

The Leveller

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Ignoring the rule of law since 2009

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OTTAWA IS STANDING WITH WET'SUWET'EN

RALLIES AND BLOCKADES PROLIFERATE, WHILE POLITICIANS AND PUNDITS MELTDOWN

Kieran Delamont and Tim Kitz

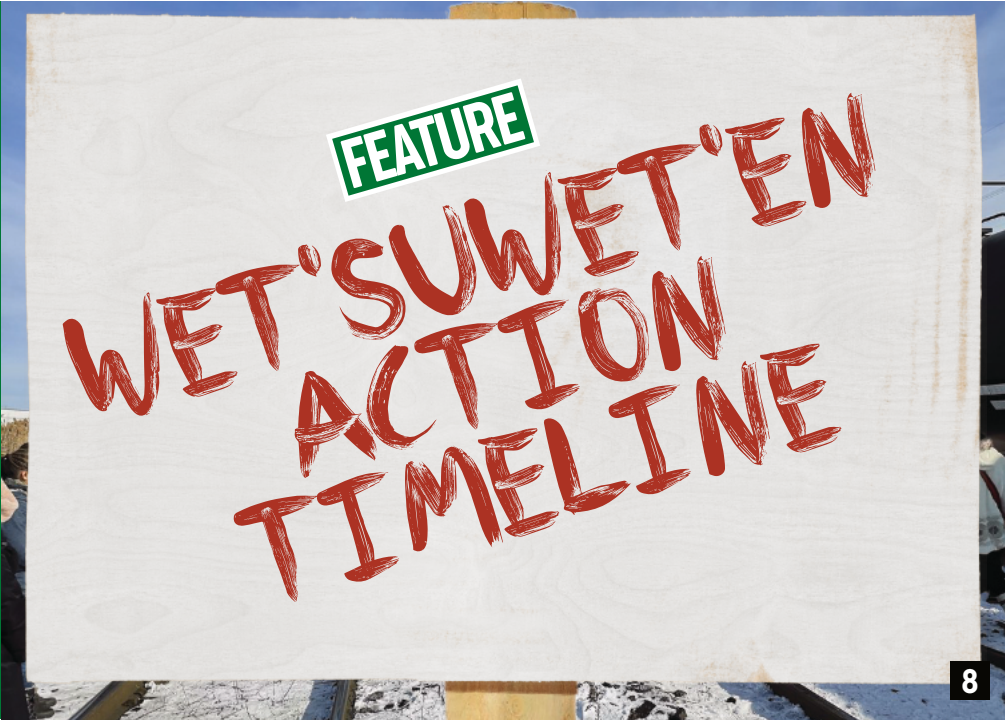
Across the country, demonstrations in support of Wet'suwet'en resistance to the Coastal GasLink natural gas pipeline project, and to RCMP invasions of their territory, have galvanized into a movement, growing in numbers and in pitch. This has forced the country to reckon with the

conflict between human and Indigenous rights and the economic ambitions of the resource extraction industry.

In Ottawa, too, mobilizations led by Indigenous young people have forced confrontation and conversation in the seat of the federal government. Weekly protests since Wet'suwet'en arrests began have made their mark, shutting

down large parts of downtown on several occasions, and stalling traffic near the Rideau Centre and on the canal with joyful round dances. A day-long occupation of Justice Minister David Lametti's office, which started on Feb. 10, was one in a series of nation-wide efforts to occupy and shut down government buildings.

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EXTRADITED CARLETON PROF SUES FEDS

Kieran Delamont

Hassan Diab, the Carleton sociology lecturer who was extradited from Canada to France on contested — and ultimately vacated — terrorism charges in 2011, is suing the federal government in civil court, seeking \$90 million in damages.

Diab was extradited in 2014, after being arrested at the request of French police in 2008, who accused him of involvement in the 1980 bombing of a synagogue in Paris. Under Canadian extradition law, the accused cannot call evidence in their

defence. And despite extradition judge Robert Maranger's conclusion that the evidence *against* Diab seemed "illogical" and "convoluted, very confusing, with conclusions that are suspect," Diab was extradited by the Harper government of the time.

Diab spent more than three years in a French jail before being cleared of any involvement. Similar to Marganger, the French investigative judges found the unsourced intelligence used to accuse Diab was "full of contradictions and inaccuracies," and that there was "consistent evidence" Diab

was in Lebanon at the time of the Paris bombing. He returned to Canada in 2018.

"Despite having evidence showing I was not involved, Canadian authorities made the decision to extradite me," Diab said, at a recent press conference. "Since my release in 2018, we have called for a public inquiry into my case, and the government has said no. We've called for reforms to Canada's extradition law, and the government has taken no meaningful action."

In addition to the time spent in prison — much of which was spent in solitary

confinement — and the RCMP surveillance he was put under, Diab says he has suffered from anxiety, depression, and severe insomnia.

"My ordeal could have been prevented," Diab said.

Diab is accusing Department of Justice lawyers, as well as Stephen Harper's justice minister Rob Nicholson, of malicious prosecution and breaching his charter rights, causing emotional distress for both him and his family.

The case has become clearer as a story of a prosecutorial boondoggle. At virtually every step of a convoluted investigation, exculpatory evidence seemed to be lost in communication between Canadian and French police — or even deliberately concealed.

In 2018, the CBC reported that French officials sat on a fingerprint that would have cleared Diab and claimed to Canadian officials that it never existed. Meanwhile, a Department of Justice lawyer sent a confidential memo to French officials with an urgent request for another handwriting analysis when the case against Diab seemed about to collapse. The lawyer, Claude LeFrançois, then obtained long delays in the extradition trial so that the analysis could be produced, while assuring the judge he had knowledge of what France was up to.

LeFrançois works for a specialized division of Canada's Department of

Justice known as the International Assistance Group. According to the CBC, a Department of Justice spokesperson said it is "normal practice for Canadian government lawyers like LeFrançois to provide extradition-requesting states such as France with advice on how to strengthen their case."

Readers of this article spooked that our government has high-paid lawyers working to assist foreign governments that want to extradite Canadian citizens need not fear, however. An independent review of Diab's extradition, completed for the minister of justice, concluded that the department's lawyers broke no rules and "acted in a manner that was ethical and consistent."

Diab disagrees. "It's about justice, it's about correcting the wrong things," says Diab. "We've tried all other avenues. We've asked for a public inquiry — nothing was done. We asked to reform extradition laws — nothing was done. We were left with nothing but to seek justice through legal ways."

Diab's long-time lawyer Guy Pratte added, "Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Freeland at the time both said they thought this was a tragic case, a mistake, and we hope there are ways not to renew them." He said that Diab and his family are hoping to sit down with the federal government in mediation negotiations, with an eye to settling the case outside of the courts.

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The Leveller

Hi! My name is Hassan Diab.

I am a canadian citizen, a sociology scholar, and I live in Ottawa with my wife Rania Tfamily and our children, Jad & Jena.

I'd like to tell you my story if you haven't heard it yet.

"Justice for Hassan Diab: A Webcomic" is available at icimg.ca/diab-webcomic/. Credit: Anne Dagenais

RECONCILIATION IS DEAD, BUT WAS NEVER REALLY ALIVE

This is an excerpt from an interview with Jesse Wente on CBC's *Metro Morning*, from Feb 25 — a day after Tyendinaga land defenders were arrested for blocking railway tracks in solidarity with Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs.

Canada is a state built on the removal of Indigenous peoples to make way for resource extraction companies. That's very literally the reason this country exists. And it has exported this around the world, with Canadian resource extraction companies doing this globally — removing Indigenous people so they can access their land with little care for the environment or their sovereignty. ... That Canadians don't realize this is due to years of false history-telling and mythmaking, the lies that a country tells itself so it's not tied down by the guilt of its own actions. ...

Frankly, I'm glad reconciliation is dead — it was never really alive. It was a campaign slogan, a way to get elected, to appear progressive while advancing the same colonial agenda that has fuelled Canada since its inception. And its death should not be mourned. What it should do is free us to do the actual work. ...

Reconciliation deserved to die, as the truth remains too much for this country to bear. Now that we know reconciliation is dead, for all to see, we can stop pretending that this is a relationship to be saved. It is one to discard and start over. Save your reconciliation for someone you care about, give us back what was taken —

all of it — and then we can discuss the nature of the relationship we should have. ...

Many Canadians seem to know that great change is required — and I ask them now to bring it about. You have the power to stop this, to redefine the country you call home. It's up to you — not any politician or corporation. Show that your solidarity has teeth and a backbone. Canada's ongoing survival is not written in stone; its right to exist is not immutable. We know that you are not

leaving, nor have we ever asked you to. Our ancestors welcomed yours, even when that generosity has never been returned.

You should know by now that we aren't leaving either. Despite all that has been done to us and continues to be done to us — and will be done to us today and tomorrow — we were here before Canada, and we will be here long after it as well. Show us the resolve of your solidarity, show us that the myth of Canada can be replaced by its truth.



GET INVOLVED!

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Whether you're looking to add your accent to our voice of dissent or if you're interested in learning what it takes to get a grassroots media project up off the ground, contact editors@leveller.ca 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@leveller.ca to contribute any amount.

The Leveller acknowledges that Ottawa is on unceded Algonquin territory.

The Leveller

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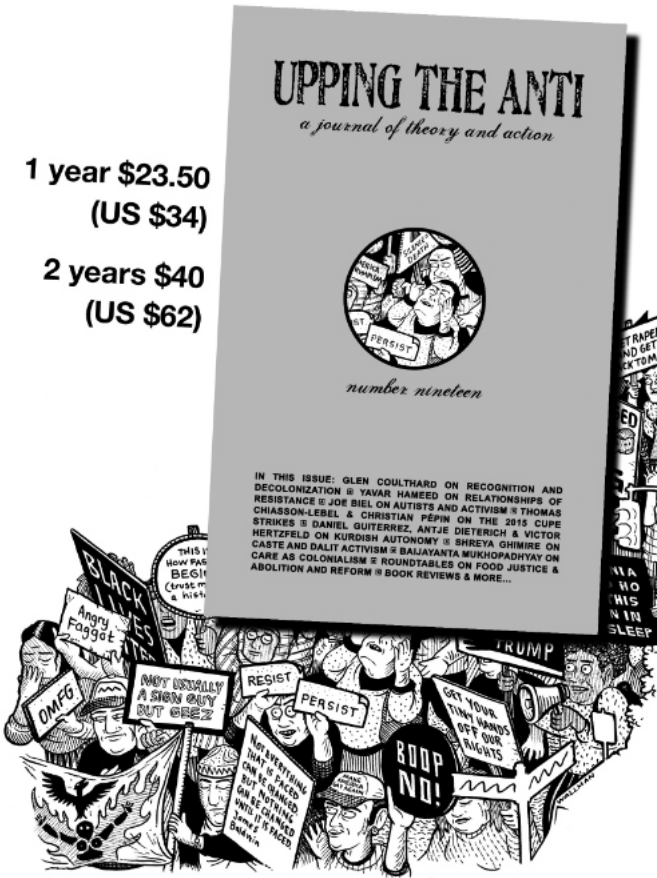
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Lev·el·ler

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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STANDING WITH WET'SUWET'EN
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, at multiple points along key cargo rail lines across the country, blockades were erected. Online, the hash-tag #shutdowncanada gave teeth to the long-ignored demand from the Wet'suwet'en land defenders that their land and human rights be respected, that the state and colonial police leave their unsundered land, and that the pipeline project be abandoned.

As militarized police have arrested Indigenous land defenders across the country, multiple Indigenous people have declared that reconciliation, Trudeau's signature political posture, was dead — something that has surely irked the prime minister's communications machine.

On Monday, February 24th, the largest demonstration in Ottawa so far was blocked from accessing Parliament Hill (which is currently half under construction). But it did succeed in halting the flow of traffic along Wellington Street (and others nearby) for much of the day.

The action took on an added dimension as, moments before it was set to begin, news broke that the Ontario Provincial Police were enforcing an injunction to end the blockade in Tyendinaga Mohawk territory near Belleville, Ontario.

"This is not the end of the fight," said Gabrielle Fayant, one of the Indigenous speakers at the action, "this is just the beginning."

"Change is coming," said NDP MP Charlie Angus, who also spoke to a receptive crowd. "You are at the forefront of it."

As an indication of the rising tensions over these actions, Ottawa Police and the RCMP met Monday's demonstration with an uncharacteristic, and likely overzealous, degree of force. Cops patrolled on bikes, in trucks, and in cars. Several officers wandered alongside the crowd, videotaping individuals and wearing bulletproof vests.

At one point, police tactical units formed a large line in an apparent attempt to block the demonstration from proceeding further down Wellington at Kent Street. The demonstration moved to encircle police in the intersection, who then awkwardly retreated toward the space in front of the Supreme Court building. The march then proceeded down Kent Street.

Later, chilling images surfaced online of police deploying rooftop snipers during the demonstration. This level of escalation called to mind reports that police had been authorized to use lethal force on land defenders on the frontlines of the Coastal GasLink resistance.

At times, demonstrators chastised the media, who have seemed to ignore these surveillance tactics in the days after the march. "You don't really need to record our ceremonies," one leader said, at one point. "You should really be looking at what's going on with this surveillance."

"The story you tell can either get people killed, or you can keep people alive," they said.

