MONITOR

Progressive news, views and ideas

CONSERVATISM, POPULISM AND CRISIS

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES
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Book reviews in the *Monitor* are co-ordinated by Octopus Books, a community-owned anti-oppressive bookstore in Ottawa.

Scott Shields is a Toronto-based illustrator. He derives most of his inspiration from Western culture and the human form, and comments on both through a humorous, and often sarcastic, lens.

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CONSERVATISM, POPULISM AND CRISIS

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STUART TREW

Pipeline populism

IT HAS BEEN pointed out many times that Canada is addicted to oil. Like all addictions, ours is debilitating. It has erased the line between state and private industry (thin as that line is, in general, in most countries), stifles our politics, and is holding back local, provincial and national preparations for a world without fossil fuels. Crude oil makes up about a fifth of Canadian exports ($97 billion in 2017), puts $15 billion a year into the public purse, and directly or indirectly employs hundreds of thousands of people. Curing our addiction to oil and gas will take time and money, and historic levels of Indigenous–federal–provincial co-operation, but it absolutely has to happen—starting now.

Instead, Canada remains trapped in a pseudo-constitutional fight over new pipelines. "Blue Wave" premiers from Alberta to New Brunswick, despite their recent experiences with climate change–related flooding, droughts and wildfires, are adamant: the "national interest" aligns with the profitability of Canada's largely foreign-owned fossil fuel sector—not the global need to halve greenhouse gas emissions by as early as 2030. This rhetorical posture is a strategy of governance, with strong partisan overtones, as much as it is a sign of how much power natural resource companies wield in this country. The Trudeau government has re-approved the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, after all. But provincial complaints that this is not enough are resonating with the public.

Climate change is the nuclear war of our age. It is creating widespread anxiety, especially among workers who, for good reasons, hear "transition" and see only a jobless future for themselves and their children. Populist candidates—and governments—promising to fight back against the "elites" holding us hostage are globally besting traditional parties from left to right that have blithely accepted inequality and declining opportunity as an unfortunate but inevitable result of globalization. Some of these new voices want to build a more equal society. Most of them, however, blame immigrants, Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ2+, and "foreign funded" rights advocates (pg. 38) for the crisis, then direct popular outrage toward even more socially and economically destructive policies.

In Canada, an upswing in conservative populism fuelled by sitting and aspiring politicians is being aimed squarely at anyone who would get in the way of new fossil fuel infrastructure. Populist rhetoric has also been used provincially to justify defunding social programs and services designed to fight poverty and inequality (pages 22, 27 and 28-29), and to deplete public tax revenues that new governments could use to re-invest in the future (page 34). We begin our special issue on these trends with Shane Gunster's examination (page 13) of the links between "extractive populism" and more virulent nationalist, misogynist and anti-immigrant sentiments that, he writes, "are morally licensed by the routine condemnation of environmentalists as traitors to their country."

Paul Saurette explains why populist narratives are so successful, and why progressives needn't flinch at the thought of using their own to drive support for climate policies (page 16). "Even ancient philosophers who treated the political realm with relative disdain…understood that rhetoric was an inextricable part of democratic politics," he writes. Robert Neubauer finds examples of a successful "ecological populism" uniting Indigenous communities and environmental groups against a common threat to their communities from the "elite" financial CEOs and "Texas oil billionaires" backing TMX (page 25).

The undisputed leader of the extractive-populist reaction is former Harper government cabinet member Jason Kenney. His first priority as newly minted Premier of Alberta was to set up a "war room" to attack the "foreign-funded radicals" opposed to new pipelines—and the tar sands expansion they would facilitate. Ricardo Acuña (pg. 19) puts Kenney's strategy in historical context, as the latest example of an Alberta government posing as the victim of eastern elites. If Kenney is special, it is only for outdoing his predecessors. Over the course of his Progressive Conservative and then UCP leadership bids, writes Acuña, "Kenney laid the groundwork for directing Albertans' anger and frustration…at a rogue's gallery of alleged miscreants." Former premier Rachel Notley, current B.C. Premier John Horgan, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and HSBC, one of Europe's largest banks, are all on Kenney's growing enemies list.

