

The Leveller

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Election skeptics since 2009

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Demonstrators at a rally against Timbercreek's Herongate evictions. Photo: Kieran Delamont

GENTRIFICATION ON TRIAL

HOW THE FIGHT FOR HERONGATE BECAME A FIGHT FOR ALL IMMIGRANT NEIGHBOURHOODS

Kieran Delamont

In just four years, a multibillion-dollar developer has demolished dozens of homes and evicted hundreds of residents in Ottawa's Herongate neighbourhood. Now, community members are trying to put the company — and gentrification itself — on trial.

On a Saturday afternoon in early May, Daniel Tucker-Simmons folds out a table in a

multi-purpose room at the Heron Road Community Centre. He sets down his laptop, a tablet, some paper, and a large legal reference text, and he waits. A few blocks east lies a patch of muddy, fenced-off land that was once part of Herongate, a community of 4,000 people, more than 70 per cent of whom are visible minorities — mostly Somali, Arab, and Middle Eastern immigrants.

The townhomes and apartment buildings that once stood there are now gone, demolished as part of what some critics have called the most egregious forced-displacement campaign in recent Canadian history.

At his pop-up office, stocked with the obligatory coffee and Timbits, Tucker-Simmons convenes what is part legal clinic, part information session, part recruitment drive.

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Marchers at the Students Fight Back protest. Photo: Maxine Neumann

DOUG FORD'S IMPACT ON OTTAWA STUDENTS

VOICES FROM LOCAL UNIVERSITIES ON CUTS TO OSAP AND THE "STUDENT CHOICE INITIATIVE"

Laura Blanchette

Across campus, students are questioning their future, as many struggle to fill the gap in their finances left when the provincial government cut OSAP (Ontario Student Assistance Program) funding. While their frustration has occasionally escalated to the point of organizing events to protest, it is important to note that even the students who stay quiet about it publicly are being affected. *The Leveller* hits the streets, the corners of Carleton's campus, and the byways of social media to ask students how the Ford government's changes are affecting them.

Third-year Carleton student Jenn lost nearly half of her OSAP funding, leaving her to find other means of paying her tuition. Nadine S. lost her grants entirely, which were converted into loans to be paid

back after graduation. Nairah, a second-year student, lost six thousand dollars worth of grants and only received partial loans to cover her tuition. Many more students throughout Ontario have been personally affected and *every* student has stories of peers who have lost financial stability.

Sam Yee was part of a core team organizing a student protest titled Students Fight Back: A Protest Against Cuts to Education. As a second-year student at uOttawa who is ineligible for OSAP support, she witnessed how the cuts were affecting her friends. Some began working a couple of part-time jobs, in addition to their regular schoolwork and classes, and some were forced to pull out of university altogether.

"Even if people have not been affected by the cuts to OSAP directly, we have a bit of a moral responsibility to provide

avenues to share their stories and how the cuts have been affecting them," Yee said, explaining her role in planning the protest.

Taking place on September 10, the protest attracted attention from several media sources, including CBC and the *Ottawa Citizen*, as well as receiving attention — both negative and positive — on Facebook and Instagram.

"Everyone has a right to safety and security, that includes financial security," Yee explained. While students are losing their financial security, they are also finding that their academic stability has been struggling. Adam Aube, a first-year student at Carleton, says that "the workload in school hasn't changed but the workload outside school has" and "it can take away from [students'] learning."

Not all students see this as a

problem. One Carleton student told *The Leveller* with a shrug that "if you want it, you gotta work for it."

Meanwhile, Joe MacDonald commented on Facebook that "this generation of participation medals and safe spaces and socialism" needs to take personal responsibility for funding their education. Similar ideas are rampant throughout the comment sections on various Facebook covering the protest and reporting on specific students who have lost funding. Jamie Kingsley simply writes, "Your debt is your mismanagement" in response to photos from the Students Fight Back protest.

That said, taking a year off of university to work or learn better money management does not guarantee a student will be able to return the following year. High school graduates have few opportuni-

ties to find a position that will earn them a living wage, much less save. Especially for those who no longer live with their parents, putting aside several thousands of dollars for the upcoming year's tuition is not always feasible.

Students are worried about the negative effects of limited financial assistance, from increased stress levels to a general decrease of diversity within the professional sphere. Aube has witnessed his peers losing "more money out of their pockets" because of the cuts, which directly conflicts with boasts the provincial government has made about the Student Choice Initiative (SCI) and 10% tuition reduction saving students money.

Other students told *The Leveller* that they appreciate the opportunity to save money through SCI and several noticed

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The Leveller

EDITORIAL

A CALL TO ARMS - IN ELECTIONS, BUT MOSTLY ELSEWHERE



Our feature this month offers a critical summary of what the major parties are promising on climate change and touches on whether they would or could achieve these goals.

We do not offer this analysis naively. We think it is important to remember history when you vote – or even when you decide whether or not to vote.

The history’s pretty clear. Not one vote cast in Canadian history has had an impact on the climate crisis.

In our first-past-the-post, majority-rules, representative democracy, no one’s vote has counted for much, really – unless it was cast for the Liberals or Conservative, the only two

parties to form government since Confederation.

Ok, ok. To be more accurate, it’s a minority-rules system, since our first-past-the-post system usually converts a minority of votes into a majority of representatives – who then robotically vote however the unelected party masterminds tell them. That’s the real minority who rules. Three cheers for democracy!

Anyways. Successive Liberal and Conservative administrations have promised action on climate change since the ‘90s, without delivering. They have also not delivered on a lot of other promises. It’s like some weird good cop/bad cop routine to gaslight the public into electing them again.

Perhaps the only questions worth asking the latest crop of Liberal/Conservative candidates, then, is “how can we know your party has changed?” and “what differentiates your climate promises from the last batch of lies?”

If so, then maybe the question for candidates from other parties is “how can we know your party is different from those other guys?” and “why should we believe your climates promises?”

While you’re working up the nerve to ask them, feel free to use our feature guide to make small talk about their party’s platform on climate change.

Because nothing has shown the uselessness of our present political system like climate change. The slow-building catastrophe of climate change has unfolded over the last few decades in an entirely predictable and preventable way, but our governments have failed to meaningfully grapple with this truth, much less act on it.

Our best leaders have pranced and postured and made promises they don’t keep, while the worst have simply buried their heads in the sand like an ostrich in the path of a freight train – and invited us to join them.

Well, this freight train is labelled ‘extinction’ and now it’s in kissing distance.

Here at The Leveller, we’d love to see the NDP or the Greens get into power and we’d love to see them act on their platforms. We’d love to see a revolution from the inside. But we’re not holding our breath for either to happen.

There’s no real historical precedent for the kind of change that is needed being achieved

through the ballot box. Certainly not through the ballot box alone; in itself, voting is more placebo than sacred duty. Governments generally react to social movements and cultural change, to struggle and resistance as much to conformity and quiescence.

Violent revolutions have overturned whole social systems in the past, but generally only when the ruling class has lost its grip and an enormous upswelling of political will and popular rage explodes. We don’t seem to be there (yet) and gulags and guillotines are the stuff of nightmares not utopias.

On the other hand, the example of social movements like the Civil Right Movement shows that committed minorities with little power can enact social transformation in a short amount of time – through non-violent direct actions that obstructs business as usual and makes systemic injustice visible and visceral.

This kind of action faces the world with a kind of confrontational welcome. It is confrontational in that it cannot be ignored, the way a vote or a march can be dismissed and ignored. “No one takes any notice of you unless you cause disruption,” as Roger Hallam, the founder of Extinction Rebellion, puts it. But to be successful, such movements avoid needlessly alienating outsiders, welcoming them to change their minds and join, enabling small actions to spiral into mass movements.

We’ve tried decades of international diplomacy and electoral politics. Why not try something new?

What could this editorial end but with the old Situationist slogan? “Be realistic – demand the impossible!”

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 news, current events, and culture at Carleton University, the University of Ottawa, the Ottawa/Gatineau region and, to a lesser extent, the wider world. It is intended to provide readers with a lively portrait of their campuses and communities and of the events that give them 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 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.

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. 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. Ultimately it needs you to become a more truly democratic and representative paper.

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 in. It wants to be your coolest, most in-the-know friend and your social conscience at the same time. It continues to have its work cut out for it.

The Leveller is published every month during the school year. It is free.

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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 of 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.

\$100 - Investigative pieces
\$50 - Feature spread
\$25 - Most others – campus, news, magazine, culture, comics
\$15 - Columns
\$10 - Comment/Opinion

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

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

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

The Leveller

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GENTRIFICATION ON TRIAL
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While his setup is modest, his ambitions are not: the soft-spoken lawyer, who has a history of taking on housing-rights cases, has teamed up with a group of activists and two dozen ex-residents to take Timbercreek, a multibillion-dollar real-estate company, to the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal (OHRT) — and to put the very mechanisms that power gentrification on trial.

Over the past four years, Timbercreek has torn down dozens of homes and evicted hundreds of residents in Herongate. The demolitions are intended to make way for a “resort-style” development where rents, said Timbercreek senior vice-president Greg Rogers in October 2018, will “reflect the premium nature of the community” — pricing out former residents, many of whom have had to resettle in far-flung corners of the city.

In the statement of claim submitted to the OHRT, Tucker-Simmons calls Timbercreek’s approach to the community, which it bought from competitor Transglobe in 2012, “planned or ‘hyper-gentrification’ — that is, a process of mass and accelerated gentrification driven by a large corporate landlord financed by capital raised on capital markets and the sale of financial instruments to investors.”

Tucker-Simmons argues that Timbercreek deliberately let the neighbourhood decay in order to justify its demolition. He’s seeking \$50,000 per resident in damages.

The application lays out both a specific argument about Herongate and a more general one about the development approach it represents. “Timbercreek’s development plan for Herongate is consistent with a broader model of real estate development in Ontario that disproportionately affects people of colour, immigrants, people receiving public assistance, and families,” it reads.

“This development model involves identifying real estate that is ‘undervalued’, displacing the existing ‘low quality’ occupants, renovating or building higher-end rental housing or condos, and then marketing them to ‘higher quality’ tenants,” the application continues. “The replacement tenants are disproportionately white and non-immigrant, with smaller or no families, and not receiving public assistance.”

Tucker-Simmons’s argument is not that Timbercreek broke the rules: in his view, the rules themselves are unfair, allowing city councils to prioritize developers’ economic interests over everyone else’s. By supporting the project, he writes, the City of Ottawa — which is also named in the lawsuit, because of its role in approving the development — “has failed to ensure that the Applicants’ housing needs are accommodated and incorporated into Timbercreek’s development proposals and that the displacement of the Applicants and their neighbours is only temporary.”

The ex-residents who trickle in — today, they’re all women, and many are accompanied by translators — aren’t concerned with abstract legal issues: they’re looking for possible restitution. But it can be difficult, Tucker-

Simmons says, to convince people to sign up for a potentially long court battle, especially as there’s no guarantee of success.

“I think some people are worried,” he tells me a few months later. “Especially in immigrant communities, there’s this concern that, ‘Oh, my citizenship will get taken away.’”

While that’s not the case, he understands why rumours like that can spread. Many of the ex-residents are still Timbercreek tenants and don’t want to cause trouble. “If, in their mind, there’s some kind of risk,” he says, “why would you chance it?”

Most of the people who visit his makeshift legal clinic leave with information in hand. Thirty-two have now added their names to the tribunal application. Some of them are members, informal or otherwise, of the Herongate Tenant Coalition — a collection of ex-residents and activists who are publicly advocating for Herongate residents and who have been spearheading the organizing and fundraising campaigns to cover the cost of legal fees.

The coalition’s Twitter account has been suspended several times for publishing the public profiles of Timbercreek employees and for what Timbercreek sees as inflammatory statements. Meanwhile, members are suing the company in small-claims court, alleging that it defamed them and misled city officials.