Where these demonstrations are leading, and how long they will continue, still depends largely on the outcome

of high-level talks still underway at press time (Mar. 2) between BC and Canadian officials and the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs. As a condition of the talks, both the RCMP and CGL workers have temporarily withdrawn from the territory. The RCMP has had previously offered to pull out of Wet'suwet'en territory if land defenders agree to stay out of the way of CGL workers getting on with pipeline construction, an offer that media releases somehow spin as new and generous.

As the talks continue, so do numerous demonstrations and blockade actions, as the issue has grown beyond a single political flashpoint into a wider-reaching statement about the failures of reconciliation.

In the halls of Canadian energy corporations and the political class, the demonstrations are already succeeding in making an impact. Hours before Monday's demonstration, Teck Resources pulled the plug on their planned Frontier Mine, saying they did not want to become the nexus of "a broader debate over climate change and Canada's role in addressing it."

The Trudeau Liberals are spinning plates, trying to brandish carrot and stick at the same time and constantly tripping over themselves in the process. Trudeau sings the praises of negotiations and says that "paralyzing key infrastructure is... unacceptable and untenable," but ignored Wet'suwet'en requests for nation-to-nation meetings until blockades started affecting the Canadian economy.

Opposition parties have either offered tepid half-support, in the case of the NDP, or a shrieking meltdown about thugs, terrorists and paid activists, in the case of the Conservative Party. Andrew Scheer — a man with an army of paid staff at his beck and call — told land defenders making sacrifices to attend blockades, occupations, and rallies to "check their privilege," while his party paid \$15,000 a year for each of his four children to go to private school.

BC premier John Horgan has foamed at the mouth about "the rule of law," but seems taken aback by the idea that his government apply the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) to CGL's pipeline — despite having just enshrined UNDRIP in BC law.

The *National Post* got briefly fascistic and declared that actually politicians can order the police to do their bidding, and that Trudeau should order police to clear Indigenous people from their land when they're blocking roads and railways. "There is no alternative," John Robeson wisely explained.

Meanwhile, the CBC (the Colonial Broadcasting Corporation, as some critics were tempted to label it) fretted constantly about a looming economic apocalypse, fanning reporters out across the country to find small business owners experiencing a slow season — but had no one reporting from ground zero as Wet'suwet'en land defenders were arrested.

Nobody in the Canadian establishment quite knows how to react to such a large and coordinated assertion of Indigenous rights, and what it says

IS THE OTTAWA RIVER SAFE FROM NUCLEAR WASTE?

A corporate consortium's plan to dispose of nuclear waste in mounds near the Ottawa River is raising fears

Olivia Hnatyshyn

Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL) is looking for approval to dispose of one million cubic metres of nuclear waste in an engineered mound formed over a decommissioned nuclear facility, just 1.2 kilometres away from the Ottawa River.

The plan is to repurpose Chalk River Laboratories, located in Renfrew County, 180 kilometres north-west of Ottawa. Chalk River became the first operational nuclear reactor outside of the US in 1945; it also suffered the first serious reactor accident in the world in 1952, which led to 4,500 tons of radioactive water being dumped in ditches 1,600 metres from the Ottawa River. It was permanently shut down on March 31, 2018.

The groundwork for this plan was laid by the Harper government's major restructuring and privatization of Canada's nuclear industry. This first saw the Crown corporation Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) sell its CANDU reactors to SNC-Lavalin in 2011. Then in 2015, AECL gave the contract to operate CNL and the Chalk River facility to an international consortium of engineering corporations — again including the scandal-plagued SNC-Lavalin, as well as Fluor Corporation, the world's largest engineering and construction company.

CNL is proposing to convert Chalk River into an engineered disposal facility for low-level radioactive waste. Since the facility is on the shore of the Ottawa River, CNL's plans have caused widespread concern about nuclear waste leaking into the river.

The Ottawa River is the source of drinking water for more than a million people in Ontario and Quebec who live along its 1,271-kilometre length. Locals worry the project might poison this important water source and inflict other environmental damage.

about the fundamental facts of Canada — maybe they thought they'd never have to — and in that vacuum most have reacted with indistinct anger.

It is striking that this whole crisis could have been avoided, had the government attended to a groundbreaking Supreme Court judgement from 25 years ago. In the 1997 judgement *Delgamuukw v British Columbia*, the court recognized that the Wet'suwet'en and Gitksan hereditary chiefs who brought the suit were right in asserting continued aboriginal title over their traditional territory. The court directed the Crown to negotiate in good faith with the Wet'suwet'en to reconcile Aboriginal title with "the sovereignty of the Crown."

Yet provincial negotiations have consistently sought to extinguish aboriginal title in

At a press conference in September 2019, Green Party candidate Angela Keller-Herzog criticized the plan. "Poor nuclear waste decisions have fallout for millennia — this is too important a job to be handed to SNC and corner-cutting, profit-seeking foreign corporations with dubious ethical background," Keller-Herzog said.

An environmental assessment is still pending for the project. The scope of the environmental assessment states that commentary and questions from the public, and specifically the Indigenous community, must be taken into account for CNL to obtain licensing. The parameters of how much Indigenous ecological knowledge will be considered is unclear.

The Ottawa River is of vital importance to the Algonquin Anishinaabe people, who know it as the *Kitchissippi* ('Great River'). Their territory corresponds with its watershed and they have used it for trade, travel, and sustenance since time immemorial.

Since the plan was proposed in 2016, protests have been taking place. Several Indigenous communities, Concerned Citizens of Renfrew County, and other environmental activists have been at the forefront of the opposition, urging the federal government to intervene.

In 2018, grand council chief of the Anishinabek Nation Patrick Madahbee said, "Trying to build this giant mound of radioactive waste... is insanity."

However, CNL president Mark Lesinski blames many of the objections on "misunderstandings" about the nature of the plan. CNL recently modified their plan from storing some amounts of intermediate-level nuclear waste, to only storing low-level radioactive waste in the plant.

Jules Blais, a biology professor at uOttawa specializing in toxicology and environmental chemistry, comments on CNL's modification, "That would

return for one time payouts and small parcels of land — as freedom of information documents obtained by The Narwhal attest — rather than negotiate resource sharing agreements.

Similarly, the 1996 recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, formed in the wake of the Oka "Crisis," laid out a sweeping 20-year agenda for implementing changes that governments have spent 20+ years ignoring. It seems likely that this movement will spill over into a broader, and sharper, conversation about Indigenous rights than this country has seen since that time.

"I have been protesting with some of you for 30 years," Waneek Horn-Miller said, describing her experience during the the standoff at Kanesatake near Oka. "Now, Wet'suwet'en needs you to stay strong."

make quite a difference. Low-level waste would be less harmful and would also take less time to become harmless."

Low-level waste decomposes within 300 years, but time frames can vary significantly.

HOW WILL IT BE STORED?

Nuclear waste is best stored deep underground. The Chalk River plant plans on a near-surface level disposal facility. CNL proposes that it will take 50 years to fill the facility with nuclear waste, taking up the equivalent space of 1,000 football fields in length.

"One of the reasons for putting nuclear waste underground is that the thick rock will prevent the radiation from reaching the people at the surface, and ecosystems at the surface," says Blais.

CNL's plan does not include burying the waste deep underground and instead proposes creating a mound, with a cover system over top of the waste.

Approximately 90 per cent of the nuclear waste to be stored is already at the Chalk River location. The decomposing buildings at Chalk River contain traces of radioactivity from former scientific research, such as cancer research, conducted in the labs in 1940-1960.

According to AECL, "In some cases, temporary waste storage areas and facilities dating back to the 1940s, 50s, and 60s has led to the contamination of the surrounding soil. While this contamination is contained at the Chalk River site, it needs to be remediated in order to protect the environment."

The remainder of the low-level waste will come from other nuclear waste facilities, and from various universities and hospitals.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

There are many possible risks for storing nuclear waste at Chalk River. However, the likelihood of problems occurring are difficult to judge.

CNL released an executive summary of the potential risks in 2017. Risk factors include natural disasters and natural geological processes, such as the shifting of tectonic plates, which could alter the position of the buried waste.

"There is also the risk that radioisotopes can get into groundwater, and then groundwater can reach the surface," explains Blais. If water found under the earth surfaced naturally, as it often does, it can bring with it traces of the radioactive waste, which would then be airborne on the surface. To deal with the possibility of groundwater surfacing, CNL has designed a surface water management system, to hopefully reduce harmful radiation.

The main concern for opponents of the project is the possibility of the nuclear waste

leaking into the Ottawa River, since the waste facility is so close to the waterway.

"If the nuclear waste got into the river then these isotopes could eventually be taken up by the plants and the algae, and then they could make their way into the food chain," explains Blais. This is a concept known as bioaccumulation. Toxic matter can accumulate in the systems of organisms consuming radioactive matter. Land animals also consume the water and aquatic life, spreading nuclear waste beyond the water source.

Of course, if the Ottawa River showed traces of nuclear waste, water treatment plants would have to send out advisories, and Ottawa, among other areas, would be put on a water ban.

In addition, the CNL summary report also indicates that the construction of the waste site would destroy the habitat of the Blanding turtle, which is classified as a threatened species in Ontario. "It is possible that the level of habitat fragmentation and road mortality existing on the CRL site are significantly impacting the population of Blanding's turtle in the Base Case at an unsustainable rate," the report notes. "The destruction of proposed critical habitat for Blanding's turtle will require a Species at Risk permit."

IS IT WORTH IT?

AECL plans to invest \$1.2 billion dollars in the renewal of Chalk River Laboratories. CNL is still in the process of getting this project approved. Environmental risk factors are still being assessed. The nuclear waste plan does not meet the standards of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and Canadian law currently does not enforce these regulations.

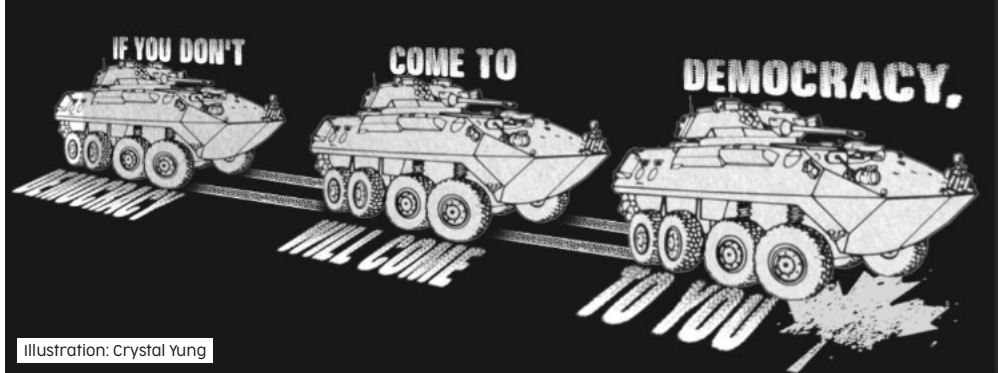
It is uncertain whether this project will result in harm to the Ottawa River water. However, what is certain is that the nuclear waste currently at Chalk River needs to be properly maintained to protect the environment.

"As a concerned citizen I would want to know that the storage is being done in a way that minimizes risk for isotopes being released from groundwater... if storage is done carefully, if it's placed in a stable environment where there's very little movement of groundwater, then it can be quite safe," Blais assured *The Leveller*.

It is difficult to weigh the ultimate risk if this project goes through. Yet what does seem clear is that the federal government is paying a private consortium to dispose of nuclear waste in ways that are not up to international standards — and that poses certain risks to the Ottawa River, which provides drinking water to over a million people and habitat to countless animals, including threatened species like the Blanding turtle.

BUSINESS IS BOOMING AS CANADA’S LARGEST ARMS FAIR COMES TO OTTAWA

Those who buy and sell arms will be in town on May 27-28, but a major conference and protest says it’s time to cancel CANSEC



Brent Patterson

The business of war is coming to Ottawa on May 27-28.

CANSEC, North America’s largest arms fair, will bring together arms manufacturers, cabinet ministers, government officials, soldiers, and delegates from 55 countries.

The 300 exhibitors include transnational corporations that manufacture warships, combat vehicles, fighter jets, bombs, bullets, and guided missiles.

The exhibitors notably include General Dynamics Land Systems, a builder of the Light Armoured Vehicles (LAVs) that are sold to Saudi Arabia. The London, Ontario-based company is building more than 700 LAVs for Saudi Arabia, some with 105-millimetre cannons, others with a “two-man turret” and 30-mm chain guns for “direct fire” support.

Successive governments under Harper’s Conservatives and Trudeau’s Liberals have come under fire for enabling the sale of LAVs to Saudi Arabia. The repressive Saudi government has a habit of militarily attacking its citizens and has played a defining role in the Yemeni Civil War, which has seen war crimes, mass displacements, and the slaughter of thousands of civilians.

THE SOARING COSTS OF FIGHTER JETS

The three transnationals currently bidding for Canada’s \$19 billion-plus fighter jet contract will also be there to hawk their warplanes.

Boeing will be there to promote its F/A-18 Super Hornet Block III fighter jet, Lockheed Martin its F-35 Lightning II, and Saab its Gripen-E fighter jet.

With initial proposals for the fighter jet procurement due this spring, and a decision to be made by the federal government early in 2022, the push will be on for these transnationals to connect with the cabinet ministers and Canadian Armed Forces leadership that will be present.