If we zoom out a little, extractive populism seems like a nice problem to have. In other parts of the world (Europe, India, Brazil and the United States, for example) right-wing populist politicians have struck overt alliances with national supremacist groups demanding the expulsion, or worse, of perceived religious, ethnic or political enemies. In Canada, the rhetorical strategy, at least as deployed by Kenney and gang, looks mostly like life support for an embattled oil industry, a positive sign the public is souring on oil and gas. Unfortunately, right-wing populism, by preying on people's fears (of immigrants in particular), risks unleashing forces that will be harder to control.

At heart, populism is meant to be about governing for the people—about listening to them and accommodating their interests in policy. That sounds like what politicians should be doing as a reflex in a healthy democracy. We can even envision a popular approach to meeting the climate crisis that brings people together to cure our addiction to fossil fuels, and that lays the foundation for a more prosperous future for everyone. M

Letters

Meat and veg

The article on sustainable eating in your March/April issue ("Food for thought from the EAT-Lancet Commission) is an example of contradictory thinking typical of those who believe they have the answers.

As an animal welfare sympathizer, I have no problem with the promotion of vegetarian eating. I also accept the evidence of its health benefits. However, the assertion that meat production takes up too much valuable agricultural land is a truth known only in lush crop-growing districts like eastern Ontario, where the author lives. The western reality is that a lot of marginal land is unfit for cropping due largely to rough, uneven topography or drought, and except for preserving it in its natural state, its best use is livestock grazing.

Growing more vegetables would require more water for irrigation, and here in southern Alberta the water resources are already allocated, and global warming will not increase the supply. On the other hand, much of the livestock watering is done from the ranchers' own wells.

A hue and cry has been raised about the destruction of natural landscapes. A vegetarian diet would require ploughing up more of the scarce and diminishing prairie. Realists should try to look at the whole picture.

Charmaine Wood,
Irvine, Alberta

Heresy on the Hill

For some reason, as I will try to explain, the deferred prosecution agreements (DPAs) remind me of mediaeval indulgences in the days when the Vatican in effect ruled much of Europe, as via the Holy Roman Empire ("Deferred prosecution agreements, or get out of jail for a fee," May/June 2019).

Here is the benefit of indulgences that is reminiscent of a DPA: If a king or wealthy nobleman paid a large sum to the Vatican coffers, he was guaranteed that God would forgive him his future sins. An old version of the "get out of jail free" card, except in this case it was better—it let you avoid eternal hellfire.

Around the year 1400 there was a Czech reform preacher by the name of Jan Hus who took exception to this. "How can you bribe God?" he thundered from his pulpit! Indeed, how can you? Doesn't it sound like Jody Wilson-Raybould's stand? I see a definite similarity.

Fortunately for her, she is not likely to meet the same fate. Hus was lured to Constance in Switzerland, on the promise of safe passage by none less than the Holy Roman Emperor. However, the minute he arrived he was thrown in jail, and refusing to recant, was burned alive at the stake in 1415.

Seems to me that Wilson-Raybould, honourable and courageous as Hus, but in the Indigenous tradition of a strong woman, was dealt with in the modern version of death by fire, namely lies, slander, and dismissal. That's proof that we have advanced a bit from 15th century Europe: she has the opportunity to continue her courageous ways in the future, for the benefit of all Canadians. I wish her all the best of luck!

Eva Lyman, West Vancouver, British Columbia

More than solutions

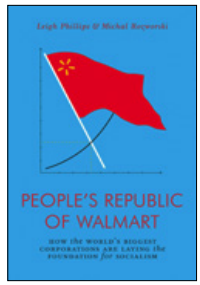
I'm writing not to argue the details of carbon pricing with Marc Lee ("Carbon pricing: Prospects and protests," March/April 2019), but to take issue with one word in the first sentence of his last paragraph—the word "solution." As in "Carbon pricing can be one part of the solution on climate change, but it may well be more effective to lean on regulation and standards."