Grace Lato and Margaret Alluker are two of the hundreds of Herongate residents who have been forced to relocate — one to a different part of the neighbourhood, the other out of the neighbourhood altogether. On May 7, 2018, both women attended a meeting with Timbercreek at which they learned that they were being evicted. More than 100 other households also received the news that day. Their homes had to be cleared out by the end of September.

(Neither woman has added her name to the application; they’re instead working with ACORN, a housing-advocacy group, to negotiate a community-benefit agreement with Timbercreek.)

Lato had been evicted once before, in late 2015, when Timbercreek was preparing to demolish 53 homes in a different section of Herongate, but she was able to find a place to live in the neighbourhood afterwards. This time, she wasn’t.

“What am I going to do?” she asked herself when she found out. “How am I going to do this with my kids?”

When she talks about the eviction now, Lato becomes visibly upset. She liked living in a neighbourhood of immigrants. It was home. Now, she says, “I regret coming to Canada sometimes.” She points toward various pieces of furniture in her new home — 14 kilometres from Herongate, in Gloucester, a neighbourhood in Ottawa’s east end — and tells me she doesn’t even want to bother setting them up. Her kids now have lengthy bus rides to get to school (long enough that, during the winter months, it will be dark by the time they get home).

If it weren’t for her kids, she says, she would move back to Nigeria. Nigeria may have its

problems, she declares, but at least nobody steals your home out from under you.

Alluker, who immigrated to Canada in 2010 from what was then Sudan, moved into a nearby apartment building following her eviction and still lives in the neighbourhood. According to planning documents, Timbercreek intends to leave that building up, as well as four other buildings on the property, while it demolishes all the remaining townhomes in Herongate over the coming years to make way for more than a dozen condo buildings, which will contain more than 5,000 units in total.

Alluker says she moved to Herongate in 2012 in order to be closer to her family. “You have a community of people that can understand the language,” she explains. “You just need to be beside them. That’s what made me come here.”

She says the neighbourhood has changed since the evictions: “Many people just moved out ... The unity that was among the people here, speaking the same language and coming from the same place — it’s just not united anymore.”

Both Alluker and Lato believe that Timbercreek deliberately let the Herongate properties fall into disrepair to justify knocking them down. “They let everything go,” says Alluker. “When I looked outside, windows were broken, doors are broken. No mainte-

“Timbercreek’s development plan for Herongate is consistent with a broader model of real estate development in Ontario that disproportionately affects people of colour, immigrants, people receiving public assistance, and families.”

nance had been done. I think they let this happen so people would get out.”

Timbercreek’s current development plan, which was filed with the city in April and publicized in July, would be one of the most substantial condo-development projects in Ottawa history if the city approves it. (It’s on the planning committee’s spring docket, although the schedule is subject to change.)

Tucker-Simmons’s application to the OHRT alleges that Timbercreek aims to push residents out and transform Herongate from an ethnic enclave into a community that’s demographically and culturally more like Alta Vista, an affluent, predominately white neighbourhood directly to the north. (At one point, Tucker-Simmons notes in the application, Timbercreek considered calling the new development “Vistas South,” although it ultimately opted instead for “Vistas Local.”)

This, he contends, constitutes a human-rights violation. His argument is relatively simple: ethnic enclaves such as Herongate serve as a counterweight against the larger systemic unfairness of market capitalism by providing “substantial socioeconomic and cultural dividends that specifically compensate for discrimination experienced as a result of being a member of a protected group.”

In simpler terms, it means that getting to live near other

racialized people, many of whom might understand more about your cultural background, helps the world seem less awful and it’s unfair for a developer to take that away from you.

For instance, a predominantly Somali neighbourhood is more likely to have a grocery store that stocks Somali ingredients. It may also be more likely to have a mosque, or perhaps a school with other Somali kids. And living close to people who look like you and share similar experiences may simply make life more bearable. In Canada, white people experience this as a default state; for racialized minorities, it is something that needs to be sought out and then consciously and constantly maintained.

Although neighbourhoods such as Herongate, says Ted Rutland, a professor of urban geography at Concordia University, are often byproducts of class-segregationist city-planning policies and societal inequality, they become something that’s worth more than the sum of their parts. “Once people end up in those places,” he says, “they build their own forms of community and mutual aid” that make it possible “to maintain traditions, figure out how to engage with the broader city and society — basically, make low-income life that much more viable.” (Rutland is expecting to provide expert-witness testi-

mony as part of Tucker-Simmons’s case.)

The Herongate evictees — and Tucker-Simmons — believe that their experience serves as evidence of the discriminatory impact of gentrification. They see Timbercreek’s demolition of their old neighbourhood as an example of rapid gentrification, which can be far more disruptive than the sort of gentrification that occurs over a long period of time. “It’s no longer this kind of elusive, really high-level systemic discrimination,” Tucker-Simmons says. “It’s still systemic discrimination, but it’s manifested as a concrete industry practice that we can show, with the basis of social-science evidence, actually targets people of colour.”

What’s happening in Herongate, Rutland says, is consistent with a pattern of displacement that’s been repeated since the rise of urban planning in the late 19th century. Low-income and racialized people settle in a neighbourhood. As the land around it is developed, people begin to view the neighbourhood as comparatively undervalued and want to see it cleaned up — and those in a position to profit from such transformation see an opportunity. Today, cash-strapped cities are often motivated by the prospect of increased tax revenue and the fear that, if they don’t give developers a lot of leash, those developers may simply choose to invest else-

where.

“Planning in one moment creates class segregation and in another moment destroys the communities that class segregation produce,” says Rutland. “It’s a painful thing to talk about ... but there’s no way this would happen if the residents were predominately white.”

Timbercreek declined to be interviewed for this story, stating by email, in response to a list of written questions, “While we strongly disagree with the claim, out of respect for that process, the company does not wish to make a public comment on the issues raised in the application.” It continued: “We believe the revitalization of Heron Gate is an outstanding opportunity for both the immediate community and the City of Ottawa ... The diversity found in Heron Gate adds to the fabric of the community today and will for years to come.”

The emailed statement also highlighted elements of Timbercreek’s social contract with the neighbourhood: in December 2018, the company made a commitment not to demolish any more homes whose tenants had not been offered relocation to a new unit at the same rent; to ensure that a portion of units were designated as affordable housing; and to create green space and employment opportunities. Contrary to what the name may suggest, the social contract is not legally binding; it’s little more than a goodwill gesture. In an interview with TVO.org, local councillor Jean Cloutier said that he would like to see it codified into a legally binding document: “We have to ensure that we put those documents in place as the planning file goes forward and ensure the legality of those.”

The city generally maintains that it is not in the business of dictating what private owners can do with their properties — a position it does not seem to adhere to when it comes to another contentious planning file: an unpopular proposed seven-story addition to the Fairmont Château Laurier, one of the city’s oldest and most prominent hotels. City Hall has flexed some muscle on the addition, having gone through nearly a half dozen iterations of the design before settling on the current and probably final version.

Everyone still hates it, but the effort all along has been to insulate the developer from the public backlash and mediate between the two, while publicly claiming not to have an official position on the merits of the development application.

Josh Hawley, an organizer with the Herongate Tenant Coalition, says the group will be watching the city’s next move closely: he theorizes if Ottawa were to step in and block the addition, then it should also be prepared to involve itself in the details of the Timbercreek development.

Mayor Jim Watson has remained largely silent on Herongate. In September 2018, Ottawa Centre MPP Joel Harden tweeted out footage of a Queen’s Park speech in which he addressed the matter, saying, “I encourage the mayor of Ottawa, Jim Watson, to pick up the phone and help somebody other than wealthy developers in Ottawa.”

Watson posted the following response on Twitter: “I have met with the residents and the owners and have secured additional funds for the tenants to move. I have also ensured that all residents when the buildings are rebuilt can move back to their homes at the same rent[.] Aside from picketing and protesting what have you done?” (I reached out to Watson, but he declined to provide comment for this story.)

Tucker-Simmons hopes that the OHRT case will usher in protections for minorities and the neighbourhoods they call home. He also hopes that it will enshrine in law the right of return for vulnerable populations — that is, the right of evicted tenants to rent units in the redeveloped property at rates comparable to those they’d been paying before.

He points out that the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights includes the right to be free from displacement, and that signatory countries — of which Canada is one — may be in breach of this covenant if they allow mass-eviction campaigns without accommodating evictees’ right of return: “We don’t have the same kind of restrictions as other developed countries, like in Germany, all over Europe and South America, where you have to compensate people. You have to guarantee a right of return and minimize the impact of the mass eviction so that you don’t fundamentally change the character of the neighbourhood.”

But in Ontario, as in the rest of Canada, real estate “is really the Wild West,” Tucker-Simmons says. “Property development is really unhinged.”

If his case is successful, it could mean Little Italies with more Italian immigrants, Chinatowns that remain predominantly Chinese. “It could apply to all sorts of places, so developers would just have to be alive to the social composition of the residents,” he says. “You’d have these neighbourhoods that would be preserved, and they’d be more likely to be preserved over the long-term.”

If there are protections to be won through this case, however, they’re still a long way off. The OHRT is backlogged, and the Herongate case is still in the early stages. Tucker-Simmons says that he and his fellow claimants are still waiting for a response from Timbercreek (the City of Ottawa has filed a response, but it has not been made public by the tribunal).

After some legal back-and-forth, Tucker-Simmons and the developer came to an agreement that no applicants will be added to the case after the end of August. Timbercreek will file its response by the end of September. Then, the process of discovery can start, after which there will be a preliminary hearing. All told, it could be another year before the case actually gets a hearing, which itself could take weeks.

For Lato, the wrongs can’t be erased. All that’s possible now is to prevent more from happening in the future. “We have to find solutions to get everything back,” she says. “If you let the landlord do that, it’s going to happen again.”

An earlier version of this article was published by TVO Hubs.



Embroidered logo of the Canadian Union of Educational Workers (CUEW).
Photo: Jason Mihaychuk

FORD, OSAP & SCI
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

a decrease in the cost of their tuition. Mikhail, a second year civil engineering student, told *The Leveller* that SCI not only saves money for students but it also forces university services and programs to be “more conscientious” about their spending.

Nairah explained that she placed value on the programs and resources that could benefit her and her studies, while Mikhail said his decision was based on “what a university *should* be like,” which prompted his decision to opt-in to the radio station, *The Charlatan*, and several others.

Yee criticized this sense of agency as an illusion, telling *The Leveller*, the Conservatives “have already decided what matters more than other things and give the students the illusion of choice that they get to decide what’s important.” After all, the Student Choice Initiative generally only makes services run by student groups optional – especially any groups perceived to have a leftward political tilt, who are likely to challenge the Conservative program.

All of these now-optional fees were also approved in student referendums; Ford is happy to overrule student democracy where it serves his interests. Ultimately, SCI replaces democratic solidarity with consumeristic choice.

Yet this choice is not even consistently applied. Yee specifically mentioned the compulsory athletics fee, a point echoed by other Carleton students, who feel they should not have to pay for it if they never plan on reaping the benefits.

If SCI is about allowing students to opt out of services they don’t use or are not interested in, why can’t they opt out of the university-administered athletics fee? Because the fee is administered by the university, not a student group. Ford only gives students the choice to undermine their own power as a group.

Crucially, while some students might be saving several hundred dollars through these

The Conservatives “have already decided what matters more than other things and give the students the illusion of choice that they get to decide what’s important.”



measures, without the support from OSAP, many are promptly losing thousands.

Long-term, many students will lose more. As fellow-Leveller correspondent Jesse Whattham put it when these changes were first announced, “Changing grants to loans essentially amounts to a penalty for being poor. Those with less financial means will take longer to pay back loans. So they will accrue more interest and pay more in the long run for their education than those with the means to pay quickly.”