Last year, Saab had a full-scale model of its Gripen fighter jet at CANSEC. What will they have up their sleeves this year?

And while \$19 billion is a lot of money, the fighter jets are likely to cost billions more when the annual maintenance fees, fuel, and likely upgrades in the longer term are considered. Canada’s current fleet of

CF-18s cost \$4 billion to purchase in 1982, \$2.6 billion to upgrade in 2010, and now \$3.8 billion has been budgeted to extend their lifespan.

ARMS SALES ARE BIG BUSINESS

Overall, the arms sales of the world’s 100 largest arms-producing and military service companies totalled more than \$398 billion in 2017.

The Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries (CADSI), which organizes the annual CANSEC arms fair, highlights that 900 companies in Canada generate \$10 billion in annual revenue, of which about 60 per cent comes from exports.

While CADSI likes to trumpet those numbers, it’s also important to note that Canada sold \$5.8 billion in arms over the past 25 years to countries classified as dictatorships by the human rights group Freedom House.

Among the countries that will be present at CANSEC this year as potential arms buyers: Israel, Chile, Colombia, Turkey, the United States, Mexico, Russia, and China.

Arms fairs aren’t just for browsing. CANSEC boasts that 72 per cent of the 12,000 people who will attend this year’s arms fair have “purchasing power.”

WAR AND CLIMATE PEACE

The Canadian government intends to increase its annual military spending to \$32.7 billion over the next decade and to spend \$70 billion on 15 new warships over the next quarter-century. Imagine a similar spending commitment for a Green New Deal.

Not only does an escalation in arms spending signal a prioritization of fighter jets over high speed trains, the carbon emissions from the military are an accelerant of climate breakdown.

The UK-based grassroots collective the Wretched of the Earth have stated that a "Global Green New Deal" should "include an end to the arms trade." They add, “Wars have been created to serve the interests of corporations – the largest arms deals have delivered oil; whilst the world’s largest militaries are the biggest users of petrol.”

The Royal Geographic Society study recently noted that the US military is one of the largest polluters in history,

consuming 269,230 barrels of oil a day in 2017.

And who buys Canadian armaments and component systems? The United States — a country that has never gone a decade since its founding without being at war — is the largest buyer of Canadian-made armaments and technology, accounting for well over half of Canada’s military exports.

ARMS DEALERS INVITED TO LANSDOWNE PARK

CANSEC grew out of ARMX, a Government of Canada-organized military trade show that was previously held at Lansdowne Park in the 1980s.

Peace groups regularly protested and organized against ARMX. Their efforts culminated in a rally of 3,000 people and the arrest of 140 protestors for blocking the Lansdowne entrance in 1989. That same year, Mayor Marion Dewar and City Council passed a resolution that prohibited ARMX from municipal properties, including Lansdowne Park.

In 2008, Ottawa City Council under Mayor Larry O’Brien cancelled the ban on arms exhibitions on municipal property, citing a legal technicality about the ownership of Lansdowne Park and Canadians’ need to “do everything they can to support our military personnel and the businesses or organizations they rely upon for their own safety and security.”

CANSEC now takes place at the EY Centre, which is located near the Ottawa International Airport. That said, in his CANSEC 2020 welcoming message, Mayor Jim Watson invited those attending the arms fair to visit the ‘revitalized’ Lansdowne Park.

NOWAR2020

Just over 30 years ago, hundreds were arrested for blockading the ARMX weapons show at Lansdowne Park.

Hundreds will be mobilizing again this year in an effort to cancel CANSEC during the NoWar2020: Divest, Disarm, Demilitarize conference (May 26-31). Details are available on the World Beyond War website.

This will be an important opportunity to mobilize against the agenda of profiting from war and to call for a conversion to a peaceful, green, and just future.



LIVING FOR YEARS WITHOUT STATUS, THIS FAMILY OF ROMANI WOMEN IS STANDING UP TO DEPORTATION

Kieran Delamont

Officially, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau claims that Canada “stands with people around the world who have been forced to flee their homes.” The reality, however, is that many of the same immigration practices that get condemned elsewhere are actively practiced by Canadian border officials domestically. Children are held in detention centres, federal police patrol the border, and families are regularly separated by selective deportations. Case in point: the family of Celina Urbanowicz.

Urbanowicz arrived in Canada in 1997 with her husband, Ismet Hajrizi, as refugees fleeing the Yugoslav Wars and the persecution of Roma people. Two decades later, she lost her husband to Canadian immigration officials. He was picked up and sent to Kosovo last June, with “not even given a chance to say goodbye,” says Urbanowicz.

For much of the last 23 years, the Ottawa family lived without status, consistently slipping through the cracks of the Canadian immigration system. They fled war-torn Yugoslavia in 1997, which no longer even exists as a country one could even be sent back to. Several of Urbanowicz’s younger children were born in Canada and are not at risk of deportation.

As members of an oppressed group, they expect persecution if they are deported to one of the successor states to the former Yugoslavia.

These fears seem well-founded, given what has befallen Hajrizi since being deported to Kosovo. Urbanowicz’s husband reportedly lives in hiding, inside a garage, because life is not always safe for Roma Muslims there. Urbanowicz says, “He is not a citizen of Kosovo. He was Serbian Roma. They sent him to the wrong country!”

On February 12, a rally put on by Urbanowicz’s daughters, Camila and Roksana Hajrizi, sought to call attention to their mother’s plight.

“The deputy prime minister, Chrystia Freeland, back in 2019, made a statement and

said she vowed to never let such atrocities happen to Roma people ever again,” said Roksana, who has become something of a regular feature on Parliament Hill. She has staged protests and, at one point, a frigid winter camp-out to draw attention to her mother’s cause.

“Today, I hope that the deputy PM stands by her statement and intervenes in my mother’s case,” Roksana says. “Family separation, persecution, and marginalization will kill her.”

Urbanowicz feels like she could be picked up by immigration officials at any moment. She’s not currently under a deportation order, but if it decides to, the government would send her to Poland — another country where Roma people face discrimination. There would be a cruel, but illustrative, irony to it — two partners, each sent to the wrong country by an immigration system which so often likes to talk of its own tolerance.

This talk of tolerance is something the family takes seriously. They have genuine affection for Canada and the Trudeau Liberal Party — and the values it claims to represent, like multiculturalism, diversity and tolerance. At the same time, they know better than most that those values can ring hollow in practice.

“Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, he said families have to stay together,” says Urbanowicz, referring to the time when news of families being separated at the southern U.S.-Mexico border first started making headlines. (Of course, in perfectly Trudeausque fashion, Trudeau actually hedged on it for as long as he could before condemning the separations.) “What about my family? After 23 years, they leave me to stay here, and now they want to deport me to a country where, for the last 30 years, I’ve had nobody left.”

To be clear, life for Roma people isn’t always great here, either. In 2013 for example, the walking id of the Canadian right known as Ezra Levant called Roma culture “synonymous with swindlers” in a Sun TV screed, and said “their chief economy is theft and begging.” (Levant issued a

rare apology after the Roma Community Centre in Toronto filed hate speech complaints with the CRTC, Alberta Law Society, and Toronto police.)

Family separation is also not an uncommon experience for those interacting with the Canadian immigration system. In contrast to the compassionate, tolerant system our politicians so often espouse, Canada’s immigration and justice system has shown itself capable of being harsh and unflinching.

Last year, for example, a judge had to order the CBSA to halt plans to deport both parents of a seven-year-old boy without him. The year before that, government ministers had to step in after stories were published by Global News about the Montoya family, who were (rather cruelly) set to be deported on Christmas eve. And in November 2019, Michelle Messina committed suicide in Québec jail, rather than face extradition to the US for the crime of “kidnapping” her children after they ran away from her abusive ex-husband.

The family of Urbanowicz lives with the consequences of this harsh and uncaring legal system. It is a constant feature in their lives.

“I’m scared. Every day, every night,” Urbanowicz says. “I’m not sleeping. I’m scared of immigration.”

Yet when government ministers make bold pronouncements and promises for the camera, the family is inclined to believe them, or wants to, at least. For all the complicating features of their immigration status, Urbanowicz and her daughters have a pretty simple ask of the federal government: be as moral as you constantly say you are.

The family says they plan to continue fighting for their mother’s case. For now, though, life remains hard. Every month, Urbanowicz has to meet with immigration officials. Every month, she fears that she will be arrested — just like her husband was.

“Every month, you know what I’m feeling?” Urbanowicz says. “Every month my heart beats like it’s broke. I’m scared.”

THE NEOLIBERAL CITY AND THE GENTRIFICATION OF HERONGATE

How Ottawa promotes business interests over working people under the auspices of urban revitalization

Doug Yearwood and Tim Kitz

The mass-eviction of Herongate tenants — the largest in Canada — shows just how disastrous the corporate capture of housing can be.

It has almost been one year since former Herongate tenants made a complaint to the Human Right Tribunal of Ontario against the City of Ottawa and Timbercreek Asset Management. The complaint alleges that in 2018 the financial landlord used racially discriminatory practices to evict more than 500 people from their homes, 90 percent of whom were first-generation immigrants and people of colour. It also notes the city was complicit in these evictions.

The reason Timbercreek is displacing residents in this largely racialized community is to make way for an intensification project that could quadruple the neighborhood's already dense population. Detractors, like the members of Herongate Tenant Coalition (HTC), argue the proposed development hinges on Timbercreek's plans to build "resort-style apartments" to maximize profit for the multi-billion dollar investment company.

Despite opposition from HTC, criticism from the non-profit Association of Community Organizers for Reform Now (ACORN), and denunciation from the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing Leilani Farha, both the city and Timbercreek have moved ahead with the project.

So how is it that an asset management corporation like Timbercreek has such asymmetric power? How — in a time where rent prices are increasing by 8.4 percent a month and when the city has declared a housing emergency — is it possible for the city to get on board with a project that necessitated displacement from an already densely populated, working class, and racialized community?

The answer starts with the triumph of neoliberalism's "housing as a commodity" approach.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ONTARIO'S NEOLIBERALISM & MARKET-LED HOUSING REFORMS

During market reform in the 1990s, rental housing relations in Canada underwent significant change. This stemmed from a radical reorganization of the dominant political economy paradigms in the 1970s and 1980s and the triumph of neoliberal policies.

Neoliberalism is characterized by deregulation, free trade, and above all "cutting public expenditures, privatizing public assets, and gearing economies toward export production," according to Robyn Maynard, author of *Policing Black Lives*.

The economic tumult of the 1970s — including the oil crisis and widespread stagflation — precipitated a shift in industrial production away from the Global North. Keynesian economists in the postwar period had failed to foresee how full employment and inflation would lead to capital strikes and declining profitability, and they were assailed by free market radicals like Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, and their disciples. Promoted by business and political elites in the United Kingdom and United States in the 1980s, an unabashedly pro-private enterprise ideology emerged as political common sense, which soon trickled down to Canadian politicians and business leaders.

This meant that the welfare capitalism that emerged in the wake of the Great Depression and World War II fell out of favour. Canada's 1990-1993 recession also provided an impetus for a drastic change in social spending and a shift towards market-oriented ideas.

In 1993 the federal government introduced austerity spending on social housing. The Canadian Housing and Mortgage Corporation (CMHC), responsible for social housing provisions, capped expenditures at \$2 billion and refused to provide funding for new social housing production.

As outlined in programs like the United Nations' 1995 Report of the Commission on Global Governance, federal states during this time were also encouraged — in the name of "good governance" — to devolve management responsibility to the regional and local level. This fit well with the post-referendum ethos that existed in Canada at the time. With social housing already capped, the CMHC relegated the management of social housing to provincial and territorial governments in the 1996 federal budget.

These changes at the federal level were matched provincially by a hard right turn towards neoliberalism in mid-1990s Ontario. On the heels of a recession during the Liberal and NDP's watch, a hobbled centre-left political paradigm was challenged by a well-funded, hungry, right-wing economic agenda. This was embodied by the populist 'Common Sense Revolution' of conservative Mike Harris — Ontario's answer to Thatcher and Reagan.

Once in power, Harris' neoliberalism had a profound impact on housing in the province. In 1996, Harris introduced Bill 69, which repealed the Landlord Tenant Act and the Rent Control Act of 1992. Then the dubiously named Tenant Protection Act of 1997 transferred more power to landlords and developers. Afterwards, the 2000 Social

Housing Reform Act eliminated provincial support for social housing provision.

Harris' reforms — which involved vancancy decontrol and above-guideline increases to rent — enabled the rise of large, financialized corporate landlords, who could more easily raise rents and prioritizes profits over people.

THE CITY OF OTTAWA AND THE LOGIC OF NEOLIBERALISM

While municipal politics are supposed to offer residents a say in how their community develops, the increasing corporate capture of democratic institutions has meant that ordinary people's voices count for little.

"Even [Timbercreek's] visioning sessions are a tactic, because it is creating this illusion that they are involving the community, that they care what the community thinks," Timbercreek tenant and HTC organizer Tammy Mast told *The Leveller*.

City of Ottawa Councillor Catherine McKenney notes that people are increasingly unwilling to get involved because neighborhood planning initiatives are routinely railroaded by developers. Developers simply apply for variances from zoning and planning guidelines that are developed through painstaking consultation, which council usually grants.