Climate change, or, more accurately, anthropogenic climate disruption, is a cascading series of increasingly severe calamities—droughts and hurricanes, wildfires and floods—whose most catastrophic impacts we may be able to mitigate to some uncertain degree. It is also a name for a rapidly changing, increasingly inhospitable planet to which we will have to adapt as best we are able.

What it is not, certainly not anymore, is a "problem" to which a "solution" is waiting to be found.

Murray Reiss,
Salt Spring Island,
British Columbia

Correction



In the May/June issue, a review of the new book on economic planning by Michal Rozworski and Leigh Phillips mistakenly omitted the book's title: *The People's Republic of Walmart: How the World's Biggest Corporations are Laying the Foundation for Socialism* (Verso). We thank Larry Kuehn for pointing out the error, which has been fixed in the PDF version of the *Monitor* on the CCPA website.

Send all letters to monitor@policyalternatives.ca. We will contact you if we plan on running your letter.

New from the CCPA

LNG Canada's sweet deal

The B.C. government published its fiscal framework for LNG development on March 25. In his briefing note on the plan for the Corporate Mapping Project, "**A critical look at BC's new tax breaks and subsidies for LNG**," CCPA-BC Senior Economist **Marc Lee** notes, "Overall, the new B.C. government has offered a much sweeter deal to the LNG industry than what the previous government was willing to extend."

The B.C. framework makes four major concessions to the LNG Canada consortium that, Lee argues, will form the basis of future deals with LNG producers: 1) discounted electricity prices, a subsidy worth $32–59 million per year; 2) exemptions from increases in the B.C. carbon tax, worth $62 million per year; 3) a corporate income tax break, from 12% to 9%; and 4) deferral of provincial sales taxes on construction, "essentially an interest-free loan that does not have to be repaid for more than two decades," worth $17–21 million a year.

"A rich province like B.C.—blessed with a well-educated populace and abundant resources—could be a true leader on climate [but] has instead backed a massive fossil fuel expansion project," concludes Lee.

Living wage calculators for 2019

The CCPA is an annual participant in local living wage campaigns across the country. The living wage is the amount each person in a two-parent family of four would need to earn to pay for necessities, support the healthy development of their children, escape severe financial stress and participate in the social, civic and cultural lives of their communities. Recently, the CCPA-Nova Scotia and CCPA-BC released updated living wages for St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador and Metro Vancouver, British Columbia.

The living wage in St. John's is now $18.85 an hour, while it is $19.50 an hour in Metro Vancouver. Currently, almost 70,000 workers in Newfoundland and Labrador earn less than $15 an hour, the majority of them women. For a minimum-wage worker to earn the equivalent of a living wage in St. John's, that individual would have to work at least 58 hours a week. Likewise, Metro Vancouver's living wage remains much higher than B.C.'s minimum wage ($13.85 as of June).

P3 highways cost Nova Scotia

A new report from the **CCPA-Nova Scotia** reveals that the Cobequid Pass Toll Highway cost $232 million more to build, finance, operate and maintain as a public-private partnership (P3) than it would have cost as a government- financed and delivered, and publicly maintained project.

"The advantages often cited to support P3 developments—project delivery on time and on budget; cost saving; risk allocation to the private sector; provide now, pay later—have little to recommend them," notes author Christopher Majka. "P3s provide either no advantage or are as easily achievable through traditional government procurement. Additionally, the lack of transparency and accountability surrounding the P3 model is a significant drawback."

Majka's report comes out as the Nova Scotia government is considering bids for another P3 road project—the Sutherland's River–Antigonish Highway 104 expansion—that could end up costing the public $66.6 million more in interest payments alone than had the project been funded through government bonds. Add to this the $52.6 million more in construction costs (above what government currently pays to build identical lengths of twinned highway) and the expansion, done as a P3, becomes $119.2 million more expensive than it needs to be.