With poorer students paying the government more for education, then, these policies amount to a transfer of wealth from poor to rich.

Defanging student unions and media (like *The Leveller*, dear reader) also opens the door to tuition hikes down the road. We continue to predict that the next time a manufactured austerity crisis comes



along, Conservatives (or some future government) will hit students with the kind of 75% tuition increase the Charest Liberals of Québec attempted in 2011.

Charest’s government was taken down by the student movement, but if Ford destroys

the student movement infrastructure through the subtle defunding the SCI represents, who will stand in the way of such wild tuition hikes? Students are being bribed with small savings now, that will cost them dearly down the road.

STRIKES ARE AN ESSENTIAL TACTIC TO FORCE AN EMPLOYER’S HAND

Contract Negotiations for Teaching Assistants and Contract Instructor at Carleton University

Mohammad Akbar

If you’re a teaching assistant or contract instructor at Carleton University, you may have heard that your union, CUPE 4600, is in the midst of bargaining collective agreements. No agreement has been reached yet, which could mean strike action in the future.

What does this all mean?

Though potentially disruptive to students, the right to strike is a necessary one to ensure that the rights of both students and educators are protected on campus. There is a long history of unions on university campuses bargaining for collective agreements, as well as strikes and strike mandates.

The first drives to organize Canadian unions for teaching assistant and contract instructor workers began in 1973 with the Graduate Assistants’ Association. This morphed into the Canadian Union of Education Workers, which finally merged into the much larger Canadian Union of Public Employees.

These unions were founded and organized to protect teaching assistants and contract instructors, who traditionally fill some of the most precarious roles in academia. This continues to this day, where there are already significant reports of students unable to return to studies due to cuts to OSAP, the attempted annihilation of student services through the Student Choice Initiative, and various other measures put in by the Ford government that jeopardize resources and funding for student groups and limit the abilities of unions to collectively bargain.

These collective agreements bring many benefits to students at various institutions. At York University and the University of Toronto, for example, tuition fee grants for students are indexed, meaning that funds increase automatically each year.

In addition, wages for unionized teaching assistants are generally higher than their non-union equivalent. There are rules in place to protect workers from harassment and unfair treatment.

The right to strike is fundamental to securing these victories. Strikes are an essential tactic to force an employer’s hand. For post-secondary institutions, precarious labour is a way to hold workers in place and take as much labour as possible while paying as little as possible. There is no reason for the modern post-secondary institution, rooted in anti-worker sentiments and focused on breaking down organized labour, to want to willingly provide benefits to workers.

Even when the government legislates workers back to work (in contravention of collective bargaining), as they did at York University in 2018, the result is a significant increase in worker benefits and rights.

Carleton also has a long history of students, workers, and student workers standing up for the rights of the many against the wishes of the few. CUPE 2424, the Carleton University Academic Staff Association, and CUPE 4600 have consistently pushed for better for their members, while taking on a seemingly hostile administration focused on crushing worker power. While there is a new university president who has promised to do things differently than the previous administration, it remains to be seen what the new perspective will mean for bargaining.

Ultimately though, the material interests of workers and employers differ, and we cannot expect them to give us what we need and want out of the goodness of their hearts. The only way for workers to protect and expand their rights on is through collective action.

Mohammad Akbar is the director of communications for the Carleton University Graduate Student Association.

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TIMELINE OF CANADIAN COLONIALISM & INDIGENOUS RESISTANCE

By Tim Kitz

Look kids! Cut these timeline entries into cards, shuffle the cards, and invite your friends to put them in order! It’s decolonial fun for the whole family!



“Canada doesn’t give a fuck about Indigenous rights,” as Romeo Saganash, a Cree MP for the NDP, famously put it. Those who have been paying attention to current Liberal regime shouldn’t be surprised by this declaration.

In the 2015 federal election, Justin Trudeau’s Liberals attempted to woo Indigenous voters – and sympathetic settlers galvanized by Idle No More – by promising a renewed nation-to-nation relationship. His friendly attitude towards Indigenous grievances was a refreshing change from years of cantankerous Conservative antagonism, contributing significantly to the “sunny ways” said to have won the hearts of Canadian voters.

Political commentators also attributed Trudeau’s surprise majority government in part to Indigenous voting support. There is a long tradition of Indigenous people refusing to vote, out of skepticism towards Canada’s parliamentary democracy. And for good reason – it being an imposed system of colonial governance, which up until 1960 denied Indigenous people the right to vote unless they relinquished their Indian status.

Yet anyone who put their faith in Liberal promises has to be disappointed – enough to cut loose with a choice cussword or three, perhaps. Trudeau can change the name of a colonial department or building and make Indigenous women members of his Cabinet, but he can’t respect these women or Indigenous consent and he can’t apply UNDRIP into Canadian law.

“Canada doesn’t give a fuck about Indigenous rights.” Those who have been paying attention for the past four years won’t be surprised by this statement. But then, those who have been paying attention to the past 400 years wouldn’t be surprised either. Canada’s imperial parents never cared for Indigenous rights and they birthed the nation out of that active indifference.

After all, Canada’s parliamentary democracy and capitalist economy are systems imposed on the land and its original peoples, just like the 1867 Constitution Act was unilaterally imposed as Canada’s founding document, giving European settlers exclusive control over Indigenous lives, lands, and resources.

What is remarkable about this colonial project is how often it speaks in a benevolent voice – with words that sound good, but actions that undermine Indigenous nationhood and rights. The vocabulary may evolve, but the impulse to ‘improve’ the lot of First Nations by assimilating them into the Canadian economic and political order is tenacious.

Since Contact, then, Euro-Canadian governments seem to have found it difficult to recognize Indigenous peoples as equal partners so long as they retain their cultural identity and Indigenous status. Assimilation would also conveniently eliminate the government’s ‘Indian problem’ – and this is as true today as it was for early colonial governments.

But, as this timeline will show, Indigenous resistance to assimilatory efforts is also nothing new.

1600s

INDIGENOUS WELCOME

Indigenous nations are generally welcoming when Europeans arrive on their territory. They trade with the strange newcomers from a position of strength and prosperity, having developed cultural, political, and ecological systems that have grown and flourished over the course of millennia.

Europeans view Indigenous lands with amazement and envy, having degraded and destroyed most of their natural resources and ecological systems.

TERRA NULLIUS & THE DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY

To justify the appropriation and exploitation of the riches of Indigenous Nations’ land in Africa and the ‘New World,’ European governments develop the Doctrine of Discovery and the legal concept of *terra nullius*.

These legal doctrines say that Turtle Island is ‘empty land’ that belongs to no one. According to this reasoning, Indigenous nations and the ownership or title that they exercise can be ignored because they do not have permanent settlements, farms, Christianity, state governments, or ‘real’ culture, economy or civilization.

Colonial governments grant themselves absolute title to the land by virtue of ‘discovery.’ They say that Indigenous peoples only have subservient usage rights, not having used the land to its ‘full potential,’ but cannot genuinely own land or exercise sovereignty any more than the ‘beasts in the forest.’



Kent Monkman, Miss Chief’s Wet Dream, 2018

1700s

RESISTANCE TO SETTLEMENT

European governments have defined the land as legally ‘empty,’ but when waves of settlers begin arriving, Indigenous communities resist the theft and destruction of their land through diplomatic and military means.

ROYAL PROCLAMATION OF 1763

Settlers and colonial governments have to contend with the presence and resistance of First Nations on territories that they want to exploit. So the British Crown releases a Proclamation acknowledging ‘Indian title,’ but also creating a process by which this title can be extinguished – treaties.

Earlier treaties are largely concerned with establishing a peaceful relationship between the Crown and First Nations, one where they will share the land. The Proclamation of 1763 envisioned treaties as a way for settling land ownership. It outlaws individual land transfers, putting a check on American expansionism in particular. (This antagonizes the American colonies and contributes to their revolt in 1776). The right to acquire Indigenous land is reserved for the Crown – affirming nation-to-nation diplomacy, but mostly so the Crown can acquire First Nations’ land.

1800s

TREATIES

Indigenous nations continue to make treaties – some willingly, some under pressure or outright coercion – with colonial governments in order to safeguard their land and way of life. They see the treaties as agreements to share the land that initiate mutual relationships that must be maintained and renewed; colonial governments see them as one-time transactions by which they acquire land. The written, English version of the treaties often include language where First Nations recognize Crown sovereignty and cede Indigenous territory. Such concepts are often difficult if not impossible to express in a First Nation’s language and culture, but then Crown negotiators are also rarely open and honest.

In return for accepting existing white settlements, First Nations are generally promised an inalienable ‘reserve’ of their traditional territory to live on and are told that they can continue their traditional use of the rest of their territory. Allen G. Harper, an Indian Affairs official, later describes reserves as “the cradle of the Indian civilizing effort – and the means of securing the white man’s freedom to exploit the vast riches of a young dominion.”

INDIAN ACT

With Indigenous nations asserting their treaty rights and still trying to use their territories and reserves in traditional ways, colonial governments turn to assimilation as a way of eliminating their ‘Indian problem.’ In Canada, efforts to assimilate natives center on the Indian Act.

The Act defines who is ‘Indian’ without any consultation, excluding many individuals that Indigenous communities consider members. The Act states that Indigenous women who marry settlers lose their status, as well as their children.. Nations are broken up into smaller ‘bands’ and existing leaders are not recognized. A Western electoral system is imposed on most bands, ignoring traditional selection processes and excluding Indigenous women.

The overall goal is to ‘civilize’ Indigenous people by Christianizing them and forcing them into permanent agricultural settlements. ‘Civilizing’ programs are to be funded by the sale of reserve land. Processes are created for individuals to be enfranchised as Canadian citizens and individual property owners, and for Indigenous nations to be assimilated into the bottom of the governmental order as municipalities. Enfranchised individuals would lose their legal status as ‘Indians,’ while municipalized communities would cease to exist as distinct nations.

Canadian politicians like John A. Macdonald assume this assimilation is inevitable and will be seen as desirable by Indigenous peoples, remarking that “the great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects.”

LATE 1800s - EARLY 1900s

RESISTANCE TO ‘CIVILIZING’ EFFORTS

Many elected band councils refuse to use the limited authority granted to them by the Indian Act. Almost no individuals choose to become enfranchised and most nations refuse to recognize individual deeds granted to those who do. Nations also resist attempts to alienate more of their land, often successfully. Farming programs, meant to replace Indigenous subsistence practices, are deemed a failure. Missionaries struggle to make progress and they become frustrated by their inability to halt traditional ceremonies. On the prairies, the Métis and Cree launch an armed ‘rebellion.’

CULTURAL REPRESSION AND RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Since Indigenous Peoples will not voluntarily ‘civilize’ themselves (i.e. assimilate), the Canadian government decides to force them. It bans spiritual and cultural practices. Indian Affairs and its on-reserve agents exercise totalitarian control over the lives of Indigenous people, forcing them to adopt European norms. Agents control band finances, direct band council meetings, and cast the deciding vote in the event of a tie. Without agents’ permission, individuals cannot, for example, legally write a will, sell crops, slaughter livestock, or leave the reserve.

Indian Affairs is granted the power to override councils and chiefs, and depose them at will. Bands lose control of the disposal of reserve land, their land is leased without permission, and ‘surplus’ reserve land is sold to waves of new settlers.

Most importantly, Indigenous children are taken away from their families, homes, and cultures for schooling in settler culture. Attendance in residential schools is mandatory, and children are punished for speaking their language, or engaging in spiritual and cultural practices. Conditions are deplorable: thousands die from malnutrition and disease. Death rates reach as high as 69% in some institutions. Thousands of students are physically and sexually abused; traumatized survivors return home years later to family they barely know.