"If I were a resident, I'm not sure I would get involved. I would see my time as being wasted," McKenney told *The Leveller*. "Oftentimes, we build communities for the more affluent."

Politicians spend a lot of time and energy trying to earn the support of relatively affluent homeowners, which often leaves more marginalized renters behind.

"What [homeowners] want for their neighbourhood, which I understand and appreciate, is not in line with what we want," said Herongate Tenant Coalition's Mumina Egal. Egal notes that many homeowners prefer lower property taxes and would like to see their property value appreciate, which necessitates them complying with the new, pro-developer status quo. "It's almost impossible to meet in the middle," Egal told *The Leveller*.

"We've taken a thing that's a human necessity and elevated it primarily to an asset class," comments sci-fi writer and activist Cory Doctorow, cutting to heart of the matter. "And so it is a vote-getter for politicians to do everything they can to elevate the value of homes."

"This is the problem with making human necessities into assets," Doctorow concluded. "If, in the course of a four-year term, a government quadrupled the cost of bread, we would call them a dismal failure. But if they did it for

houses, then we say we've made the votingest, donatingest people in society four times richer and we celebrate them. And this perverse incentive is tearing apart our cities and our lives."

This "perverse incentive" to increase property values results in gentrification, where a neighbourhood's original, poorer population is replaced with a more affluent one.

One of the main ways municipal politicians and bureaucrats increase property values and drive gentrification is through Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and Building Better Revitalized Neighborhoods (BBRN) initiatives. BIAs and BBRNs use an optimistic language of improvement, revitalization, and economic development to promote gentrification.

When asked about the effect that city's current 'urban renewal' initiatives will have, Josh Hawley, an organizer with the Herongate Tenant Coalition, is blunt. "Evictions will still continue. Rent will continue to go up."

Even without the use of a BBRN, the city can simply approve project proposals by landlords and development companies like Timbercreek. Development is supposed to be guided by the city's Official Plan, which provides a framework for assessing new developments or redevelopments of land, and for planning and approving of public works and infrastructure, and zoning by-laws. The document, created in 2003, also covers planning procedures for new communities and outlines how consultation measures and soliciting opinion from the community should take place.

The plan calls for Ottawa's communities "to be built on the basics: good housing, employment, ample greenspace, a sense of history, and culture." It further states that any new developments or intensification projects require "a sensitive approach and respect for a community's established characteristics."

Yet Timbercreek has used a two-pronged approach of demolition-evictions and renovation-evictions to rid themselves of working class tenants, to make way for a premium, resort-style complex. As Timbercreek senior vice-president of development Greg Rogers told the Real Estate News

EXchange, "This is a completely different product than what used to exist on this site."

Of course, Timbercreek claims this transformation adheres to the city's Official Plan when not talking to industry insiders. Citing Section 2.5.1 of the plan, Timbercreek's Planning Rationale submitted to the City of Ottawa maintains that their proposed development is sensitive to the existing urban fabric.

This is a reference to where the Official Plan states that "compatible development means development that, although it is not necessarily the same as or similar to existing buildings in the vicinity, can enhance an established community" and "coexists with existing development without causing undue adverse impact on surrounding properties."

It is only through a perverse interpretation of this document that Timbercreek's development plans can be seen as enhancing an established community. Timbercreek's actions have caused hundreds of people to lose their homes, damaged kinship networks and community bonds in the neighbourhood, and involved harassment and surveillance by Timbercreek's management team on community members and organizers. This is the opposite of enhancing an established community.

The Official Plan acknowledges that a shifting global economy, population growth, and affordability are all issues facing the city. In the face of these dynamics, it states that city council has adopted a plan to build a "sustainable, resilient, and liveable city." It defines a liveable community as having appropriate housing at a price people can afford.

Yet granting for-profit housing a near-monopoly on rental housing has *not* kept things affordable. The CMHC states that an affordable household is one that pays 30 percent or less of its income towards housing. In Herongate, Stats Canada data shows that more than 50 percent of renting households are paying more than 30 percent a month on shelter costs.

A recent study by the Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives determined workers living in Herongate's Alta Vista ward would have to earn \$24.95 per hour to afford a two bedroom apartment. Someone

would have to work 71 hours per week at the \$14 minimum wage to afford that unit.

The city recognizes, in theory, that affordable housing for all residents is a building block for developing a vibrant and sustainable community. Yet because of its neoliberal assumptions, the city apparently cannot see that global asset management firms like Timbercreek have a responsibility to maximize profits for shareholders above and beyond everything else.

This means that Timbercreek practices "unscrupulous demographic engineering in search of profits: replacing poor and vulnerable people with those who possess greater purchasing power," as UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing Leilani Farha put it.

This is built into what Farha calls the "financialization of housing" performed by international conglomerates like Timbercreek. For Farha, this "corporate capture of housing" is a step beyond gentrification. She sees gentrification as driven by the desires of relatively affluent individuals to live in chic, cheap neighbourhoods — and then their desire to raise property values, once they've bought homes and businesses.

The corporate capture of housing, on the other hand, is naked neoliberalism — driven by international commodity markets. "That's when housing is treated as a commodity — a place to park capital and grow wealth — rather than as a social good and a human right, a place of dignity and respite from the world," Farha wrote in Huffington Post.

Treating housing as a commodity rather than a right can only deliver profits for corporations, not affordability for people. Yet at this point our federal, provincial, and municipal governments — under the spell of neoliberal ideologies and corporate interests — look to the free market to provide people with housing. Under accepted economic logic, "There is no alternative," like Margaret Thatcher infamously said.

The decades-long housing shortage in cities like Ottawa will continue — while politicians spar over whether it constitutes a crisis or an emergency — so long as this paradigm goes unchanged.

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CONTRACT INSTRUCTORS STRIKE MANDATE VOTE

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES AT THE TABLE?

DEFEND JOB SECURITY

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A BETTER TEACHING EVALUATION MODEL

ANONYMOUS ONLINE TEACHING EVALUATIONS DO NOT WORK. THE RESULTS AFFECT ALL INSTRUCTORS, BUT ARE ESPECIALLY DISCRIMINATORY TOWARDS INSTRUCTORS OF COLOUR AND WOMEN. CONTRACT INSTRUCTORS KNOW THIS, AND SO DOES CARLETON. YET DESPITE THIS WELL KNOW FACT, CARLETON IS REFUSING TO MOVE TOWARDS A FAIRER MODEL OF EVALUATING INSTRUCTORS. WE BELIEVE DISCRIMINATION HAS NO PLACE ON THE JOB.

FIGHT FOR A FAIR PAY!

DOUG FORD'S BILL 124, WHICH LIMITS SALARY INCREASES FOR ALL PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS TO 1% A YEAR, APPLIES TO CIS AS WELL. IN A BARGAINING YEAR THAT IS ALREADY SO LIMITED BY THE MEDDLING FROM THE CONSERVATIVES, IT IS SHAMEFUL THAT CARELTON WOULD EVEN CONSIDER ATTACKING THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF CIS.

ADVANCE VOTING IN CUPE 4600 OFFICE

FEB. 28TH, MARCH 2ND

GENERAL VOTING

MARCH 3RD, 4TH, 5TH

UNICENTRE ATRIUM 9AM-9PM

SOUTHAM/LOEB JUNCTION IN TUNNELS 9AM-6PM

MINTO MAIN ENTRANCE 9AM-6PM



LE CHEF DE KAHNAWAKE, JOE NORTON, LIE LA MOBILISATION DES AUTOCHTONES A LA LUTTE MONDIALE POUR LE CLIMAT



Photo: Jason Hargrove, flickr.com

André Noël

Cet article est paru sur ricochet.media le 27 février 2020.

Un peu plus d'un an après la naissance de ce grand mouvement social qui transcende les frontières de l'île, rien n'est gagné pour le peuple d'un des pays les plus pauvres de la Terre.

M. Norton a accusé le premier ministre Justin Trudeau et d'autres politiciens de ne pas comprendre l'enjeu du mouvement de solidarité envers la communauté de Wet'suwet'en, en Colombie-Britannique, qui s'oppose à la décision des autorités fédérales d'imposer la construction d'un gazoduc sur son territoire sans avoir obtenu au préalable l'assentiment de ses chefs héréditaires.

Le conseil de Kahnawake, situé sur la rive sud de Montréal, appuie sans réserve ses citoyens qui bloquent la voie ferrée du Canadien Pacifique depuis le 8 février. Son service de police, appelé «Peacekeepers», refuse d'appliquer l'injonction obtenue par le CP, ainsi que l'appel lancé par M. Trudeau pour démanteler les barricades.

«Personne ici ne va faire le sale travail de M. Trudeau, a déclaré M. Norton mercredi. Nos gens manifestent pacifiquement sur notre propre territoire. Le premier ministre, et tous les autres politiciens, devraient comprendre ce qui est en jeu. Ce n'est pas seulement un litige autochtone. C'est aussi un dossier qui touche les millions de personnes préoccupées par le changement climatique et par la voracité des compagnies qui veulent sans cesse étendre l'exploitation des énergies fossiles et qui, par conséquent, cherchent à ce que ces carburants puissent s'écouler vers les marchés dans des pipelines.»

Ce n'est pas la première fois que des autochtones associent leur combat pour le respect de

leurs terres aux campagnes menées partout dans le monde contre l'exploitation effrénée du pétrole et du gaz, dont la combustion réchauffe dangereusement la planète. Des représentants des communautés autochtones ont ainsi pris part à la grande manifestation pour le climat du 27 septembre à Montréal en compagnie de Greta Thunberg.

Mais dans le contexte de crise actuelle, les paroles de M. Norton ont une résonance particulière car elles inscrivent le mouvement de solidarité pour la communauté de Wet'suwet'en dans un mouvement international et beaucoup plus large. Ses déclarations sont rapportées dans Iori :Wase, un journal en ligne de Kahnawake. Elles ont eu peu ou pas d'échos dans les médias francophones de Montréal.

Le même jour, le premier ministre François Legault tenait des propos controversés en affirmant que la Sûreté du Québec ne pouvait pas faire appliquer l'injonction obtenue par le Canadien Pacifique parce que, selon lui, des mitrailleuses AK-47 se trouveraient dans la réserve. De telles déclarations sont fausses, «incendiaires et dangereuses», a rétorqué Kenneth Deer, secrétaire de la Nation mohawk de Kahnawake.

L'injonction obtenue par le Canadien Pacifique autorise nommément les Peacekeepers et la Sûreté du Québec à démanteler les barricades érigées près du Mile 40.7 de la subdivision Adirondack du CP sur la Old Malone Road. Mais en vertu d'ententes en vigueur, la SQ ne peut pas intervenir dans la réserve sans l'accord des Peacekeepers, à moins d'une situation exceptionnelle où la vie humaine serait autrement en danger, ce qui n'est pas le cas actuellement.

La Nation mohawk de Kahnawake estime que l'injonction accordée par la Cour supérieure de Montréal mardi matin est en soi un «acte de provocation et d'agression».

«Nous rappelons à la province de Québec et au gouverne-

ment du Canada que notre territoire n'a pas été cédé et qu'il a été l'objet d'une expropriation illégale pour construire ce tronçon ferroviaire à la fin du 19e siècle, ajoute la Nation mohawk. Les Chemins de fer du Canadien Pacifique sont eux-mêmes un agent de colonisation. Ils ont volé les terres autochtones pour ouvrir une voie qui allait faciliter la colonisation et l'oppression dans l'Ouest [canadien]. Le Canadien Pacifique n'a pas l'autorité morale pour jouer à la victime devant la Cour supérieure du Québec. Notre terre a été l'objet d'un vol par cette compagnie.»

L'injonction déçoit d'autant plus les Mohawks que, avant d'aller la requérir, les dirigeants du Canadien Pacifique s'étaient montrés sensibles aux préoccupations des autochtones. Le 20 février, Keith

Creel, le pdg de la compagnie, a même écrit à Justin Trudeau pour lui demander de donner suite aux requêtes faites par les chefs héréditaires de la nation Wet'suwet'en qui souhaitaient avoir une discussion directe avec le premier ministre.

Plus tôt ce mois-ci, deux chefs héréditaires de Wet'suwet'en ont déposé une poursuite pour obliger le gouvernement fédéral à respecter

ses cibles climatiques en modifiant ou en annulant des projets comme celui du pipeline Coastal GasLink.

Warner Naziel et Alphonse Gagnon soutiennent qu'en vertu de l'Accord de Paris, Ottawa a l'obligation constitutionnelle de respecter ses engagements de réduction de gaz à effet de serre, indique le Globe and Mail.

Selon eux, le gouvernement

prive les droits à la sécurité et à l'équité des membres les plus jeunes et des générations futures de la communauté autochtone en permettant à des projets gros émetteurs de GES de se réaliser. Ils ajoutent que cette politique entre en violation avec l'obligation qu'a le Canada de contribuer aux efforts mondiaux pour empêcher un réchauffement catastrophique.

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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WET'SUWET'EN AC

BY YA MONTENEGRO, THE WOMEN'S COORDINATING COM

The forcible removal of Wet'suwet'en from their land by the RCMP so that a pipeline company could access the territory was years in the making.

Granted an injunction, the RCMP moved in on behalf of TC Energy's Coastal GasLink pipeline project to forcibly clear out land defenders at the Gidimt'en checkpoint in January 2019. One year later, after Wet'suwet'en peacefully evicted CGL from their land, a large RCMP force moved in again to remove all Indigenous bodies from the land.