Good co-op, bad co-op

A new CCPA report co-published with **PowerShift e.V.** examines the threat to precautionary environmental, consumer, public health and labour policy arising from regulatory co-operation and "good regulatory practices" (GRP) chapters in recent Canadian free trade deals including CETA (with Europe), CUSMA (the proposed NAFTA replacement) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

"While, in principle, international regulatory co-operation has the potential to raise standards, the terms under which this co-operation takes place, and the ideology behind the GRP agenda, will increase corporate influence in rule-making at the expense of public protections," says **Stuart Trew**, *Monitor* editor and author of the report ***International Regulatory Co-operation and the Public Good*** (see Trew's article in this issue's Up Front section).

The report examines several examples of Canada–U.S. co-operation based on "good regulatory practices" that produced pretty bad results (e.g., post–Lac-Mégantic rail reforms and a "tested once" policy for U.S.-produced cosmetics). Trew then assesses corporate priorities for deregulation related to food safety, genetically modified crops, pesticides and the management of toxic chemicals within CETA's many bilateral regulatory co-operation working groups. Finally, the report recommends ways that international regulatory co-operation could be put on more democratic, transparent and accountable foundations.

For more reports, commentary and infographics from the CCPA's national and provincial offices, visit www.policyalternatives.ca.

Up Front

BETHANY HASTIE | BRITISH COLUMBIA

A foundation to strengthen worker rights?

The first comprehensive review of B.C.'s labour code in over a quarter-century has resulted in changes to the law, introduced in the legislature in April, to strengthen protections and collective bargaining rights for workers. In addition to requiring a review of the code every five years, these changes will:

- Strengthen successorship rights for workers in identified industries that are vulnerable to contracting out;
- Restrict existing timelines for union raids; and
- Remove education as an "essential service" in order to reflect the constitutionally protected right to strike for unionized workers.

For workers already employed in unionized environments this is good news, and the reforms will strengthen the power and stability of unions in the workplace. For the majority of B.C. workers employed in non-union environments, however, the rights and protections they might seek to benefit from through unionization under the code remain practically out of reach—even though several reforms that would change this were discussed during the review process.

Currently, only 15% of employees in the private sector are unionized in B.C. compared with 77% in the public sector. The labour market has also gradually shifted away from full-time and full-year jobs toward work in the services and technology sectors, which is contributing to the erosion of employment rights and protections. Workers in these sectors would benefit from unionization—to enhance job security and working conditions through collective bargaining—but they often face difficulty certifying workplaces.

Obstacles to unionizing in the private sector in B.C. are multifaceted and include the requirement to unionize by worksite and the two-step certification process, neither of which were addressed in the legislative proposal. Certification is a hot-button issue with labour advocates who would like to see the return of card-check, the ability to apply for certification after enough employees sign union cards. The current rules require this step as well as a secret ballot vote, which takes longer, requires more resources and provides a greater opportunity for employer interference in the certification process.

The panel tasked with reviewing the B.C. labour code did not reach consensus on the certification issue. While two of the three panellists ultimately recommended retaining the secret ballot voting system, they did so on the condition that there be in place "sufficient measures to ensure the exercise of employee choice is fully protected and fully remediated in the event of unlawful interference." Although the announced amendments include complementary protections, such as shortening the length of time for a vote to take place (from 10 days of the application date to five days), they are likely not enough to protect employee choice, particularly in precarious workplaces where subtle coercive tactics by an employer can be easily deployed and difficult to redress.

Other provinces allow for card-check certification if a majority of employees show support for unionization, with the option of holding a secret ballot vote if there is less than majority support. This optional model provides greater access to and ease of union certification where there is demonstrable support (such as at 60% in New Brunswick and 65% in Manitoba) while also preserving optional vote procedures where support levels are lower, typically above 40%. The B.C. government ought to revisit this dual model as it moves ahead with labour law reform.

In addition to maintaining the status quo on the certification process, the announced changes are silent on the issues of sectoral certification and bargaining.

JON BUNTING (FLICKR CREATIVE COMMONS)

In many sectors that would greatly benefit from increased unionization rates (e.g., retail, food services, hospitality and building services) the requirement to certify a union by individual worksite makes unionization too costly and resource-intensive. Labour advocates have therefore called on the B.C. government to accommodate sectoral organizing and bargaining, which would allow a group of worksites to organize together if they meet certain parameters. The panel reviewing the labour code recommended that the B.C. government examine this issue in greater depth, possibly with an independent commission.