With land loss and ecological destruction making most Indigenous communities destitute, they have little means to resist the colonial clampdown. Bands are also isolated by the fragmentation and trauma they have suffered, and the restrictions placed on travelling off-reserve. They tend to initially hope that residential schools will help their children adjust to new realities and flourish – and in turn, help their communities do the same.

LATE ’40s - EARLY ’70s

INDIGENOUS ACTIVISM

Ironically, residential schools help foster a consciousness of being ‘Indian’ rather than simply members of particular bands and nations. ‘Pan-Indian’ organizing and resistance begins in earnest with the formation of groups like the National Indian Brotherhood, a forerunner of today’s Assembly of First Nations. Campaigns to improve the lot of Indigenous peoples find support among settler civil society. This pressure forces the Canadian legislature to consult Indigenous people on the Indian Act for the first time. The Act is reformed, and some of its more draconian aspects are softened.

WHITE PAPER & COLONIAL MEGAPROJECTS

Trudeau’s Liberal government introduce the ‘White Paper on Indian Policy’ in 1969. It uses a rhetoric of individual rights reminiscent of that used by the Civil Rights Movement in order to justify assimilation. It envisions eliminating reserves, the Indian Act, and any recognition of individual ‘Indian status’ or collective aboriginal rights. The existence of aboriginal title is denied, and treaties are dismissed as irrelevant in the context of modern Canada.

Meanwhile, the Canadian state and corporations plan huge development projects – the James Bay Hydro Project and Mackenzie Valley pipeline – on Indigenous territory in Northern Canada. There is no consultation with the Dene, Inuit, Cree, and Métis who would be dramatically affected by these projects.

THE HISTORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 11.

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THREE DEFAMATION LAWSUITS FILED AGAINST TIMBERCREEK

Residents of Heron Gate take legal action
after landlord makes allegations

Mike Hermida

Three residents of Heron Gate have filed defamation lawsuits against their corporate landlord and developer Timbercreek.

The lawsuit alleges that Timbercreek defamed three individuals — Josh Hawley, Ikram Dahir, and Mumina Egal, all members of the Herongate Tenant Coalition — by casting their opposition to mass evictions as “criminal activity,” and by casting them and the coalition as “unstable, unhinged, and extremists.” The developer made these claims, among other places, in a letter sent to Twitter in an attempt to get the Herongate Tenant Coalition account suspended after they posted public information about Timbercreek executives.

Timbercreek’s lawyer, Michael Polowin, also alleged in the same letter that Hawley and Dahir were arrested and charged at a rally in October 2018. Both deny this, however, and no such arrests were reported in media accounts of the demonstration, nor witnessed by multiple Leveller correspondents, even.

Heron Gate is a neighbourhood in the Alta Vista ward of Ottawa. It is home to many racialized people, immigrants and refugees, and people who do not speak English as their first language. The core of the Herongate neighbourhood consists of a housing complex now owned by Timbercreek (who insist on branding it Heron Gate despite past usage).

The lawsuits come in the context of two mass evictions from the complex: once in 2016



where 80 families were evicted and again in 2018 where 150 families were evicted. Timbercreek is carrying out these evictions to make way for luxury condominiums, with “premium rents” that will likely price many former residents out of the neighbourhood.

In a piece for Huffington Post, UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing Leilani Farha called Timbercreek “not your typical landlord” — saying that they practice “unscrupulous demographic engineering in search of profits: replacing poor and vulnerable people with those who possess greater purchasing power.”

“Some people can’t afford homes outside of this community,” noted Dahir, a community organizer who has been living in the neighbourhood for 27 years.

Timbercreek exploits the lack of privilege that many tenants have. Dahir explained that “when you go into [Timbercreek’s] office, if you don’t speak any English or have a hard time understanding, they actually do abuse you.”

To challenge Timbercreek’s power, some residents have organized under the collective name Herongate Tenant Coalition. This coalition has been at the forefront of the struggle against the evictions and have proven adept at getting under Timbercreek’s skin.

Two ex-Heron Gate residents are also suing the developer in small claims court, alleging that Timbercreek has been ignoring its tenants’ maintenance requests. Some families have had to deal with no heat, persistent flooding, mould growth, and leaks, which residents claim Timbercreek knew about but ignored in order to let the properties fall into disrepair.

Failing to maintain a property saves landlords money in the short term and allows them to condemn and demolish buildings in the long run, replacing them with more profitable, high-end properties. This is gentrification 101.

Although the coalition is no stranger to engaging in activism, its members reject the allegations made against them by Timbercreek that they were arrested and charged as part of their demonstrations.

“This is patently false and clearly defamatory,” said Yavar Hameed, the Ottawa-based human rights lawyer represent-

ing the three claimants, in an interview with *The Leveller*. Hameed claims that Timbercreek hasn’t disputed that the allegations were inaccurate and have instead sought to limit damages. “Instead of defending the actions on their merits, the defendant Timbercreek has sought to challenge the extent of damages that can be claimed, suggesting that three cases can only be allocated up to \$25,000 cumulatively.”

A ruling favourable to Hawley, Dahir and Egal would symbolize a great victory for the members of Herongate as a whole; the defamation case is one aspect of a wider legal battle being waged in both small claims courts and in Ontario’s human rights courts. “These cases are examples of [the tenants’] struggle, which directly challenge Timbercreek’s otherwise unfettered control over their community,” said Hameed.

Such a ruling would also prove that it is possible to fight back when the odds are stacked against a group of marginalized people. Timbercreek has significant staff and legal resources to throw into the fray in their battle with the Herongate Tenant Coalition. As documented previously in *The Leveller*, developers in Ottawa also enjoy a cosy relationship with city politicians and staff.

All of this means the legal battlefield is tilted, formally or otherwise, against the residents of Herongate. So while they are fighting Timbercreek and the evictions in court, they have also been getting the word out on social media and participating in protests and direct action. The coalition believes by alleging that these protests had led to arrests, Timbercreek was attempting to scare them off from further demonstrations and to get Twitter to “permanently disable” the coalition’s Twitter account, in the words of the letter Timbercreek lawyers sent to Twitter. This is in line with earlier “cease and desist” letters Timbercreek sent to the coalition, calling for them to immediately stop posting on social media over supposed defamation.

Hameed objects to these tactics and notes that the coalition has every right to do what they have been doing. “They are organizing,” noted Hameed. “They are protecting their right to be critical of the land developer’s tactics.”

Les Sans-Culottes

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

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There are major consequences to inaction on climate change that are already being demonstrated through natural disasters, economic hardship, and ecological harm.

Ever since the '90s, Canadian governments have been all talk and no action on climate change. The major parties are talking again about the climate in this campaign – more than ever – but it's hard to separate the wheat from the chaff.

To that end, this article offers a critical summary of what the major parties are promising on climate change and touches on whether they would or could achieve these goals.

First, let's quickly remind ourselves of the dire situation we're facing and the international commitments we have made to try and survive it.

THE CRISIS OVERSIMPLIFIED

The climate crisis is here. With every report published by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the ominous warnings become increasingly alarming. All sectors must immediately and drastically decrease greenhouse gas emissions in order to hold global average temperature increases to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, while efforts should ultimately pursue to halt the increase at 1.5°C.

Signatories to the 2015 Paris Agreement committed to a reduction in emissions that could meet this target. Yet signatory countries to various climate agreements in recent decades have consistently failed to meet their targets, leading to a climate strike rebellion among global youth. Everyday people are increasingly frustrated by political and economic elites who consistently stifle efforts at reducing emissions.

With a federal election looming amid IPCC alarm bells and global youth resistance, climate change has become a prominent election issue like no other time in Canada's history. What are the major parties saying they would do about it?

THE LIBERAL PARTY

Since being elected in 2015, the Liberal party has established a federal carbon tax with a clear plan until 2022. The tax slapped a fine of \$10 per tonne of carbon pollution emitted. The fine increased by \$10 dollars till 2022 to an amount of \$50 per tonne. It is unclear if the price will continue to scale past 2022.

The Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) has stated that to abide by the Paris Agreement, Canada would have to double the tax to a total of \$102 a tonne, unless other drastic actions are taken alongside the current tax policy. The discrepancy has allowed the Conservatives to put political pressure on the government, accusing them of intentionally hiding a plan to keep raising taxes to hold up our end of the international deal.

This has also led to statements by Environment Minister Catherine McKenna like "We will meet our 2030 target through what we are already doing and new measures, including tackling plastic pollution, doubling the amount of nature that we are protecting, [and] investments in cleantech and innovation."

These sorts of eco-goodies

were mentioned on the Liberal party platform from 2015, Liberal budgets and throne speeches throughout their term, and will undoubtedly get announced some more in staggered updates to the platform to generate publicity throughout the electoral campaign. They are vague promises that have led to little action in the first term (so what would change in a second?), and their projected impact on carbon emissions is uncertain even if they were enacted.

To sum up, the Liberals have no clear plan to get to Paris Agreement benchmarks and a clear record of failure at meeting their climate change promises, no matter how photogenically they're presented.

It seems like the Liberals don't want to scare away Conservative-leaning voters or offend industry by upping the tax to effective levels, but still want to appeal to progressives with rhetoric and skin-deep change. This is a classic Liberal electoral strategy and it may work well for them again. After all, they're excellent politicians and terrible climate leaders.

THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

Andrew Scheer recently unveiled his climate plan. It's helpfully titled "A Real Plan" so you know it's serious. In the 33-page booklet, there's glossy photos of a sunkissed Scheer striking poses by a cornfield, harbour, waterfall, greenhouse, sunset, beach, and while planting a tree – at an oil refinery in Jamnagar, India, if you can decipher and believe the small tasteful caption.

This real plan sells the dream: to address the problem of climate change "without taking money out of Canadians' pockets." However, the first policy principal of the plan is "Green technology, not taxes."

Now when politicians speak vaguely of innovation and technology solving the climate crisis, far too often they speak of interesting ideas that do not yet exist or are not yet economically viable. Unfortunately, we have a deadline to get our emissions in check, so leading with a science-fiction solution is disheartening, if not unexpected.

It is worth noting that this real plan does include some real facts. It acknowledges that anthropogenic climate change is real. It also acknowledges the gap between the current carbon tax plan and what would need to be done to meet Paris Agreement benchmarks, according to the PBO.

However, Scheer's real plan sets no

VOTING WHILE THE WORLD BURNS

EVALUATING SIX PARTY PLATFORMS FOR CLIMATE ACTION

BY MORGANA ABBY & LEVELLER STAFF

ILLUSTRATION BY ADAM ASHBY GIBBARD

goals beyond scrapping the Liberals' inadequate carbon tax and replacing it with... nothing.

Well, not quite nothing. When the Conservatives roll back the carbon tax, they will replace it with a new set of vague and less aggressive incentives and policies. They will set no standards or benchmarks for emission reductions. But they will provide a green homes tax credit and establish a Green Technology and Innovation Fund. They will set emissions standards for major emitters and make them get a Green Investment Standards Certification that will make a company that produces too many emissions to spend a “proportionate amount in an eligible clean tech investment.”

Who will set these emission standards and proportionate amounts? Who will administer this certification? This sounds like an awful lot of regulation and bureaucracy. Here we thought Conservatives favoured flat taxes and market incentivization – but not when it comes to carbon, apparently, or saving humanity and half of the biosphere from extinction. No, those are too important to trust to the magic of market forces.

By now you should be able to see why Greenpeace strategist Keith Stewart told the CBC that the Conservatives real plan to tackle climate change is "a plan only an oil lobbyist could love. It checks all the key boxes on the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers' wish list and if it ever became federal policy it would deepen the climate crisis."