In response to this series of raids, Indigenous peoples and allies across so-called Canada and beyond have taken to the streets and the barricades. Rail blockades set up by Mohawk and Gitksan land defenders halted most rail traffic in the country, precipitating a national crisis.

This article charts the solidarity response to the Wet'suwet'en call for action and the demand that the RCMP completely withdraw from their lands. It begins on Feb. 6, with the first wave of arrests on Wet'suwet'en Territory....

FEB 6

In response to multiple arrests of Indigenous land defenders in Wet'suwet'en territory, members of the Mohawk community of Tyendinaga begin a rail blockade, stopping all rail traffic between Toronto, Ottawa, and Montréal.

FEB 8

The RCMP extends their exclusion zone over most of Gidimt'en Clan Territory of the Wet'suwet'en Nation. Statements from the Unist'ot'en camp condemn the violations of Wet'suwet'en law, Canadian law, and of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) committed by the RCMP on February 6th, 7th, and 8th. Mohawks of Kahnawake on Montréal's South Shore begin blocking a CP rail line serving commuters on Exo's Candiac line in to Montréal.

FEB 10

RCMP arrest Unist'ot'en matriarchs including Freda Huson (Chief Howihkat), Brenda Michell (Chief Geltiy), and Karla Tait while holding a ceremony to honour missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Militarized Royal Canadian Mounted Police Units advance further into Wet'suwet'en, arresting 21 indigenous land defenders and supporters over the weekend.

Dozens of rail and highway blockades and occupations to government offices break out across so-called Canada in support of Wet'suwet'en. Actions throughout the day include:

RAIL BLOCKADES

SIX NATIONS OF THE GRAND RIVER TERRITORY: Haudenosaunee land defenders block CN rail lines carrying freight from morning until noon. Land defenders erected tipis and banners in a show of solidarity.

Blockades at Tyendinaga and Kahnawake continue

OCCUPATIONS

OTTAWA: Indigenous youth occupy the Ministry of Justice to demand that Justice Minister David Lametti have the RCMP stand down from Wet'suwet'en territory.

TORONTO: Indigenous and settler youth occupy the office of Liberal MP Carolyn Bennett, the federal Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations.

VICTORIA: A group of indigenous youth occupy the steps of the BC legislature.

EDMONTON: Extinction Rebellion Edmonton and Beaver Hills Warriors occupy a central Bank of Montréal branch.

FEB 11

Actions throughout the day include:

RAIL BLOCKADES

LISTUGUJ: Mik'maq land defenders block rail traffic in Listuguj, Mik'maq territory near Gaspé, Québec.

NEW HAZELTON: Gitksan land defenders block rail traffic between Prince Rupert and Prince George.

SQUAMISH: Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam land defenders block all CN Rail traffic into the Vancouver ports.

HALIFAX: Mik'maq land defenders and supporters block CN Rail and shut down the Halifax Port throughout the day, ending at 5PM.

Blockades at Tyendinaga and Kahnawake continue.

OCCUPATIONS

TORONTO: Indigenous youth occupying the constituency office of Liberal MP Carolyn Bennett are removed by the RCMP after a meeting with the Minister.

WINNIPEG: Hundreds of land defenders block Portage and Main during the evening rush hour.

VANCOUVER: Land defenders occupy the intersection of Cambie and Broadway overnight.

Occupations in Ottawa and Victoria continue

FEB 12

The RCMP lifts the exclusion zone. Actions continue to spread further across the country in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en.

RAIL BLOCKADES

WINNIPEG: Indigenous land defenders block all rail traffic, braving -40° C windchill.

Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Listuguj and New Hazelton. A second blockade is set up at Tyendinaga.

OCCUPATIONS

OTTAWA: Indigenous Youth vacate Ministry of Justice after a press conference stating "reconciliation is dead." On their way out, they block the intersections of Lyon and Wellington at noon. The youth return to the streets in the evening and block traffic at various locations in the downtown core.

HALIFAX: Land defenders briefly occupy the lobby of a downtown office where Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland was scheduled to speak.

VICTORIA: Indigenous youth and land defenders lock down the BC legislature to disrupt the Throne Speech. Occupation on the steps of the British Columbia legislature continues.

VANCOUVER: Land defenders block Granville Street Bridge, following an overnight stay at Cambie and Broadway.

FEB 13

Via Rail announces they will be shutting down all service across the country; CN to do the same in eastern Canada. Canadian media reports the loss of millions of

dollars over the delays and cancellations. BC Premier John Horgan agrees to meet Hereditary Chiefs.

RAIL BLOCKADES

NEW HAZELTON: Gitksan Hereditary Chiefs agree to remove their blockade in light of Horgan's decision.

MAGNETAWAN: Anishinaabe land defenders blockade rail lines near Magnetawan First Nation on highway 529, a few kilometres from Sudbury.

COQUITLAM: Land defenders blockade a CP train yard in unceded Kwikwetlem territory.

Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, and Listuguj.

OCCUPATIONS

VICTORIA: Land defenders receive a court injunction approved by the BC Supreme Court.

SASKATOON: Land defenders march and block roads throughout the downtown area.

NELSON: Land defenders occupy a Bank of Montréal branch, demanding divestment from the Coastal GasLink LNG.

FEB 15

Solidarity actions continue and spread further across the country.

RAIL BLOCKADES

VAUGHAN: Land defenders block the CP Macmillan Rail Yard in Vaughan, just north of Toronto.

VANCOUVER: Land defenders block CN Rail in East Vancouver carrying freight to the United States.

Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Magnetawan, and Listuguj.

OCCUPATIONS

TORONTO: Land defenders block the intersection of Yonge and Dundas for several hours.

WASWANIP: James Bay Cree land defenders slow traffic on bridge crossing in Waswanipi, northern Québec.

FEB 17

Mass marches break out across Canada as blockades and occupations continue

RAIL BLOCKADES

MORRIS, MANITOBA: Indigenous land defenders block CN Rail just south of Winnipeg.

SAINT-PASCAL: Wet'suwet'en supporters block the railway in

Saint-Pascal, Québec.

Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Magnetawan, and Listuguj.

DEMONSTRATIONS

TORONTO: Over 10,000 people march from Christie Pitts to Queen's Park, blocking traffic along Bloor Street and major intersections.

OTTAWA: Indigenous youth lead a march of over 500 people, blocking the Rideau Canal and major intersections of the downtown core, and ending the march outside the Prime Minister's office on Wellington Street.

MONTRÉAL: Land defenders led by Indigenous youth march and blockade major intersections, including Sherbrooke and McGill College Avenue.

SASKATOON: Land defenders demonstrate in downtown Saskatoon, blockading major intersections and bridges.

OCCUPATIONS

MORRIS, MANITOBA: Indigenous land defenders block Highway 75 leading to the United States, slowing traffic.

THOUSAND ISLANDS: Land defenders blockade the Thousand Islands Bridge along the US Border, impeding international traffic for two and a half hours.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND: Mik'maq land defenders slow down traffic on the approach to the Confederation Bridge.

FEB 18

Wet'suwet'en Chiefs declare they "would not be negotiating while under the barrel of a gun," demanding the demilitarization of the territory in order to begin talks with Justin Trudeau and John Horgan.

FEB 19

The Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs head to Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory to meet and thank those that have stood with them against the encroachment of the RCMP in the nation's battle against the Coastal GasLink pipeline. Meanwhile, CN Rail announces mass layoffs – allegedly due to the protests, despite having previously announced layoffs in November. Later, far-right groups associated with Yellow Vests and United We Roll tear down a barricade in Edmonton.

RAIL BLOCKADES

EDMONTON: Indigenous land defenders block CN and VIA Rail

PROTESTION TIMELINE

MITTEE FOR A FREE WALLMAPU, AND LEVELLER STAFF

traffic west of the city; far-right groups tear down a barricade.

SAINT- LAMBERT: Land defenders shut down the railway in Saint-Lambert, south of Montréal.

Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Magnetawan, Morris, and Listuguj.

FEB 20

Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs meet Mohawk leaders of Tyendinaga and tell supporters to continue mobilizing amidst ongoing pressure from the federal government to lift the blockades. Public Safety Minister Bill Blair announces the RCMP will leave Wet'suwet'en territory on the condition that the Wet'suwet'en "keep the road clear" and abide by the court injunctions to maintain the construction of the pipeline. The Hereditary Chiefs reject the offer, which simply repeats RCMP and CGL demands from the beginning.

RAIL BLOCKADES

KAMLOOPS: Secwepemc land defenders blockade CP Rail lines across from Neskonlith Hall near the town of Case, BC.

Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Magnetawan, Saint-Lambert, and Listuguj.

FEB 21

Bowing to industry concerns, the Prime Minister states, "The injunctions must be obeyed and barricades must come down."

Trudeau adds "we have reached the limit of what we can do unilaterally as the Federal Government, and now it is up to Indigenous leaders to find solutions to continue on the path of reconciliation."

Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs and Mohawk leaders hold a joint press conference and remain resolute in demanding the full retreat of the RCMP from their traditional territory.

RAIL BLOCKADES

CALEDONIA, NB: Mik'maq land defenders blockade CN Rails just north of Moncton. The land defenders are served an injunction a few hours later.

Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Magnetawan, Saint-Lambert, and Listuguj.

DEMONSTRATIONS

CALGARY: Indigenous land defenders interrupt shopping in a mall in downtown Calgary.

FEB 22

Thousands defy government demands to bring down solidarity barricades. Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs meet with Mohawk leaders of Kahnawake.

RAIL BLOCKADES

SASKATOON: Indigenous youth, women, disabled LGBTQ2S, and inner-city community members block CN Rail lines in Saskatoon's Pleasant Hill neighbourhood. The land defenders are harrassed by white supremacist groups.

ELSIPOGTOG: Mik'maq land defenders move to Salmon Arm River near Elsipogtog and blockade CN Rail lines.

MASHEUIATSH: Indigenous land defenders and allies blockade CN Rail lines near Saguenay, Québec.

Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Magnetawan, Saint-Lambert, and Listuguj.

DEMONSTRATIONS

TORONTO: Over 2,000 people march in defense of the Wet'suwet'en, ending with an Indigenous-led round dance at Nathan Phillips Square.

CAPE BRETON: Indigenous land defenders slow traffic on the Canso Causeway.

SALABERRY-DE-VALLEYFIELD: Land defenders demonstrate downtown in Salaberry-de-Valley-Field, Québec.

CATTARAUGUS, NY, USA: Seneca land defenders blockade a bridge on the Cattaraugus Reservation in upstate New York.

FEB 23

OPP give an ultimatum for Mohawks of Tyendinaga to remove barricades at midnight.

RAIL BLOCKADES

SAINT- LAMBERT: Land defenders and allies vacate premises after police encircle the blockade.

Blockades continue at Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Saskatoon, Elsipogtog, and Listuguj.

FEB 24

Police raid Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, arresting 10 people. Blockades, occupations and protests explode across the country.

RAIL BLOCKADES

KAMLOOPS: Secwepemc land defenders return to block CP Rail lines after vacating it on Feb 21.

NEW HAZELTON: Gitxsan land defenders return to block CP rail

traffic between Prince Rupert and Prince George. Police arrest 14 Gitxsan land defenders overnight, including three Hereditary Chiefs.

HAMILTON: Land defenders blockade CN Rails near York Boulevard.

Blockades continue at Kahnawake, Saskatoon, Elsipogtog, and Listuguj.

OCCUPATIONS

KAHNAWAKE: Mohawk land defenders block the Mercier Bridge in the morning and afternoon hours. Mohawk Warriors barricaded the same location during the standoff at Oka in 1990, making the site a symbol of Indigenous struggle.

KANESATAKE: Mohawk land defenders block Highway 344. Mohawk Warriors barricaded the same location during the standoff at Oka in 1990.

SIX NATIONS OF THE GRAND RIVER TERRITORY: Six Nations land defenders blockade the highway bypass between Argyle and Greens Road near the town of Caledonia. Six Nations land defenders blockaded the same during the reclamation of Kanonhstaton in 2006.

SAULT STE MARIE: Anishinaabe land defenders block the international bridge to the United States.

VANCOUVER: Indigenous land defenders and allies defy a court injunction by blocking the entrance to the Port of Vancouver.

VICTORIA: Indigenous land defenders defy a court injunction and occupy the front steps of the British Columbia legislature. Indigenous youth chain themselves to the doors to prohibit entry to the building.

Blockades continue at Kahnawake, Saskatoon, and Elsipogtog.

PROTESTS

OTTAWA: Indigenous land defenders block multiple streets and intersections near Parliament. Police snipers watch the demonstration from a nearby building.

MONTRÉAL: Land defenders and allies organize a flash mob outside of Prime Minister Trudeau's constituency office.

FEB 25

Rail blockades, occupations, and protests continue and continue to break out following the OPP raid of the rail blockade on Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory.

RAIL BLOCKADES

TORONTO: 500 land defenders block CP Rail lines at Lambton Arena during rush hour traffic, causing havoc at nearby Union Station. Police arrest 37 people overnight.

KAMLOOPS: Police encircle the camp and arrest three people, including one Hereditary Chief and his daughter.

HAMILTON: Land defenders and allies leave after police encircle the blockade, avoiding any arrests.