The announced changes do extend successorship rights to certain identified industries, which should prevent decertification of a union when part of a business is contracted out or where contracts are retendered. This offers some protection in precarious sectors such as building services, where workers are already unionized; however, on its own, the extension of successorship rights does not go far enough. Additional changes that create more and better access to organizing and certification in the first place are needed.

Models for sectoral certification and bargaining already exist in Canada. In addition to allowing sectoral certification and bargaining in the construction, health care and film industries, proposals to create specific frameworks for sectoral certification in underserved industries (like retail) have been put forth in B.C. in the past.

Overall, the amendments to B.C.'s labour code will strengthen existing unions in the province and also lay the groundwork for improving access to unionization in new workplaces. Ultimately, however, the announced changes do not, on their own, go far enough to improve access. As a result, for the vast majority of B.C. workers in non-unionized workplaces (mostly in the private sector), unionization and coverage rates will likely remain low. Further changes that will increase access to unionization through certification rules and collective certification and bargaining are needed for B.C.'s workers, especially those in precarious sectors.

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GOVERNMENT OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

HALENA SEIFERLING | BRITISH COLUMBIA

B.C. child care spending shows the power of good public policy

On May 1, the Living Wage for Families Campaign released new living wage rates for 12 B.C. communities. Even though costs are increasing steeply for rent and other basic necessities, the cost of living for families with children is lower this year thanks to the provincial government's new child care policies.

The living wage is the hourly amount that each of two working parents with two young children must earn to meet their basic needs. It captures the overall cost of living in a community, including both family expenses and government taxes and transfers. This year, B.C.'s living wages vary from $14.03 per hour in the North Central Region to $19.50 per hour in Metro Vancouver. All living wages calculated this year have decreased from previous years.

Does this mean it's now cheaper to live in B.C.? Not necessarily. Costs for housing, food and transportation are climbing every year and the overall cost of living is still on an upward trend.

However, B.C.'s recent child care investments are reducing out-of-pocket costs for families by thousands of dollars. In Metro Vancouver, the living-wage family saves $8,213 on child care expenses—a 45% reduction from 2018. These savings come from two programs: the income-tested Affordable Child Care Benefit ($7,013) and the universal Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative ($1,200).

Without B.C.'s new child care spending, the living wage rates would have increased considerably. For example, two parents with two children in Metro Vancouver would each have had to earn $22.47 an hour in 2019 to cover their basic expenses—a shocking 7.5% increase over the 2018 living wage of $20.91 per hour.

This is a win for some B.C. families, who for too long have struggled to get by in the midst of a housing crisis, a lack

of affordable child care, and a minimum wage that stagnated for the first decade of this century. With the provincial government's recent steps in child care, its poverty reduction plan, and its newly introduced amendments to the Employment Standards Act to better protect workers' rights, a good quality of life is finally in sight for many families. This year's living wage calculations show that good policies are having an impact.

But while the living wages are lower in 2019, much still needs to be done. Rent continues to be the most expensive item in the living wage budget and vacancy rates remain near-prohibitively low in most B.C. communities. Many families struggle with long wait lists for child care spaces, or no accessible spaces at all, and $10-a-day child care is still just a dream for most families.

Costs for things such as transportation and food will continue to rise. And while the minimum wage increased to $13.85 in June, a gap remains between the minimum wage and the living wage, particularly in high-cost communities like Vancouver and Victoria. Moreover, the living wage methodology captures only one family type. We know that seniors, single people and families with younger children or teenagers are still experiencing challenges making ends meet.

The impact of the government's child care spending this year shows the power of good public policy to improve standards of living. By showing this same commitment in other policy areas, particularly housing, food and transportation, the government can ensure that all British Columbians are able to thrive.

HALENA SEIFERLING IS THE CAMPAIGN ORGANIZER FOR THE LIVING WAGE FOR FAMILIES CAMPAIGN, A PROJECT OF FIRST CALL – BC CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCACY COALITION. THIS PIECE ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN THE *VANCOUVER SUN*.