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The NDP's "Power to Change: A new deal for climate action and good jobs" may be the most ambitious yet concrete climate plan ever put forward by the party. While Singh's New Deal would maintain the Liberal price on carbon to 2022, with a few tweaks, overall it includes a 450-megatonne reduction by 2030, which equates to about a 37 per cent reduction of emissions below 2005 levels.

Significantly, the NDP plan has been touted as the strongest across party platforms regarding implementing emissions-reduction accountability mechanisms. Targets would be legally-binding under an NDP government, and interim targets measures established and tracked by a Climate Accountability Office.

Further, the NDP promises to spend \$15 billion to drive the transition required to meet the Paris mark, including the creation of 300,000 jobs within their first mandate. Singh's New Deal also promises net carbon-free electricity and all new buildings net-zero ready by 2030, to replace diesel use with renewable microgrids in Indigenous and northern communities, to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies, and to continue carbon pricing while reducing exemptions for companies.

Now the NDP typically attempts a balancing act in order to woo leftist and more centrist voters. This is a tricky and tedious line to tow; when Mulcair's steered the party to the right in the last election, it resulted in the party falling flat on its face and allowed the Liberals to capture the vote of many naive progressive-leaning voters.

In 2019, the NDP seems to be edging left, deploying the language of the

Green New Deal – U.S. legislation aiming to address climate change and economic inequality, while avoiding talk of the 'socialism' its most prominent American proponents happily flaunt – and while catering to workers in natural resource and manufacturing sectors, supported in part by a proposed \$3 billion Canadian Climate Bank.

Jagmeet Singh's environmental plan is uniquely connected to the role of Indigenous Peoples, unlike other party platforms. Singh promises to make Indigenous peoples “full and equal partners” in fighting climate change and to recognize the role of Indigenous knowledge and the importance of “uphold(ing)” Indigenous rights to protect lands, waterways, and biodiversity.”

It's not easy to judge if the NDP would or could implement all these measures, since they have no history as a federally governing party to go on. They do have a clear plan to meet Paris Agreement targets, however. At the moment, the biggest challenge is simply getting elected. The party is sitting at 13 per cent in the polls as of this writing and CBC's Poll Tracker doesn't even bother presenting their chances of winning.

THE GREEN PARTY

The 2019 election could be a breakthrough for the federal Green Party. Climate change and environmental degradation is a top priority for Canadian voters – a mid-September Ipsos poll assessing voter priority put climate change third behind health care and affordability/cost of living and thus even ahead of the coveted economy.

This gives the Greens room to shine and the party is riding a wave of momentum, scoring recent breakthroughs by electing members to provincial legislatures in B.C., New Brunswick, and P.E.I.

The federal Greens are promising a 60 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 2005 levels by 2030, touting their plan as “Mission: Possible – The Green Climate Emergency Action Plan.” This is both more specific and more ambitious than any other party. (To put it in perspective, that doubles the current Liberal target). The Greens argue that only by taking such measures can the Paris emissions-reduction targets be met.

The Green's “Mission Possible” includes a 20-point plan that is by far the most concise yet comprehensive we've looked at so far. They pledge to eliminate all fossil fuel subsidies, refuse any new oil drilling or pipeline developments, and ban all fracking. The Greens would set a target of 100 per cent renewable electricity by 2030 and zero emissions by 2050, saying they would ban internal combustion engines by 2030.

As reflected in its title, their platform emphasizes that we are in a climate *emergency* and they would establish a cross-party cabinet “modelled on the war cabinets of Mackenzie King and Winston Churchill” to address this emergency.

So what's the catch? Obtainability. Although all 20 of the plan's goals are logical responses to the challenges of sustainability, actually following through would involve drastic action – and the social licence and broad political will to do that does not yet exist, it seems.

The Green Party's infrastructure plans have also come under fire from

several directions. They aim for a kind of national energy self-sufficiency, in the long run through a national electrical grid to transport renewable energy interprovincially and in the short-term by cutting off oil imports and transporting oil from Western to Eastern Canada.

Environmental scientist Blair King criticizes this admittedly ambitious infrastructure plan as impractical and overly expensive in a piece for The Orca; King is also the kind of self-described “pragmatic environmentalist” who supports the Trans Mountain Pipeline and the Site C dam.

These plans have also faced criticism from within party ranks for not taking a harder line on tar sands production. Back in May of this year, Quebec Green Alex Tyrrell made headlines by publicly condemning Elizabeth May's approach to cutting off oil imports and instead relying on Canadian crude – including tar sands bitumen – until weaning the country off fossil fuels by 2050.

Regardless of May's questionable stance on tar sands production, a vote for the Green Party is a vote for a comprehensive emissions-reduction plan that would undeniably take commitment, time, and resources to accomplish with any level of success.

BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS

The Bloc Québécois is a unique party in the federation. It is the only federal party committed solely to furthering the interests of its provincial constituency. In recent decades the Bloc has held significant influence in Canada's House of Commons. Since its first election run in 1993 (when it won 54 out of 75 seats in Québec), it has been either the second or third largest party in the House, until it rolled under the NDP's “orange wave” in 2011.

The Bloc's platform “Le Québec, c'est nous” outlines that the party is sovereigntist and works exclusively for the interests of Québec. Within this, the platform outlines eight guiding principles and the first on the list asserts “souveraineté environnementale” (environmental sovereignty). It promises a bill granting Québec the authority to block any federal projects in the province, including pipelines, airports, and cell towers.

In the Bloc's environmental platform, “L'environnement, c'est nous,” the province is touted as one that doesn't produce oil yet has abundant renewable natural resources – in stark contrast with Canada, which acts like a petrol-state whose policies cater to big Western oil.

Like other parties, the Bloc criticizes the inadequacies of the Liberal carbon tax scheme. It then proposes that Ottawa levy a carbon tax that targets provinces that have greater per-capita emissions and that these revenues be distributed to provinces with lesser per-capita emissions – a green equalization payments system.

Regarding greenhouse gas emissions, the Bloc proposes implementing a law to mandate emissions reductions in line with Paris targets. The law would include an accountability mechanism compelling Ottawa to account for all of its actions, including subsidies. The Bloc underlines that the federal government has never respected targets going back to the Kyoto Protocol and that accountability measures are required.

Other environmental commitments outlined by the Bloc include an outright rejection of the Energy East pipeline, an end to fossil fuel subsidies, rebates for electric vehicles, green renovations, and a net-zero emission law mandating that auto dealers sell a minimum number of zero-emission vehicles, in line with what California has done.

In Québec, those voters intent on casting a climate change ballot will have to consider the Bloc among the Greens and NDP when stepping in to the poll booth.

PEOPLE'S PARTY OF CANADA

No serious voter concerned with climate change and the environment should consider the People's Party. Former Conservative Cabinet member Maxime Bernier left the party to form the People's Party, not long after Bernier narrowly lost the leadership race to Andrew Scheer. Bernier now leads a libertarian-populist party who draws its greatest support from the xenophobic demographic of Canada's electorate.

While the anti-immigration zeal is worrying, Bernier's environmental platform is more laughable. “Global Warming and Environment: Rejecting Alarmism and Focusing on Concrete Improvements” is an exercise in denying the human role in climate change.

Here's a select quote or two:

“Until twelve thousand years ago, much of Canada was under ice, and it is thanks to natural climate change that we can live here today.” How insightful!

The platform continues, “There is however no scientific consensus on the theory that CO2 produced by human activity is causing dangerous global warming today or will in the future, and that the world is facing environmental catastrophes unless these emissions are drastically reduced. Many renowned scientists continue to challenge this theory.”

There is much more, but we cannot devote any further space here. We invite you to check it out, if you would like to learn how CO2 is “beneficial for agriculture,” how climate change policy debate has been “hijacked” to spread fear, and how children are being manipulated to protest and pressure their parents.

To summarize, the People's Party pledges to withdraw from the Paris Accord, abolish the carbon tax, and cut all subsidies for green technology.

CONCLUSION

Election season arrives with much fanfare and each day of the campaign is greeted with breathless play-by-play commentary by media pundits. Voting is treated like a sacred duty, yet by the time election comes and gone we tend to feel deflated. At *The Leveller*, we know that voting can make a difference, but voting itself will not solve climate change. The climate justice movement we need may involve electoral politics (or not), but it will certainly have to be so much bigger than that, involving mass social movements, protest, public and clandestine direct actions, broad cultural changes, dramatic economic shifts and lifestyle changes, etc., etc.The fight doesn't end at the ballot box, it begins there.

OPIRG CARLETON DISORIENTATION WEEK

SEPT
23

ANTI-FASCIST CRYPTO-PARTY
UNIVERSITY CENTRE 426 | 12:30PM-2PM

PROTEST HISTORY WALKING TOUR
NATIONAL GALLERY, IN FRONT OF SPIDER | 3PM-6PM

SEPT
24

\$15 & FAIRNESS WORKSHOP
DUNTON TOWER 2017 | 2PM-4PM

CUPE 4600 PANEL
DUNTON TOWER 2017 | 6:30PM-8PM

SEPT
25

LATERAL VIOLENCE PANEL
DUNTON TOWER 2017 | 5:30PM-7:30PM

INDIGENOUS SOLIDARITY WORKSHOP
UNIVERSITY CENTRE 326 | 7:30PM-9:30PM

SEPT
26

COMMUNITY HARM REDUCTION FAIR
UNIVERSITY CENTRE GALLERIA | 11AM-3PM

DAN KOVALIK ANTI-WAR TALK
UNIVERSITY CENTRE 180 | 1PM-2PM

HARM REDUCTION 101 WORKSHOP
UNIVERSITY CENTRE 326 | 2:30PM-4PM

PEOPLE'S DETOX FILM
UNIVERSITY CENTRE 326 | 5PM-6:30PM

SEPT
28

FRUIT, STAR, CANDY BAR
10PM-2AM | KINKI LOUNGE (41 YORK STREET)

GO TO OPIRGCARLETON.ORG FOR MORE INFO

1970s - 80s

RED POWER, PUBLIC OPINION, AND COURT BATTLES

Fuelled by outrage at Liberal arrogance, the Red Power movement asserts Indigenous sovereignty and calls for treaties to be honoured. Its emphasis on pride in Indigenous identity also births a cultural and spiritual renaissance.

Meanwhile, Indigenous resistance to Northern megaprojects gains significant press coverage and public support, forcing the government to stop ignoring and start negotiating with the Cree, Inuit, Dené, and Métis. The Native Peoples' Caravan and the Constitution Express – both grassroots-organized cross-country treks from B.C. to Ottawa – raises awareness about broken treaties, Indigenous grievances, and the need to recognize Indigenous rights.

Having regained access to the courts and control of band finances, Indigenous groups challenge government control of hunting, fishing, and land in the courts. Eventually the Supreme Court acknowledges the continued existence of aboriginal title, to the chagrin of Trudeau's Liberals.

MODERN-DAY TREATIES AND THE CANADIAN CONSTITUTION

Trudeau's Liberals abandon the White Paper and its most egregious principles. While they refuse to call it a treaty, they sign the James Bay Agreement with the Cree and Inuit of Québec, who win a say in resource development and significant territorial and financial settlements – but only in return for the surrender of aboriginal title over other portions of their territories.

Later, bowing to the pressure from the courts, First Nations leadership, and grassroots Indigenous activists, Section 35 of the newly-created Canadian Constitution does recognize the “aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada.” It leaves these rights undefined.

MID-80s

INDIAN ACT AMENDMENT

After a century of pushing back against the feds, Indigenous advocates win an amendment to the Indian Act, Bill C-31, which eliminates sexist provisions which meant that women lost their Indian status and band membership if they married non-status men. Affected women (and their children) could apply to restore their status, but only if they lost it after 1951. This “Act to Amend the Indian Act” also finally eliminates enfranchisement and grants bands greater powers – but only to make bylaws, a kind of municipal and subservient self-government.