SHERBROOKE: Land defenders block CN Rail lines in Lennoxville, a suburb of Sherbrooke, Québec.

ABBOTSFORD: Land defenders block CN Rail lines in BC.

TYENDINAGA: Police remove the second blockade, but Mohawk land defenders continue to gather near the rail line.

The blockades in Kahnawake and Listuguj continue. Police serve Mik'maq land defenders in Listuguj with an injunction.

OCCUPATIONS

VANCOUVER: Several protestors are arrested by police, who remove the blockade at the Port of Vancouver only to see it re-established a few hours later.

VICTORIA: Land defenders block the Pat Bay Highway north of Victoria overnight.

Occupations continue at Sault Ste. Marie, Kanesatake, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, and Victoria.

FEB 26

The Québec Superior Court approves an injunction presented by Canadian Pacific (CP) Rail against the Mohawk community of Kahnawake, which leaders of the nation reject outright. Mohawk Secretary of the Six Nations Confederacy Atsenhaen Kenneth Deer blasts

Québec Premier François Legault for insinuating arms are being used in the Kahnawake blockade to the national press.

RAIL BLOCKADES

KAHNAWAKE: The blockade is reinforced by Mohawk community members and continues.

The Listuguj blockade continues.

OCCUPATIONS

VICTORIA: Land defenders vacated the Pat Bay Highway after being served an injunction by police.

SAULT STE MARIE: Anishinaabe land defenders walk onto the International Bridge for ceremony, closing the road for two hours.

WINNIPEG: Land defenders shut down Portage and Main, Winnipeg's most iconic intersection, for a round dance.

Occupations continue at Kanesatake, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, and Victoria.

FEB 27

The RCMP finally agrees to end patrols in Wet'suwet'en territory, while CGL agrees to a two-day pause in work. This allows talks to begin between Hereditary Chiefs and federal and provincial cabinet ministers.

The talks were delayed a day when the Canadian and BC governments demanded the Hereditary Chiefs tell their supporters to stand down. The Office of the Wet'suwet'en issued a statement saying "In accordance with our Inuk Nu'at'en (our laws), the Wet'suwet'en cannot speak on other nation's behalf."

Various actions in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en continue, including railway blockades in Kingston, Montréal, and Tyendinaga, and a march in London that slowed highway and train traffic.

At press time (Mar. 2), high-level talks continue between Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs and provincial and federal politicians. An agreement had been reached to recognize rights and title to be reviewed by the Wet'suwet'en people in the coming weeks. Yet no such agreement has been reached on the CGL pipeline, to which the Hereditary Chiefs remain adamantly opposed.

"We know that this is a long fight. We know that this is an intergenerational struggle, this is a revolution," said Molly Wickham, in a March 2 video posted to Twitter. Wickham, whose traditional name is Sleydo, is a spokesperson for the Gidmit'en camp of the Wet'suwet'en nation.

Protests and blockades continue, with a national student solidarity walk-out scheduled for March 4.

"This is the time to keep pushing, because now is the time to see and actualize and realize our hopes and dreams of liberation," Wickham concluded.

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ESCALATION IN NORTHWEST SYRIA

Civilians caught in crossfire between government and opposition

Josh Lalonde

For the past several years, the Syrian civil war has seen a slow but steady progression towards victory for the Syrian government under Bashar al-Assad, which has now regained control over nearly the whole country.

In recent weeks, however, there has been a dramatic escalation in northwestern Syria — that is, the province of Idlib and nearby Aleppo and Latakia, the last region under control of the armed opposition. Operation Dawn of Idlib, the government's ongoing offensive to recapture this region, is embroiled in the complex geopolitical calculations of foreign backers of both the government and opposition, with implications that extend well beyond the Middle East.

THE MILITARY SITUATION IN IDLIB

Pro-government forces, including units of the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) and Iran-backed militias, began operations to recapture at least part of Idlib province in April, 2019. After a series of ceasefires broke down in the summer and fall of 2019, a new attack began in December 2019.

The campaign's main objectives are to clear the suburbs of the city of Aleppo (from which opposition fighters had been shelling government-held areas), to regain control over the M5 highway linking Aleppo and Damascus, and to capture Saraqeb, a city located at a major highway crossroads.

Opposing the government are a variety of mostly Salafijihadist groups including the former al-Qaeda affiliate Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), its close ally Turkestan Islamic Party (TIP), and the Turkish-backed umbrella group National Liberation Front (NLF). HTS and the NLF had previously fought each other for territorial control, but they formed an alliance to repel the government offensive.

Pro-government forces captured large portions of the region in late January and early February, including the strategic towns of Ma'arat al-Nu'man and Saraqeb. They also regained control over the M5 highway for the first time since 2012.

In response to these rapid Syrian military advances, Turkey began sending hundreds of troops to reinforce the 12 observation posts it had established in Idlib under a 2018 de-escalation agreement with Russia. Thousands of Turkish-backed fighters from Turkish-controlled regions north of Idlib province were also transferred to the front lines and provided with Turkish armoured vehicles and anti-tank guided missiles.

On February 3, Syrian government forces shelled a convoy of Turkish reinforcements, killing five soldiers and three civilian contractors, one of the few instances of direct combat between the Syrian and Turkish militaries since the

beginning of the war. In response, Turkey sent further reinforcements to the region; the UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights estimated that approximately 7,600 soldiers and 2,765 vehicles had been mobilized. Turkey also appears to have provided fighters with surface-to-air missiles used to shoot down two Syrian Arab Air Force (SAAF) helicopters.

On February 27, Turkish-supported opposition forces re-captured the town of Saraqeb from the Syrian government. This was a significant loss, cutting off the M5 highway only a few weeks after it had been reopened — and the first notable success for the opposition since the beginning of the government offensive in December.

Later that same day, airstrikes carried out by either Russia or the SAAF — it's not clear which — killed at least 33 Turkish soldiers. This brought the total of Turkish casualties since the beginning of February to 54.

Turkey has publicly blamed the Syrian government rather than Russia for the attack, likely due to geopolitical considerations. So in response, Turkey struck dozens of pro-Damascus targets, with Turkish defense minister Hulusi Akar claiming they had "neutralised" 2,212 soldiers and destroyed "eight Syrian helicopters, 103 tanks, 72 artillery and rocket launchers, and three air defence systems." On March 1, Turkey also shot down two Syrian fighter jets after the SAA destroyed a Turkish drone.

THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

The impact of the offensive on civilian residents of the region has been disastrous. According to Mark Lowcock, UN under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs, 900,000 people have been displaced since December 1. Up to 50,000 of these have no shelter in the midst of winter cold. There have reportedly been over 300 civilians killed, mostly by Russian and SAAF airstrikes.

Idlib already contained approximately one million internally displaced persons from other regions of Syria. This included many who have been displaced several times as the front lines shifted during the war.

In particular, Idlib was the destination of many fighters and their families from other parts of Syria, who were relocated there as part of various 'reconciliation' agreements formed when those areas were recaptured by the government. It is in part because there is nowhere else for fighters to be relocated that the fighting in the most recent offensive has been so intense.

At the same time, Turkey has closed its borders with Syria, leaving Idlib residents no means of escape from the conflict. Turkey already hosts approximately 3.6 million Syrian refugees, and anti-Syrian sentiment has been rising

in recent years. Turkish President Recep Erdoğan has, on numerous occasions, stated that Turkey would not accept any more Syrian refugees, and Turkish border guards regularly shoot at Syrians trying to cross the border.

The Turkish invasion of northeast Syria in October 2019 was in part motivated by the desire to set up a so-called "safe zone" where Syrians could be sent. Preventing any further influx of refugees is one of Turkey's main goals in supporting the opposition against the government's Idlib offensive.

On February 27, following the airstrikes that killed 33 Turkish soldiers, the Turkish government announced that it would no longer try to prevent Syrian or other refugees from reaching Europe. Prior to this, since 2016, Turkey has basically served as one of the EU's border guards, preventing Syrian migrants and others from reaching Europe in exchange for funding from the EU.

The Turkish suspension of this arrangement was likely meant as a threat to EU and NATO countries — a move designed to gain their support in pushing back the Syrian government offensive in Idlib. Turkish news outlets reported that hundreds of migrants had arrived at the Greek-Turkish border, hoping to cross into Europe. Others had travelled to the Turkish coast hoping to reach the Greek island of Lesbos by boat, which prompted Greece and Bulgaria to increase border patrols to prevent any migrants from entering.

The Turkish government claimed on March 1 that 76,000 migrants had crossed into Europe since the decision to open the border, but Greek officials stated that "all attempts" to cross had been prevented. Greek prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis announced the same day that

Greece would "not be accepting any new asylum applications for one month".

GEOPOLITICAL INTRIGUE

One of the main factors driving the Idlib offensive has been the role of the foreign backers of the various armed parties — in particular Turkey and Russia.

Turkey has, from the early stages of the conflict, supported the armed opposition and served as a transit hub by which thousands of foreign fighters travelled to Syria to join groups such as ISIS, Jabhat al-Nusra (now part of HTS), and TIP. It has also directly intervened in Syria on several occasions since 2016, resulting in Turkish control over large regions in the northwest and north of the country.

Russia, on the other hand, has backed the Syrian government politically since the beginning of the war, and militarily since 2015. Russian air support has been essential for the government's recapture of significant areas once under opposition control. Meanwhile, Russian intelligence and special forces have been used to shore up depleted SAA units.

Although they support opposing sides in the conflict, Turkey and Russia have cooperated since 2017 to negotiate de-escalation zones in different parts of the country. One such de-escalation zone was established for Idlib in a separate agreement between Turkey and Russia in September 2018.

Under the agreement, Russia would "take all necessary measures to ensure that military operations and attacks on Idlib will be avoided and the existing status quo will be maintained." Turkey would be responsible for reopening the M4 and M5 highways and for establishing a demilitarized zone from which all "radical terrorist groups" would be removed.

Neither Turkey nor Russia lived up to their commitments under the deal, as HTS continued to operate within the demilitarized zone and attack government forces, the M4 and M5 highways remained closed, and the Syrian government carried out attacks and airstrikes on positions within Idlib.

This agreement now seems to have completely fallen apart, with each side blaming the other for its violation. There has consequently been an increase in the rhetorical aggression between the two parties in their respective state media. Russia has accused Turkey of supporting al-Qaeda linked groups and of firing missiles at Russian planes, while Turkey claims that Russia had lost credibility as a participant in the peace process. However, both sides have taken steps to maintain the strained cooperation, holding discussions between Turkish and Russian officials concerning the offensive.

The increasing tension between Turkey and Russia has implications beyond Syria, notably in Libya, where they also back opposing sides in a civil war. Turkey backs the UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA), based in Tripoli, while Russia supports the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by General Khalifa Haftar.

The LNA, with Russian support, launched an offensive to capture Tripoli in April 2019, which has killed up to 2,000 people and displaced 146,000, according to the UN. Turkey, on the other hand, signed a military cooperation agreement with the GNA in December 2019 and has reportedly sent over 4,000 Syrian fighters under its control to Libya to fight for the GNA. This includes "at least 130 former Islamic State or al-Qaida fighters" according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

A separate agreement signed in November 2019 established maritime boundaries between Turkey and Libya, which would allow Turkey to drill in offshore gas fields in the eastern Mediterranean. Greece and Egypt both objected to the deal, which is part of an ongoing dispute between the EU and Turkey over maritime boundaries in the Mediterranean, and rights to gas deposits in the area.

On March 1, the LNA signed an agreement with the Syrian government which would reportedly allow for Turkish-backed Syrian fighters captured in Libya to be deported back to Syria.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

It is still possible that Turkey and Russia will be able to reach an agreement ending the offensive, likely with the Syrian government maintaining control over much of the area that it has captured since December. It is also possible that the conflict between the two powers will continue to escalate and break out into open warfare — though that is an outcome that both parties are trying to avoid.

The Syrian government seems determined to regain control over the M4 and M5 highways, and may be satisfied to leave a pocket surrounding the city of Idlib temporarily under opposition control. The opposition, however, have nowhere to retreat and are therefore willing to fight to regain the territory they have lost during the offensive, as they did in Saraqeb.

No matter how the situation develops, it is the civilians of Idlib who will suffer, whether under continued rule by HTS and its allies or aerial bombardment by Russia and the SAAF, in the ruins of their homes or in displacement camps near the Turkish border.

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A GUIDE TO ACCESSIBLE VENUES IN OTTAWA

Created for literary events, this guide has a wider value

Tim Kitz

The Leveller recently caught wind of a guide to accessible venues put together by Byword.s.ca, Ottawa's online literary hub – a guide that has since come in handy when plotting story meetings, and which we keep recommending to activists for their events.

The guide can be seen at bywords.ca/accessiblevenues.pdf.

It's kind of amazing such a guide didn't already exist – and that it's being put out by a group devoted to literature, rather than some government agency or disability advocacy group. The Leveller caught up with Amanda Earl, the guide's creator, to learn more about how it came about.

What is Bywords and how are you involved with it?

Bywords.ca is a literary web site and magazine that began in 2003. It followed the Bywords monthly magazine, which had been an important part of Ottawa's literary community for 11 years, from 1990 to 2001. It was a physical magazine that contained a calendar of events and that was distributed for free. It was put together by faculty and students of the University of Ottawa and members of the literary community.

