk's. 8pm.

MON FEB 13

WORKSHOP: Mental Health in the Black Community w/ Muna Mohamed. opirgcarleton.org

TUES FEB 14

THE TAKE-OVER: CKCU 93.1 FM. 11am. Every 2nd Tuesday.

OPIRG CARLETON ROOTS RADIO: CKCU 93.1 FM. 12pm. Every 2nd Tuesday. www.ckcufm.com.

WED FEB 15

WORKSHOP & PANEL: Open Participation is Power: End Online Harassment. Shopify. 5:30pm.

THURS FEB 16

TALK: Prison Abolition & Black Liberation w/ Che Gossett. opirgcarleton.org

DISCUSSION: Indigenous Justice. Faith House Ottawa. 7pm.

FRI FEB 17

VISUAL17E OTTAWA ART EXHIBIT & CONCERT: Saint Brig-id's Centre for the Arts. Fri-Sat. 7pm.

POETS & PANCAKES: February edition. Flapjack's. 8pm.

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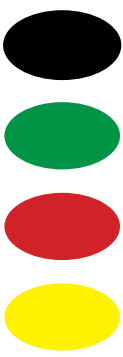
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