BUFFALO JUMP REPORT

This leaked cabinet memo from Mulroney's Conservative government reveals their desire to return to many of the White Paper's goals. It calls for the extinguishment of aboriginal title, the establishment of Indigenous governments as municipalities, and the devolution of Indian Affairs' responsibilities and spending to provinces and municipalities. This policy provides the model for the government's land claims negotiations with First Nations and the one agreement Canada signs during Conservative rule with the Sechelt First Nation. Mulroney also reopens constitutional negotiations with Québec and the other provinces – leading to the Meech Lake Accord – but do not bother to include First Nations.

EARLY 1990s

MORE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM AND THE OKA CRISIS

The Meech Lake Accord fails when Elijah Harper, a Cree member of the Manitoba legislature, refuses to grant the unanimous vote needed for approval. He criticizes the accord for not consulting with First Nations. In response, Indigenous groups are consulted in the next round of constitutional talks. This leads to the Charlottetown Accord's recognition of aboriginal self-government; while the accord is vague, it promises aboriginal governments would be constitutionally autonomous of federal and provincial governments. Yet the accord is rejected in a nation-wide referendum.

Meanwhile, Mohawks at Kanesatake erect a barricade to prevent the town of Oka, QC, from clearing pines to expand a golf course and build 60 condos. Since Louis XV granted the land to Sulpician missionaries in 1717 on behalf of First Nations, every colonial government has agreed the land in question can't possibly belong to the Mohawks themselves. With solidarity blockades springing up around the country, the Mohawks repel a raid by the Sûreté du Québec and stare down the Canadian military. The crisis shocks Canadian society and leads to some significant soul-searching.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES (RCAP)

In the wake of Oka and Meech Lake, the Conservatives' Buffalo Jump policy is in tatters and they desperately need to respond to Indigenous grievances and assertions of power. They set up a Royal Commission. Five years later, its report calls for sweeping changes to Canadian-Indigenous relations and recommends self-government for First Nations.

Chrétien's Liberals dismiss the report and its recommendations as too costly, having swept to power promising “a new partnership with aboriginal peoples that is based on trust, mutual respect and participation in the decision making process.”

Eight years later, Paul Martin's new Liberal government trumpets the signing of the Kelowna Accord with Indigenous leaders and provincial premiers. The accord ignores self-government and any challenging RCAP recommendations, but designates \$5 billion for Indigenous education, housing, health services, and economic development. When the Liberals are defeated, the incoming Conservatives jettison the deal.

LATE 90s - 2000s

THE BIRTH OF NUNAVUT

Ever since opposition to the James Bay Hydro Project coalesced among the Inuit, Inuit Tapirisat ('Inuit United') pushed the concept of an Inuit territorial government. Almost forty years later, the largest land-claim and self-governance agreement in Canadian history creates the territory of Nunavut ('Our Land') for the Inuit people. The territory's justice and political system incorporate traditional Inuit governance principles; its legislative assembly, for example, does not have political parties and works by consensus. The territory has four official languages: English, French, Inuktitut, and Inuinnaqtu. The self-government and territorial and financial concessions of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement also come at a price – the surrender of aboriginal title and acknowledgement of underlying Crown title by the Inuit.

COMPREHENSIVE LAND CLAIMS PROCESS

Successive Liberal and Conservative governments entrench a comprehensive land claims process along the lines of the James Bay Agreement and the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. The Canadian government continue to insist that the extinguishment of aboriginal title and rights is a prerequisite to the negotiation of land claims and self-determination. Many First Nations feel forced to come to the table, in order to halt or moderate devastating resource development on their land. In order to take part in the negotiation process, Indigenous groups must also borrow large sums of money from the government. These debts give the government significant leverage and will be subtracted from future settlements.

On-reserve living standards can be desperate, and government services will only be brought up to settler standards (or something like it) through the signing of these 'self-termination' deals, as Mohawk policy analyst Russell Diabo has called them. These final agreements would convert First Nations into municipalities and their reserves into fee simple (i.e. individually-owned) lands. No compensation for past crimes, injustices, or mismanagement is allowed, and First Nations must release the Crown from any future compensation claims.

As it continues, the Land Claims Process basically ignores a growing body of Supreme Court decisions affirming aboriginal title – and then provisions in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), as it is developed then passed.

2000s

ADOPTION OF UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (UNDRIP)

In the works for more than 25 years and created by Indigenous representatives in negotiation with UN state actors, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is finally passed by the UN's General Assembly. UNDRIP affirms Indigenous Peoples right to self-determination and self-government; to their traditional lands and means of subsistence; to redress for land theft, forced assimilation, and economic deprivation; and to FPIC – free, prior, and informed consent for development projects affecting their lands and resources.

FOOT-DRAGGING ON UNDRIP AND LEGISLATING FOR FIRST NATIONS

Canada is one of only four nations to oppose the UNDRIP, which includes recognition of Indigenous territorial rights and their right to self-government. After other holdout nations indicate they will adopt the declaration, Harper's Conservative government finally endorses it. But it calls the UNDRIP 'aspirational' and refuses to examine or change Canadian laws and practices that might contradict it, such as the comprehensive land claims process.

Meanwhile, the Conservatives introduce several omnibus bills changing environmental protections (to clear the way for resource development generally and pipelines specifically) and the administration of First Nations, without consulting Indigenous communities.

2010s

IDLE NO MORE

Three Indigenous women activists in Saskatoon lead a teach-in on the omnibus Conservative bills affecting First Nations, which births the largest Indigenous mass movement in Canadian history. Idle No More sparks teach-ins, protests, blockades, and round dances in public places across Turtle Island and beyond. It is often organized and propagated through social media. Idle No More calls for a renewal of the relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples on a nation to nation basis, environmental protection, honouring the treaties, and cultural revitalization. The diffuse movement tends to be led by grassroots, urban-based Indigenous women and sometimes criticizes official Assembly of First Nations leadership, which is often reserve-based men. Idle No More generates significant settler sympathy and participation, along with a backlash in some quarters.

CHEAP LIBERAL TALK

Trudeau Liberals sweep to power, echoing Idle No More rhetoric and promising a new nation-to-nation relationship based on the recognition of Indigenous rights, respect, cooperation, and partnership. However, his government continues making unilateral decisions regarding pipelines and other resource-extracting and development projects on Indigenous territories, without proper consultation or consent, stating that Indigenous communities do not have veto power.

The government also puts together the Indigenous Rights, Recognition and Implementation Framework, which expresses a clear and coherent set of goals revolving around domesticating Indigenous self-determination within Canadian Confederation. These goals have been ordered into legislation and policy in a manner that guides First Nations towards a narrow model of “self-government” outside of the Indian Act. Indigenous critics call it the new White Paper.

With the next election approaching the Liberals back away from Indigenous rights. Trudeau launches the election campaign without even mentioning Indigenous Peoples, a far cry from four years ago. Maybe the Liberals realize his glib Indigenous-friendly rhetoric was no longer credible; maybe they think the recent rightward political current and continuing popularity of pipelines make talk of respect for Indigenous rights a political liability.

NOW

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' STRATEGIC POSITION

Indigenous communities have been damaged by centuries of colonialism, but continue to exist on their traditional territories – often in more remote and relatively untouched areas, but also as a significant and growing population in urban centres. A cultural revival continues, and some form of aboriginal title can no longer be denied.

Meanwhile, hundreds of land claims negotiations, many going back decades, drag on. Colonial governments and corporations still dream of new and never-ending cycles of resource exploitation on Indigenous land, often with catastrophic ecological implications. Indigenous Nations are generally the biggest challenge to these plans for economic ‘development,’ from Secwepemc Tiny House Warriors and Wet’suwet’en camps blocking pipelines, to Grassy Narrows Anishnaabeg and Barriere Lake Algonquin logging opposition, Innu and Inuit resistance the Muskrat Falls dam, and much more.



Based on a two-part article that appeared in The Leveller 5.4 and 5.5 in 2013 to put Idle No More in context. Developed into a game by Indigenous Solidarity Ottawa, for use in their Introduction to Anti-Colonialism & Indigenous Solidarity workshop.

PHARMACEUTICAL MARKETING

The Roots of the Opioid Crisis



Nikita Lewchuk

The opioid epidemic has taken lives across Canada at such a scale that it is beginning to affect average life expectancy. According to Stats Canada, 2017 was the first year average life expectancy did not rise in Canada for nearly four decades.

Hardest hit were the provinces of BC and Alberta, where life expectancy actually dropped. (Ontario and Manitoba saw no change, while the remaining provinces all had small increases.)

Stats Canada is unequivocal about the cause, titling one section of its report on life expectancy “Accidental drug poisoning deaths offset gains in life expectancy in other areas.”

Where Did the Opioid Crisis Come From?

The roots of the opioid crisis can be traced back to the development of pharmaceutical marketing in mid-century America by a man named Arthur Sackler.

Arthur Sackler pioneered direct-to-doctor marketing and dramatically changed the way doctors prescribe medication all across North America, “bringing the full power of advertising and promotion to pharmaceutical marketing,” as the Medical Advertising Hall of Fame put it. Working with his two brothers he constructed a media campaign that would see the amount of antibiotics in the United States increase five times over from 1950 to 1956. (It didn’t hurt that he published a periodical for doctors or that the head of the US Food and Drug Administration’s antibiotics division was paid almost \$300,000 by one of Sackler’s companies, as a bribe to promote their drugs.) In the ‘60s, Sackler promoted the mass prescribing of tranquilizers like Valium and Librium.

The Sackler brothers purchased Purdue-Frederick Company in 1952, later Purdue Pharma. By the ‘80s, Purdue’s biggest seller was a time-release opiate called MS Contin, but the patent was about to expire, threatening their profits. After Arthur died in 1987, his son Richard spearheaded the development of a time-release version of oxycodone, a powerful opioid developed by Ger-

man scientists in 1916.

As Purdue rolled out their new drug, OxyContin, the Sackler family applied Arthur’s modus operandi to massive success.

The Marketing of Oxycontin

Prior to the release of Oxycontin, opioids were used to treat cancer pain during end of life care, due to their addictive nature.

Purdue’s massive marketing campaign succeeded in convincing doctors it was safe to prescribe these opioids for anything from chronic back pain to acute postoperative pain. As captured in a 1993 *New York Times* article, experts on Purdue’s payroll opined that opioids were a “gift from nature” and that reticence to prescribe them was nothing more than “opiophobia” based on a “medical myth.”

Meanwhile Purdue had done no studies to establish if OxyContin was addictive, but got the FDA to insert messages into the drug’s packaging asserting that its delayed formula “is believed to reduce the abuse liability.” (The FDA official who approved this measure was rewarded with a plum post at Purdue two years later.) This became a slogan sales reps were trained to parrot, the *New Yorker* revealed. Purdue also recklessly pushed high doses to maximize profits.

The Opioid Epidemic in Three Waves

The consequences of these overprescribing patterns are severe. The *Washington Post* found as many as one third of people who take prescription opioids for chronic pain misuse them. Between eight and 12 per cent of prescribed individuals go on to develop an opioid use disorder, according to the U.S.-based National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

As people become addicted, they take higher and higher doses of the drug, leading to overdoses. OxyContin, Methadone, and Vicodin are the deadliest prescription drugs, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The widespread misuse of these prescription opioids, beginning in the ‘90s, is consid-

ered the first wave of the opioid crisis. As this opioid crisis began to take hold, study after study was published indicating opioids were largely ineffective in treating chronic or long-term pain – but increased the risk of serious harms due to abuse and overdoses.

Yet even as prescription rates dropped dramatically, deaths did not.

When people’s prescriptions run out or are restricted, some turn to heroin – the so-called second wave of the crisis, visible by the mid-2000s. This trend is visible all across Canada and the U.S., according to both the CDC and CIHI: rates of prescription drug abuse are falling, but deaths have largely remained steady.