I started Bywords.ca with the help of my husband, Charles Earl, and a number of volunteers after the original magazine ended. In 2000-2001, I was in creative writing classes with Professor Seymour Mayne, one of the editors when *Bywords* ended.

Through the creative writing program, we attended the Ottawa small press book fair, where attendees and vendors at the fair talked to us about how much they missed *Bywords*. My husband handles tech in his daily working life and he thought he could create a site.

We, along with several volunteers, decided we also wanted the calendar, a news section that would offer information about calls for submission, publication announcements, and links to local publishers and authors. We also wanted to publish the poetry of current and local Ottawa students, residents, and workers.

It was a way to connect members of the literary community and to promote and publish Ottawans.

What was the genesis of the accessibility guide? Who contributed to it?

Since we have literary, spoken word, storytelling, and nonfiction events on the calendar, I am often contacted by publishers and by authors from Ottawa and out of town asking about places to hold their readings. In some cases, I'm also asked about the accessibility of a venue.

This guide is specifically for organizers of events, to help them find out about venues that are accessible. To be listed, a venue has to combine both accessibility and suitability for readings.

I asked around and got some advice from disability activists and artists Nathan Hauch and Chris Binkowski, Kenzie McCurdy of Stopgap Ottawa, storyteller Kim Kilpatrick, and Canadian-Scottish writer and activist Sandra Alland. I also asked for help from Toronto writer and disability activist Dorothy Ellen Palmer. I started a Facebook page called Access Word Ottawa and spread the word through social media that I wanted to start a guide.

How was the guide put together?

The plan is to go neighbourhood by neighbourhood. I started two years ago with

Centretown. I asked disabled creatives to inspect venues for accessibility. Then if the venue was accessible, I contacted the venue owner or manager and asked them questions about the suitability for literary events — including cost, capacity, sound equipment etc.

Last year I added Sandy Hill and this year I'll work on Hintonburg. Since it's only me with occasional help from a disabled person, the guide has very modest goals. An updated guide will come out in December 2020.

In the latest version of the guide, you've mostly replaced the term 'accessible' with 'barrier-free.' Why the change?

This was a foolish error on my part. We'll be changing the term back to 'accessible' with the next guide coming out at the end of December.

I'm not disabled and don't claim to speak for disabled people. I kept seeing 'barrier-free' and I thought it was more inclusive somehow. Instead it turns out to be seen by some disabled people as government jargon.

I know I'm going to make mistakes with this guide, but I aim to correct those by listening as much as I can and learning. When I talked to Dorothy Ellen Palmer about the word, she made some of the following points:

- The average abled person thinks 'barrier-free' only applies to stairs. If there are no stairs, they would likely think a building is barrier-free. It would require a huge education campaign to explain what all the barriers really are, and the government is not doing that in any way.
- This term also sets the average abled person up to thinking that the only thing needed to make somewhere accessible is to remove existing barriers, which isn't true. It is often about adding new things, like accessible washrooms and ASL.
- The idea of the word *barrier* is also problematic and euphemistic. The lack of an accessible wash-

room, for example, is not simply a barrier. It's a violation of my human rights.

- It is an impossible standard for the purposes of finding a building for a literary event. To be 'fully accessible' or 'barrier-free,' a building would have to be accessible to every kind of disability. That means a huge list of things — including adult change tables, quiet rooms, watering stations for service animals, ASL, CART [computer-assisted real-time translation], braille sig-

nage, etc. There are no 'barrier-free' buildings on the planet.

Is it a goal to build on the PDF and publish a print copy or a more interactive web version?

Well, we do have a Google map where I update venues from time to time – tinyurl.com/accessibleottawamap. It would be wonderful if someone wanted to take the guide and make it into a print version or a web version.

Can people help contribute to the guide?

Yes, absolutely. Disabled

people can inspect venues for accessibility. It should be noted that the most we've been able to hope for for venues has been wheelchair accessibility, but that's only one component of accessibility.

Everyone who attends literary, spoken word, storytelling and nonfiction events in Ottawa is free to contact me (amanda@bywords.ca) or our Access Word Ottawa facebook page at any time with venue possibilities to add to the guide.

What's the biggest barrier to more barrier-free venues?

Ableism.

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- Monthly town halls and events
 - Canvassing and community organizing
 - Assistance with government services (such as OSAP, ODSP, Service Ontario, etc.)
- And much more!

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Joel Harden

MPP / Député provincial
Ottawa Centre

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A sign at the march "Make Detroit the Engine of the Green New Deal" (July 30, 2019)
Photo: Paul Becker, flickr.com, CC



FIGHTING HOUSING DISPLACEMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Report Highlights Importance of Radical Approaches to Tenant Rights

Andy Crosby

Radical approaches to fighting back against landlords and tenant injustice can be more effective than relying on existing legal frameworks.

This is a principle finding in research undertaken by Martine August (University of Waterloo) and Cole Webber (Parkdale Community Legal Services). August and Webber published a report — *Demanding the Right to the City and the Right to Housing (R2C/R2H): Best Practices for Supporting Community Organizing* — this past December.

On Feb. 26, August and Webber presented their findings at the University of Ottawa. The presentation — “Fighting Housing Displacement through Community Organizing” — outlined best practices and the role of law, lawyers, and community legal workers.

“We’ve seen more radical approaches to fighting for tenant justice in recent years,” said August.

August and Webber interviewed tenants involved with three recent struggles against their landlords:

- the Hamilton Tenants Solidarity Network, who were fighting landlord InterRent Real Estate Investment Trust;
- Parkdale Organize in Toronto, who were taking on landlords Akelius and MetCap Living; and
- the Herongate Tenant Coalition (Ottawa) who are dealing with landlord Timbercreek Asset Management.

The goal of the report was to evaluate tenant mobilizing strategies, with a specific focus on relationships between organizers and social agencies.

August and Webber discussed the pragmatic goals that these groups embraced, which included stopping evictions, “pressuring landlords to drop rent increases, and building community power. Instead of engaging and relying on the legal system to seek justice — such as the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) — the groups engaged a radical approach, using extra-legal tactics such as rent strikes, occupations, and disruptions to fight back.

In Ottawa, the Herongate

Tenant Coalition attempted to organize those served eviction notices to stay put and precipitate a crisis for Timbercreek, who would have to file hundreds of eviction applications with the LTB and deal with the optics of forcibly removing people from their homes.

The report highlighted the achievements, challenges, and best practices for community organizing. In examining why tenants organize, August highlighted the testimony of a Herongate organizer in the presentation:

“People that lived in that neighbourhood saw the ... injustice that were going on, because they could not necessarily, I will say – breathe,” the organizer said. “That is why they became activists. They could not live with the constant threat to their dignity, their housing, their place of community that’s being demolished. So at a certain point you stand up ... simply because you cannot breathe.”

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL AGENCIES

August and Webber examined the relationship between

community organizers and non-profit organizations and explored how social agencies can both support and limit the strength of community organizing. Ultimately, they highlight the importance of radically-oriented organizing practices and therefore offer recommendations for how non-profit organizations and social agencies can support community-level organizers.

Perhaps surprisingly, Webber discussed that non-profits can act as a hindrance to grassroots organizing efforts. Here, tension exists between the radical goals and tactics of the three groups and the social agencies and legal clinics that tend to rely on funding, focus on lobbying, and ultimately work within the confines of power and the legal system.

Webber discussed the report’s recommendations to non-profits, urging them to respect direct engagement — which can include extra-legal and direct-action tactics such as collectively withholding rent, occupying offices, and disrupting LTB hearings — to respect district-based scale and organizer priorities, and to support (materially and otherwise) independent organizing.

THE RIGHT TO STAY PUT

At the “Access to Justice” roundtable panel discussion following August and Webber’s talk, Josh Hawley — a member of the Herongate Tenant Coalition — likened the eviction and displacement of hundreds of Herongate residents to the forcible re-

moval of Indigenous peoples from their lands. In the month of February, police used force to remove Wet’suwet’en, Gitxsan, and Mohawk peoples from their unceded territories.

In these cases, people are “ripped from their homes,” noted Hawley who added that, at Tyendinaga, police threw donations given to the Mohawk land defenders in a dumpster, similar to how landlords discard evictees’ belongings.

For Hawley, tenants being faced with notices of eviction should collectively take a stand — as Indigenous peoples have done on their lands — and say “no, we’re not leaving.”

THE “RULE OF LAW” AND EXTRA-LEGAL TACTICS

As a buzz-phrase, the “rule of law” has been repeated ad nauseum throughout the month of February. Politicians, pundits, and corporate commentators have had their message about respecting the rule of law broadcast over and over again in the mainstream media, as Indigenous blockades ground the Canadian economy to a halt.

The notion of respecting the rule of law should be scrutinized though, rather than simply swallowed whole.

If these dominant voices were particularly concerned about upholding the rule of law, they would engage seriously with Indigenous law, international law, and yes, even Canadian law. Indigenous law predates settler law by millennia and interna-

tional law protects Indigenous land rights and their right to “free, prior, and informed consent.” The Canadian Supreme Court’s 1997 Delgamuukw decision determined that Wet’suwet’en and Gitxsan title to the land was never extinguished; further, it recognized the hereditary chiefs as the governing authorities of those two nations. Even the provincial and federal governments recognized the hereditary chiefs as responsible for negotiating treaties in the B.C. Treaty Commission process.

The “rule of law” is applied arbitrarily to suit the interests of dominant actors who declare that they have the power to determine who commits a transgression, often against corporate interests.

The parallels that Hawley draws between forced removal and refusal are relevant for interrogating the rule of law regarding tenant struggles.

As Webber pointed out during the roundtable discussion, landlords are acting within the law. The law allows for landlords to apply for above-guideline increases to rent, to exorbitantly raise the rent on vacant units, to engage in rapid gentrification practices under the auspices of “renewal” or “revitalization.” The role of the Landlord and Tenant Board is often to rubber stamp landlord applications, said Webber, so tenants increasingly must rely on extra-legal tactics.

For Webber, victories don’t come from engaging with this framework. “Wins come from widespread working-class organization. There’s no substitute for that.”

WHODUNIT ? ?

? ? MATCH THESE WORDS OF WISDOM TO THE PUBLIC FIGURE!

- "Native people could shut this whole country down because all the transportation corridors go through our reserves and territories... It's always been about these transportation corridors to get stolen goods off our lands. And that's how Canada got wealthy with this trade of goods stolen off of Indigenous territories."
- "The main way in which poor people can have political influence is through their ability to create crises by disrupting institutions."
- "There is no more important relationship to me than the one with Indigenous peoples."
- "We want to be a free people. That's all we're asking."
- "This pipeline project is an exorbitant smallpox blanket, really."
- "The rule of law is a death wish against NDNs."
- "Lawfare, the effort to conquer and control indigenous peoples by the coercive use of legal means."
- "They're breaching their own constitution, their own charter of rights, yet they espouse the rule of law. To my mind, what [Trudeau] is really talking about is the law of rulers – they pick and choose which laws suit their economic and political purposes, while at the same time continuing to commit genocide against Indigenous peoples."
- "We're fighting against corporations. Corporations have no soul. People have souls and people are meant to be loved, but corporations are basically psychopathic entities that leave carnage in their wake no matter where they go."
- "There's more fear in the RCMP, there's more fear in the companies, there's more fear for the investors in this project than there will ever be fear in one of those people there, defending our territory. ... I don't have fears about what's going to happen to the people. I know that they're strong and I know that the RCMP has been trying to kill us Indigenous People for hundreds of years, since contact... What I fear is that people will remain complacent in the way that the world is right now. The only thing that I fear is that the world will continue to let this happen."

1. Winona Laduke, Ojibwe activist and writer
2. Dtsa'hyl, hereditary chief of the Wet'suwet'en
3. John L. Comaroff, research professor at the American Bar Foundation
4. Pam Palmater, Mi'kmaq lawyer and professor
5. Justin Trudeau, in 2020 still, somehow, echoing comments from 2015 and 2017
6. Molly Wickham (traditional name Sleydo), spokesperson for the Gidmit'en camp of the Wet'suwet'en nation
7. Tekarontake, Kahnawake resident and rail-line blocker
8. John Clarke, a founder and long-time organizer with the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP)
9. Kanahus Manuel, Secwepemc activist and Tiny House Warrior, in November 2019
10. Billy-Ray Belcourt, Cree writer



(a) Kanahus Manuel; (b) John Clarke; (c) Justin Trudeau; (d) Tekarontake; (e) Winona Laduke; (f) Billy-Ray Belcourt; (g) John L. Comaroff; (h) Pam Palmater; (i) Dtsa'hyl; (j) Molly Wickham

VENUS ENVY ADVISORY

SEXUAL HEALTH & PLEASURE ALERT

THE JOY OF FISTING

Dear Venus Envy,

A woman I was with recently wanted me to fist her, but it's not really part of my repertoire so it was a little hit or miss getting into the sweet spot. Once I did find the right spot, she got really into it, really bearing down into that particular pleasure.

Can you walk me through the best way to approach fisting, for next time? I'm down for pleasuring partners, but this isn't something I have experience with or particularly desire for myself, so have a hard time knowing what's good.