In the last five years, a third wave of the epidemic has emerged: accidental overdose deaths from heroin laced with synthetic opioids – in particular fentanyl. Fentanyl is extremely potent – anywhere from 50 to 100 times as powerful as morphine, NIDA says – and can be easily manufactured, making it easy to produce in illicit labs.

Cutting batches of heroin with fentanyl is an easy way to make money selling drugs. It has become increasingly common for drug dealers to mix large quantities of low-quality heroin with a small amount of fentanyl. Doing so dramatically increases the chances of an accidental overdose.

Despite the double digit drop in opioid prescription rates across B.C. from 2016 to 2017, deaths from illicit street drugs rose from 993 to 1,495 – nearly 74 times the number of deaths just 10 years earlier.

Fighting the Opioid Epidemic

To combat the epidemic, officials in cities across the province have been calling for access to medical-grade heroin for those in need.

To date, Vancouver is the only city in North America to have instituted such a policy. Providence Crosstown clinic offers “medical-grade heroin (diacetylmorphine) and the legal analgesic hydromorphone within a supervised clinical setting to chronic substance use patients,” according to their website.

Additionally, Vancouver

Experts on Purdue Pharma’s payroll opined that opioids were a “gift from nature” and that reticence to prescribe them was nothing more than “opiophobia” based on a “medical myth.”

mayor Kennedy Stewart, recently called for a Health Canada exemption from federal drug laws so that a non-profit organization can offer diacetylmorphine, a safe substitute opioid.

BC has also opened dozens of overdose prevention and supervised consumption sites, where people can use illegal drugs under medical supervision. So far, no deaths have been recorded at these sites and they may be helping to turn the tide of overdose deaths. The BC Coroner’s office reported that overdose deaths dropped 30% in the first five months of 2019, compared to the same period in 2018.

Accountability for Pharmaceutical Companies?

Meanwhile, pharmaceutical companies are only now beginning to face the repercussions for the aggressive marketing tactics that launched the opioid crisis.

The state of Oklahoma became the first state to successfully sue a major pharmaceuti-

cal company over this epidemic on Aug. 26 of this year, according to CNN. The suit named three major pharmaceutical companies: Teva, Janssen, and Purdue Pharma. Two of the companies, Teva Pharmaceuticals and Purdue Pharma, settled for amounts of \$85 and \$270 million (U.S.) respectively.

The state won its case against the third company, Janssen Pharmaceuticals, the creator of fentanyl and a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson. Janssen was ordered to pay \$572 million to Oklahoma.

On Sept. 15, Purdue Pharma officially filed for bankruptcy as part of a 12 billion dollar settlement to resolve over 2,600 additional cases across the United States.

Days after the ruling, Purdue Canada proclaimed itself to be a separate entity from its southern neighbor.

BC Attorney General David Eby intends to continue the class-action suit he filed in 2018 against Purdue Canada, according to CBC. The suit aims to recover healthcare costs for the opioid crisis on

behalf of the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, on account of Purdue Canada’s misleading and aggressive opioid marketing.

Amid reports of the Sackler family transferring funds to offshore locations, Reidar Morgan, Lead Council on the B.C. lawsuit, applied to add individual Sacklers and senior Purdue Canada management to the claim.

Incidentally, the Nazis seem to have had a soft spot for oxycodone. They overdosed concentration camp inmates with it and dressed them in Polish army uniforms in 1939 as part of Operation Himmler, the false flag operation that opened World War II; Hitler received regular oxycodone injections and the unavailability of the drug in Germany in January 1945 probably contributed to some bunker crankiness as he went through withdrawal; Goring must have been holding out on him, however, as he was later captured by American forces with thousands of doses of it in two suitcases.

Worried about the climate crisis?

Join us for our November town hall as we discuss what we can do as a province to tackle climate change.



Town Hall on the Climate Crisis
Saturday, November 16th
11 AM - 1:30 PM
RSVP at www.joelharden.ca

Joel Harden
MPP / Député provincial
Ottawa Centre
 109 rue Catherine St.
 613-722-6414
joelharden.ca





Hundreds of students marched on Parliament Hill urging government action on climate change in March, 2018. Credit: Kieran Delamont



THE ISSUE OF OUR TIME

A Preview of the Upcoming Climate Strike

Marcus Levis

There are many issues in 2019 that divide us: racial inequality, equal pay for equal work, abortion, euthanasia, gun violence — the list goes on. Above all others, the one issue crying out for unity and action is climate change.

One person who has been vocal about this subject and punched through the noise in a big way is climate activist Greta Thunberg. She first gained international attention by skipping school to stage sit-ins outside the Swedish parliament, demanding action on the changing climate. The 16-year-old activist started calling her movement “Fridays for Future,” and in the span of little more than a year has inspired and galvanized a

global student movement, urging governments to take action against climate change.

Thunberg has thrown her weight behind a Global Climate Strike, taking place from Sept. 20-27. Thunberg and other activists wrote in a letter announcing the global strike, “We, children and students, don’t feel like we have a choice: it’s been years of talking, countless negotiations, empty deals on climate change, fossil fuel companies being given free rides to drill beneath our soils and burn away our futures for their profit.”

She continued, “We have learned that if we don’t start acting for our future, nobody else will make the first move. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for.”

Yet this climate strike is not

just for youth, it’s for everyone. “This is not a single-generation job. It’s humanity’s job,” Thunberg explained, inviting adults to join them and “step up and out of your comfort zone for our climate.”

In a tweet posted by Thunberg, the number of global events has surpassed 4,500. Over 1.1 million New York school kids will be allowed out on the first day of the strike, Sept. 20, in advance of the United Nations annual Climate Summit.

And there are signs that Thunberg’s message is resonating with at least some world leaders. United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres called on all world leaders to come to New York on Sept. 23 with “concrete, realistic plans to enhance their nationally determined

contributions by 2020, in line with reducing green house gas emission by 45 percent over the next decade, and to net zero emissions by 2050,” in a post on the summit’s webpage.

The epicentre of the Canadian climate strike actions is in Montreal, where Thunberg is expected to speak on Friday, Sept. 27. (She is also going to receive Montreal’s key to the city.) Many schools and universities are closing that day so that students can attend the march, which is expected to draw over 300,000 demonstrators.

It’s not the first time climate actions have gained some momentum in Canada this year. In Québec on March 15, over 160,000 students from kindergarten all the way up to university took to the streets.

On May 3, over 100 communities across the country saw individuals out marching in support of climate change initiatives, calling on the federal government to do more about this ongoing and worsening crisis.

The actions have been organized by Climate Strike Canada, which aims to “confront the scale of this crisis, and create a better world, by representing youth across Canada and cultivating a culture of compassion,” according to the organization’s website.

Locally, the strike is being organized by Ecology Ottawa, Climate Strike Ottawa, Fridays For Future, 350 Ottawa, and several others. Climate strike activities will be run on Sept. 27 at Confederation Park (Laurier

Avenue and Elgin Street) from 11:30 a.m. until 2 p.m.

“Youth are rising in response to the government’s lack of action in addressing the climate crisis,” said Karolina Krym, a climate strike organizer. “We know we have only a few years to make drastic changes and buying a new pipeline is the exact opposite of what needs to be done.” Krym is also an activist with Our Time Ottawa, a youth organization pushing for a Green New Deal in Canada.

“This is about crossing lines – it’s about rebelling wherever one can rebel,” writes Thunberg and the strike organizers. “It’s not about saying ‘Yeah, what the kids do is great, if I was young I would have totally joined in.’ Everyone can and must actually help.”

WHODUNIT



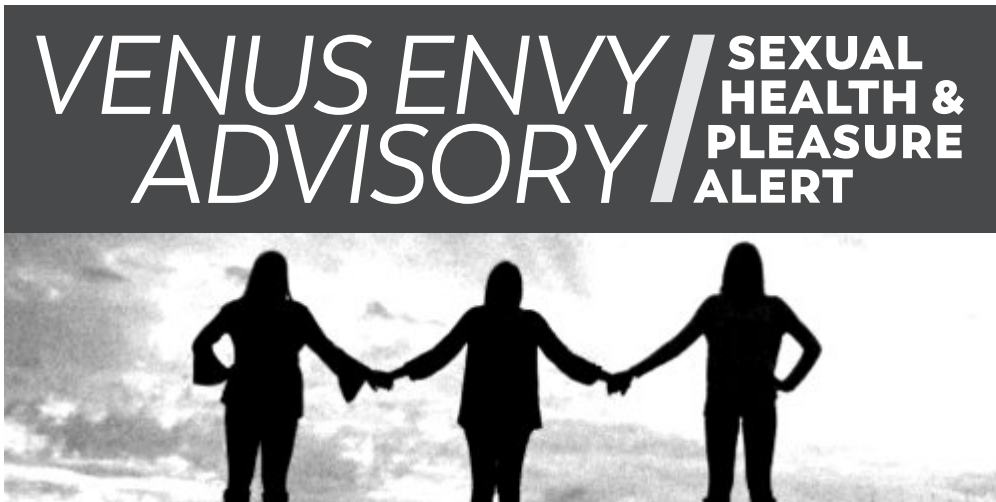
MATCH THESE WORDS OF WISDOM TO THE PUBLIC FIGURE!

- A. “No country on the planet can walk away from the challenge and reality of climate change.”
- B. “No country would find 173 billion barrels of oil in the ground and just leave them there.”
- C. “We need to get angry and understand what is at stake. And then we need to transform that anger into action – and to stand together united and never give up.”
- D. “No one takes any notice of you unless you cause disruption... The most ineffectual way to try and make political change is to avoid upsetting people.”
- E. “Because no choice happens in a vacuum, it’s scientifically impossible to make no difference. We have to quit saying ‘Can one choice make a difference?’ and recognize that every single choice we make has an impact.”
- F. “The task of an activist is not to navigate around systems of oppression with as much personal integrity as possible – it’s to dismantle those systems.”
- G. “We have all been socialized to be individualistic, to not truly care about the suffering of others – because the weight of that suffering is unbearable. And if we truly allowed ourselves to feel it... we could not possibly tolerate an economic system that requires that suffering to operate. If you want to defeat capitalism, the first step is to undo that socialization and convince ourselves to give a damn.”
- H. “A child that dies of starvation today is being murdered. There is no reason for dying. It is the world order that kills.”
- I. “Crushing truths perish by being acknowledged.”
- J. “I’m shocked by how ineffective people feel in a world that is so ripe for change.”

- 1. Justin Trudeau, addressing an oil industry conference
- 2. Albert Camus, existentialist novelist
- 3. Lierre Keith, radical feminist and environmentalist
- 4. Jean Ziegler, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food (2000-2008)
- 5. Ian MacKaye, punk rock patriarch
- 6. Julia Butterfly Hill, tree-sitter and eco-activist
- 7. Justin Trudeau, addressing the UN General Assembly
- 8. Greta Thunberg, teenage climate change activist
- 9. Thought Slime, YouTube personality and self-described “smug anarchist poseur”
- 10. Roger Hallam, co-founder of Extinction Rebellion



(a) Justin Trudeau; (b) Justin Trudeau; (c) Greta Thunberg; (d) Roger Hallam; (e) Julia Butterfly Hill; (f) Lierre Keith; (g) Thought Slime; (h) Jean Ziegler; (i) Albert Camus; (j) Ian MacKaye



Hey Venus Envy,

Do you have any advice for someone in a long-term monogamous relationship who wants to open it up? How do I broach this topic with my partner without freaking them out?

Thanks,
Possibly Open to Loving You

Hey POLY,

My first piece of advice is that you should expect this to freak out your partner. Especially if you've never talked about opening up before, this conversation might come as a shock. It's likely to threaten their sense of security in the relationship and being ready for that will make you better able to reassure them that you still want to be with them, but just want to change something about the relationship structure.