Thanks,
Frantic for Insertion Safety Tips

Dear FIST,

I'll start this answer with some blunt myth busting, for any readers who aren't even sure what you're talking about. First, vaginal fisting is not the same thing as punching someone in the vagina. That's up there in the most ridiculous sentences I've ever typed — and yet it's still the most common misconception I hear.

Second, a fisting fist is not the same as a punching fist — it's more like a duck bill or shadow puppet you make with your hand.

And myth number three is one that's always worth busting: porn is for entertainment, not for education. Just because fisting happens one way in porn, doesn't mean you should expect it to happen that way in real life.

So, how do you fist someone and hit their sweet spots? The quick answer is very very slowly and using lots of lube.

The longer answer starts with some vaginal anatomy. When someone isn't physically aroused, their vaginal walls will be relaxed against each other, creating a fairly narrow canal. As someone gets more and more turned on, the vagina starts to balloon, with the vaginal canal getting wider and longer.

Fisting someone who's not physically aroused will be uncomfortable or painful because there won't be as much space for your hand. So you need to start out by getting really, really turned on.

Light candles and sprinkle rose petals, turn on some porn, or tell your roommate to go out for the night — whatever works for you and your fistee. Some people like to have an orgasm or two beforehand, while others want to go straight to the main event.

You'll also want to gather your supplies. I recommend using latex or nitrile gloves for fisting, so that your nails don't accidentally cause any cuts. You'll also need a high quality, long-lasting lube. And a towel never hurts if you want to protect your good sheets.

Once you're ready to go, slide in one or two fingers, curled toward the belly. Lots of people like clitoral stimulation at the same time, so use your thumb or a vibe, depending on what the other person likes. Ask them to tell you when they're ready for more, and add in one finger at a time, always adding more lube too.

Eventually, you'll have all five fingers inside, making that duck bill/shadow puppet shape. Once your fistee is ready, you can gently move your knuckles inside their vagina, so that your hand is fully enveloped.

Before you do this, you may want to gently turn your hand so that your knuckles end up pressed against the g-spot instead of the tailbone. (Depending on the size of your hand, it might be hard to turn it once you're fully inside). Your hand might naturally curl into more of a fist at this point, or you can intentionally do this if the other person wants it.

Just keeping your hand still like that will offer powerful sensations for most people. You could also tenderly rock your hand from side-to-side, or up and down, or even add very gentle thrusting.

Make sure you ask explicitly before trying any movement, though. Fisting can be physically and emotionally intense, and needs to be done with care the whole way through.

On the way out, add more lube, and go as slowly as you did on the way in.

When you know what you're doing, fisting can be a transcendental experience. Some fisting fans would describe it as intense or emotional, an act that leads to new levels of intimacy.

Others love the kinky idea of fisting, of embracing greediness and its taboo pleasure. Most everyone who's into fisting will savour the delicious feeling of fullness that comes from having a whole hand inside.

For further reading, I'd recommend Deborah Addington's excellent book *A Hand in the Bush: The Fine Art of Vaginal Fisting*.

Sincerely,
SAM WHITTLE
Sex Educator and Owner of Venus Envy

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

LETTERS

Dear Editors,

I just read your article on the Wet'suwet'en actions, which were published in the January-February issue of your newspaper. While I also follow the situation from other media sources, your use of the term 'colonial remedy' resonated deeply with me.

It immediately brought to mind the 1869-1870 situation with the Métis of the Red River settlement. The parallel is uncanny.

In my estimation, articles such as yours would have more of an impact if the comparison was pointed out. History repeats itself and we are all supposed to know how the Métis Rebellion unfolded in Batoche, Saskatchewan, where the Métis population had re-settled and the army was sent to to settle the score once and for all, with Louis Riel being tried and executed in the final chapter.

The current injunction allowing the use of force by the police is no different.

Canada is still treating our aboriginal people as second class citizens who will submit to ill treatment but then will be publicly asked to accept a formal apology from this narrow-minded and financially-driven government.

Once again, it feels shameful to be a Canadian.

Best regards,

Gérard Meunier

To the Editor,

The media has to move past state-created false dichotomies.

We need to understand there are traditional sovereign Indigenous people who are correct when they stand up for their larger jurisdiction and rights beyond the reserve system and the Indian Act.

We also need to understand that Chiefs and Councils of First Nation communities are doing their best, within the confines of extreme duress, when they make decisions for their community members' needs.

What is incorrect is Canada refusing to address sovereign Indigenous Nations and what they are entitled to. What is incorrect is Canada placing Chief and Councils under so much duress that they are forced to accept scraps.

And it is completely incorrect for news reporters, news outlets, and national political television and radio programs to set up debates between these two groups of Indigenous people. The real issue is what Canada is doing that places these two groups at odds with one another.

The media has to learn to think more critically, trust that their audiences are more intelligent, and become more objective about the genocidal truth of Canada the nation-state and start reporting in more solid ways.

Regards,

Lynn Gehl

(Author of *Claiming Anishinaabe: Decolonizing the Human Spirit*, among other books)

Upcoming Workshops at venus envy



Going Down and Eating Out:
A Guide to Cunnilingus

March 9 6:30pm. \$10 student price

Non-Monogamy 101

March 16 6:30pm. \$10 student price

Sex Positive Trans Sex with S. Bear Bergman

April 2 7:30pm. \$10-\$20 student price

Whip It Good!:

A 101 Guide to Power Play and Kink

April 6 6:30pm. \$10 student price

Sex Parties 101 with Lux Velvet

April 18 6:30pm. \$10 student price

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The Ontario Government's OSAP cuts are putting post-secondary education further out of reach.

Tell the Ontario Government to STOP playing games with post-secondary education.

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LISTINGS MARCH/APRIL 2020

As The Leveller prints every four weeks or so, we highly recommend you check out these amazing sources of weekly rad events in the Ottawa area:

Punch Up Collective Radical Events Ottawa List (every Monday): punchupcollective.org/reo/

OPIRG-Carleton's Wednesday Weekly: opirgcarleton.org/blog (scroll way to the bottom to sign up)

WED JAN 22

PANEL: Sustainable and affordable housing hosted by Ottawa Coalition for a Green New Deal. Dominion Chalmers United Church, 355 Cooper St. 6 PM.

WED MAR 4

EVENT: Signature Series: Being coloured/ful in a black and white world hosted by Ottawa Storytellers. 342 A Elgin St. 7:30 PM.

THURS MAR 5

SCREENING: Invasion - A documentary showing in solidarity with Wet'suwet'en. 70 Laurier Ave. E. 2PM.

SAT MAR 7

MARCH: 4th Annual Ottawa Women's March. Meeting at Parliament Hill, 11AM - 4PM.

SHOW: We Are Not Invisible Exhibition Opening hosted by Gallery 101. 280 Catherine St. 2PM.

SUN MAR 8

EVENT: Celebrating Cornerstone Housing for Women. 371 Richmond Rd. 12PM.

TUES MAR 10

EVENT: International Women's Day - Feminist Mixer hosted by the Feminist Twins. 67 Nicholas St. 6:30PM - 9PM.

EVENT: March Reading - Youth Edition hosted by In Our Tongues Reading and Art Series. 57 Lyndale Ave, 7PM.

WED MAR 11

EVENT: Defend Herongate! Hosted by Ottawa ACORN. 1480 Heron Rd. 6:30PM.

SAT MAR 14

PLAY: An Immigrant's Tale: A Life on the Line hosted by Habiba Ali. 2410 Georgina Drive, 6 PM.

SHOW: Spice: Womxn's History Month hosted by Spice. 7PM.

PARTY: Whine n' Grind: Launch Party. 67 Nicholas St, 10PM.

SHOW: Filthy Dirty Art Show 2020 hosted by Venus Envy Ottawa. 226 Bank St. 7:30PM.

SUN MAR 15

FORUM: Youth River Academy Forum hosted by Ottawa Riverkeeper. 1064 Wellington St. 10AM.

WED MAR 18

MEETING: Ottawa Harm Reduction Taskforce. 55 Eccles St. 6:30PM.

THURS MAR 19

DISCUSSION: Racism and Colonialism as Social Determinants of Health hosted by the Somerset West Community Health Centre. 22 Eccles St, 5PM.

SAT MAR 21

EVENT: 2020 Children and Youth Powwow hosted by uOttawa. 125 University Private. 12PM.

MON MAR 23

TALK: An International Affair: What can Canada learn from fair trade in Europe? 366 Richmond Road, 5:30PM.

WORKSHOP: Zero Waste Living hosted by the Ottawa Tool Library. 250 City Centre Ave. 7PM.

TUES MAR 24

EVENT: Dining in the Dark hosted by Canadian National Institute for the Blind Ottawa. 1525 Princess Patricia Way, 6PM.

WED MAR 25

WORKSHOP: Adoption and Fostering as LGBTQ Parents hosted by Ten Oaks Project. 95 Clegg St, 7PM.

FRI MAR 27

EVENT: Meet the Doulas hosted by Ottawa Birth Stories. 2260 Walkley Road. 6PM.

SAT MAR 28

SHOW: Gay Poets' Society hosted by Tone Cluster. 507 Bank St. 7:30PM.

SYMPOSIUM Afrofeministe 2020. 100 Louis Pasteur Pvt. 9AM.

TOWN HALL: Town Hall on Childcare hosted by Joel Harden, MPP for Ottawa Centre. 1PM.

MON MAR 30

SHOW: "The 4th" Open Mic + Poetry Slam hosted by YouthSpeak! Ottawa and Urban Legends Poetry Collective. 120 Metcalfe St. 6:30PM.

EVENT: If I had a \$1B: Alternatives to a New and Bigger Jail in Ottawa hosted by the Criminalization and Punishment Education Project. 122 University Private. 8:30AM.

PANEL: Discussion for Trans Visibility Week hosted by CUPE 2626. 145 Jean-Jacques Lussier Pvt. 1PM.

TUES MAR 31

EVENT: Visualizing a Carceral Present and De-carceral Futures in Ottawa hosted by the Criminalization and Punishment Education Project. 122 University Private. 8:30AM.

WED APR 1

MARCH: Autism on the Hill / The Next Step Autism March. Parliament Hill, 12:15PM.

FRI APR 3

EVENT: Trivial Beer-Suit 2020, hosted by ACORN Ottawa. Ottawa City Hall, 6PM.

SAT APR 4

EVENT: Ten Oaks Project 2020 Bowl-A-Thon. 175 McArthur Ave. 2PM.

SAT APR 18

TOWN HALL: Town Hall on Protecting the Ottawa River and Nuclear Power hosted by Joel Harden, MPP for Ottawa Centre. 175 Third Ave. 1PM.



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HOROSCOPES BY LAUREN SCOTT



AQUARIUS (JAN. 20 - FEB. 18)

I don't know about you, Aquarius, but it's only March and I'm already exhausted with the 2020 presidential election south of the border. How about a nap that lasts all the way until November? (Can you imagine waking up to an America no longer in the grip of a quasi-fascist but a quasi-socialist instead?)

PISCES (FEB. 19 - MARCH 20)

Ah, the ever-romantic and emotional Pisces. What did you get up to this Valentine's Day? Just crying? There's no shame in that. It's kind of a shitty capitalist holiday anyways.

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 19)

You love to put yourself first, Aries. But if you, like many in Ottawa, live in a rapidly gentrifying neighbourhood, acknowledge the people that occupied your space before you did. It's a tough pill to swallow, but they were there first.

TAURUS (APRIL 20 - MAY 20)

Use some of that strong-willed Taurus determination and stand up for Wet'suwet'en land rights against the Coastal GasLink pipeline.

GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUNE 20)

Hey sign twin, I think we should work together to get another fellow Gemini on the same page. Federal Environment Minister Jonathan Wilkinson has been decidedly absent when it comes to pipeline protests. Where is he? I don't know, but let's call his office and demand action.

CANCER (JUNE 21 - JULY 22)

Happy is the Cancer that stays away from seafood restaurants.

LEO (JULY 23 - AUG. 22)

You may be a lion, Leo, but roaring into the void online won't get you anywhere.

VIRGO (AUG. 23 - SEPT. 22)

You may have seen folks on your social media posting memes about Mercury retrograde, which happens between Feb. 17 and March 10. Your sign, Virgo, is ruled by Mercury, but remind yourself that retrograde is an ILLUSION; the planet only appears to be moving backwards. Don't go making astrological excuses for shitty behaviour.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23 - OCT. 22)

The Canadian Anti-Hate Network says that there has been a rise in anti-Indigenous racism since the Wet'suwet'en protests and solidarity demonstrations began. Libra allies, go out and address the hate. Support your friends who may be on the receiving end of this injustice and try to tip the scales.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23 - NOV. 21)

Unless you live under a rock, you've heard about the growing number of coronavirus cases globally. Maybe you do live under a rock (not unheard of for arachnids, Scorpio), but the World Health Organization still suggests that you wash your hands frequently and stay one metre away from anyone who is coughing or sneezing. Why, that's the perfect social excuse for any surly Scorps! Who said international public health emergencies are all bad?

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22 - DEC. 21)

Sorry general Sagitarian population, this message is for one sorry Saggi in particular. Dear Ontario Education Minister Stephen Lecce: They say your sign is flighty and non-committal, but come on man! Get it together!

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22 - JAN. 19)

I've heard you're a sign that likes to get things done, Cap. Can you help me finish off this month's horoscopes? Thanks buddy! I owe you one.

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