Once they've gotten over the shock a little, and maybe in a separate conversation, talk with them about the kind of relationship you're interested in. There's a big difference between a relationship where you occasionally hook up with other people and one where you each have multiple partners. Neither style is better, but the important thing is that you both have the same expectations. It's a great idea to attend a workshop or read a book together to help guide the conversation - *Building Open Relationships* by Liz Powell is a great resource.

Non-monogamy can be a magical thing, and it will likely involve more communication and processing than you ever thought possible. So if your partner is interested in exploring the idea further, you will need to talk and talk and talk some more. Have a lot of honest conversations about your boundaries, your needs, and how to maintain a sense of security through a period of intense transition. You'll want to get clear on what's okay and what's not okay, and talk about how you'll navigate a grey area. And don't forget to talk about what's exciting for both of you, and how this could help deepen your connection.

It's common to have stronger boundaries when first opening up a relationship, because you're

building a new kind of trust together. Both of you should remember this as you start to adventure into dating other people - I've gone on this date and I texted you at the time we agreed on, see how I'm still here? I made out with a person and now I can't wait for our next date night, see how I'm still attracted to you? I have feelings for a new person and here are my feelings for you, just as strong, see how I still love you?

Most people end up relaxing their boundaries over time, but that's unlikely to happen by ignoring your needs and going faster than either of you are ready. This makes it extra important to only agree to things that you can actually follow through on. People are often tempted to over-promise to make the idea of non-monogamy seems easier, but if you break a promise that impossible to keep, you'll still end up having less trust and security in your relationship than you did before you opened up.

Through all this, make sure you're also clearly communicating your boundaries to other people you're getting involved with, especially if you're narrowly limiting what's allowed. Remember that they will have feelings and needs too, and you have a responsibility to be kind to anyone you have a relationship with, no matter how casual.

And on that note, a word of caution: if it turns out that your pre-existing partner is not interested in non-monogamy, do not try and push them into it. It won't end well. Lots of people just prefer to be monogamous, and your partner might be one of them.

Changing relationships structures will be unsettling. That's not at all a bad thing, but it's also not an easy thing. Make sure you're enlisting some support along the way, and be sure that it's from people who won't automatically see your relationship style as a problem. A good, non-monogamy-friendly therapist is worth their weight in gold in this case.

Sincerely,
SAM WHITTLE
Sex Educator and Owner of Venus Envy

SEND QUESTIONS YOU WANT ANSWERED TO EDITORS.THE.LEVELLER@GMAIL.COM OR DIRECT TO SAM AT EDUCATION@VENUSENVY.CA

Upcoming Workshops at Venus Envy



Going Down: A Guide to Fellatio
September 26 7:30pm. \$20 (\$10 student price)

Non-Monogamy 101
October 1 6:30pm. \$20 (\$10 student price)

Poly ABCs: Agreements, Boundaries and Contracts
Guest workshop with Stephen and Psykhe
October 10 7:30pm. \$20 (\$10 student price)

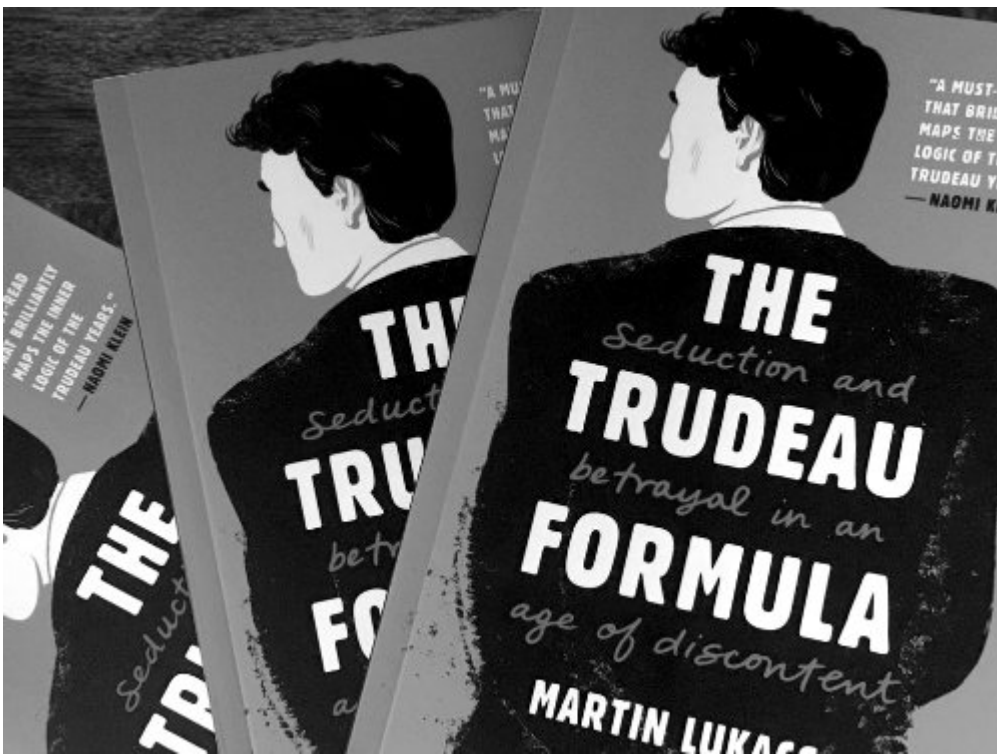
Up Yours!: The Anal Sex Workshop
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THE TRUDEAU FORMULA

LUKACS UNMASKS LIBERAL PARTY IN NEW BOOK

Mariya Mubeen

On a rainy Tuesday night, Sep. 10, 2019, at the quirky Atomic Rooster in downtown Ottawa, Martin Lukacs officially released his new book, called *The Trudeau Formula*. Lukacs is an environmental journalist and frequent contributor to *The Guardian*. He came into the limelight for his work as the co-author of the Leap Manifesto, a public call to arms regarding climate and social injustice.

Around 40 attendees were greeted amicably by the author and Joel Harden, a Member of Provincial Parliament from the New Democratic Party.

Lukacs' book is a 300-page investigative piece that knits together events scattered across Canada's political history into a quilt of uncomfortable reality. In the book Lukacs touches on the two-faced agenda of the Liberal Party and its coziness with oil companies; the purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline; the weapons deals with Saudi Arabia and complicity in the Yemeni genocide; and the ongoing theft of Indigenous land.

Above all, the book is an account of how the Liberal Party succeeded in presenting a façade as a progressive champion of the people time and time again, but constantly promotes the interests of the elites and corporations behind closed doors.

But some of this façade seems to be cracking, with scandals like SNC Lavalin and

"Calling out the faux progressivism of the Liberal Party is their kryptonite."
- Martin Lukacs

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's three cases of blackface dominating headlines.

The event started off with attendees casually mingling with Lukacs, Harden, and others. Copies of the books were being sold at the entrance. The meet and greet slowly transitioned into a small discussion panel with Harding and Lukacs, moderated by Samiha Rayeda, former OPIRG Co-Ordinator.

Some of the evening's harshest criticisms were aimed at radical centrism. "The world has run out of time for [the Liberal Party's] philosophy. If you look at climate, we have 10 or 11 more years," said Harden. "The notion of piecemealing our way to climate justice absolutely does not wash."

The panelists bounced from economic inequality, to the Liberal Party's glossy rhetoric, and the "reconciliation industry" - all of it peppered with subtle political promotion and comic anecdotes.

When asked what led him to write the book, Lukacs said, "I felt like someone had to take on the burden, someone had to take one for the team."

He said he believed the Liberal Party to be an obstruction to the change that Canadian society needs with regards

to climate change, Indigenous reconciliation, wage stagnation, and economic inequality. He told *The Leveller* that the book is intended to condense analyses being put out by social movements and organizations for future movements.

"Don't let your politics end with voting. It's an important act, but it's one tactic in a toolbox to do politics," said Lukacs. "The most important politics are not what happens at the ballot box... [they're] what happens all year round, in social movements who are agitating for the kind of fundamental change that we need."

He encouraged people to research party platforms and look for alternatives with more progressive ideals. Lukacs urged people to vote for the NDP and involve themselves with environmental, immigration justice, and Indigenous solidarity movements to keep pressure on the government.

"This book makes me angry," said Harden. "It makes me want to fight for that kind of politics more."

Lukacs is currently headed to Winnipeg for the next stop of his book tour, followed by Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary, before ending in Vancouver.



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LIBRA (SEPT. 23 - OCT. 22)

Every year Mother Nature gifts you with a dazzling display of leaves in the fall for your birthday. You might be a little tired of getting the same thing all the time, so for this year she's throwing a little bit of a surprise heatwave in there thanks to climate change. Happy birthday Libra!

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 19)

It's never a good sign when you find yourself reading the horoscopes to help make important life decisions. I know you're in a pickle, Aries, so I'm going to keep this advice straightforward: The best advice comes from people who know you and care about you. I am not one of those people.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23 - NOV. 21)

Did you hear about that kid who went blind from eating only Pringles, white bread, and french fries for years, Scorpio? You should consider a bit of a change in your diet. Might be time to add a dip to the menu.

TAURUS (APRIL 20 - MAY 20)

You're fine. No really, you're doing fine. Ok, truthfully I just can't be bothered. There was no coffee at the Horoscope Offices this morning, then they made me attend a meeting about the importance of regular tea leaf readings – which I don't do because it's nonsense – AND THEN an intern who I sent out to get me a coffee came back with tea.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22 - DEC. 21)

I rode the new LRT back and forth for the whole day yesterday. The existential comings and goings of people travelling here and there had me constantly wondering where everyone was going in such a hurry. Then I thought of you Sagittarius. Your lackluster, sluggish, and carefree approach to life helped me calm down. That being said, you should probably pick up the pace a bit this year.

GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUNE 20)

I know times are tough. Climate Change is real, Trump is still running the US, and Netflix is losing *The Office*. I was about to sacrifice this goat for you, Gemini, but then the sun came out, a warm breeze brushed across my face and a little bird chirped a happy tune. I think you'll be OK, but it may take a bit of *personal* sacrifice to get there.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22 - JAN. 19)

What's going on with all the ripped jeans Capricorn? Did someone sit on you a bit too abruptly? What are you trying to say to the world? I saw you at the store picking up a pair of jeans that for some reason had holes in places where they would never naturally occur. You are better than this.

CANCER (JUNE 21 - JULY 22)

Haikuroscope for you Cancer:

Change is in the air
Someone near has passed gas
That's in the air too

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20 - FEB. 18)

Aquarius, I was visited by someone who claimed to be from the future! They told me that you have to wear a yellow top on the next full moon and run away from the first person who compliments you.

LEO (JULY 23 - AUG. 22)

Summer is over, students are back to school and raccoons have started settling into LRT station ceilings, getting ready for winter. Around this time of year, I begin to accept that everything around me is slowly dying and that the torment of cold, ice, and snow is just over the horizon. You would think we'd all be used to this by now, given that it happens every year.

PISCES (FEB. 19 - MARCH 20)

I was contemplating your future with the forests of Argentina when it struck me that you might prefer not knowing. The last time we talked, you didn't think much about all the time I spend reading the stars and planets and I think the word "hooley" was used a few times. While that hurt my feelings, Pisces, I still feel compelled to at least warn you to not wear footwear with laces for a while.

VIRGO (AUG. 23 - SEPT. 22)

Someone asked me who they should vote for the other day. My advice: close your eyes and picture the utopia you'd give anything to live in. A place where all our problems have disappeared and robots do the cleaning. Now open your eyes, look at the ballot in front of you, and just pick the silliest name. The only real change comes from social movements, so get out there and do the work needed to make change happen.

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