GUILLAUME HEBERT | QUEBEC

Quebec's debt and borrowing rates are related, but not in the way you think

Between 2010 and 2015, no less than $20.2 billion in budgetary restrictions were imposed by the Quebec government in the hope of attaining a zero deficit. During this period, the province increased revenues by $6.2 billion and cut back spending by $14 billion. Ironically, we learned in the last provincial budget that the government was planning to generate a surplus of $21.1 billion over six years.

Governments focused on striking fiscal balance frequently go way beyond that objective. Nevertheless, the Quebec model borders on the obscene. Media outlets regularly reveal the adverse effects that cuts are having on public services. In this context, to say that austerity policies were ill-advised would be a complete understatement.

Yet, austerity measures are still common currency. Last February, the government's monthly report on financial transactions, published by Quebec's finance department, stated that the 2018–19 surplus now exceeds $9.1 billion! This is a massive feat for the one-year budget of a single Canadian province.

Quebec's government is using this surplus to reduce the province's debt. Apart from the current government's obsession to do "better than Ontario," one of the arguments behind this initiative concerns borrowing costs. As stated in the last budget, "Due to the decreased burden of debt, Quebec benefits from advantageous borrowing costs."

Last fall, the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy (IFSD) at the University of Ottawa published the results of a study on the impact of fiscal discipline. The authors compared provincial debt with that of the federal government in an attempt, among other things, to determine how debt decreases impact borrowing costs. The conclusions we can take away from the study are extremely interesting, though they are not the ones the authors want us to focus on.

The study demonstrates that a decrease of one percentage point on the public debt calculated as a share of GDP will result in a 0.0005% reduction of a province's borrowing rate. In Quebec's case, this means that for every billion dollars reimbursed by the government—by cutting public services—the borrowing rate drops by 0.0005%. In other words, even though a debt decrease reduces borrowing costs, this reduction is so small that it must be deemed negligible.

Let's take things a step further. Based on the IFSD results, we could determine how much the province could save in

If the government decided to close every department and agency, to focus exclusively on paying down its debt...borrowing costs would drop by 0.21 percentage points.

borrowing costs if it eliminated its public debt entirely.

If the government decided to close every department and agency, to focus exclusively on paying down its debt (currently $179 billion), it would need 1.9 years to do so. All other factors being equal, how would this feat affect borrowing costs? Borrowing costs would drop by 0.21 percentage points, from 2.39% to 2.1%, a decrease of only 8.9%! In other words, dismantling the whole state (and destroying Quebec's economy in the process) would have a paltry effect on the borrowing rate, according to IFSD parameters.

These numbers demonstrate how meagre the benefits are of depriving ourselves of public resources that would be a lot better allocated elsewhere.

Again, drawing on IFSD parameters, we realize that a rise of the employment rate has twice the impact on borrowing rates than a contraction of the public debt calculated as a percentage of GDP. In other words, it would be wiser for the government, if it's looking to have an impact on the size of the province's debt in relation to the economy, to stimulate job creation rather than curtail spending.

Essentially, the data published by the IFSD reveal another aspect of counterproductive fiscal discipline, which pushes governments to stifle public services and reduce program expenditures. By boosting spending and public investments and reinforcing public services, the government would also indirectly diminish its borrowing costs.

Yet another argument against fiscal conservatism's creed.

GUILLAUME HÉBERT IS A RESEARCHER WITH L'INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE ET D'INFORMATIONS SOCIOÉCONOMIQUES (IRIS).

STUART TREW | NATIONAL

How Canada exports deregulation

Regulation. It's not something many of us have time to think about. Most people are busy working, keeping their household running smoothly and generally living their lives. When we do think about how things are regulated, it's usually after something terrible has happened: planes drop out of the sky; a food product is recalled after making scores of people sick; trains carrying volatile oil derail and explode; courts confirm that people are likely getting cancer from a popular agricultural pest management product; plastic is found clogging the innards of dead whales, or sitting at the deepest part of the ocean floor, etc., etc.

In these moments, we recognize that our government watchdogs have slipped up, but likely still assume they have the desire and capacity to fix the problem by changing the rules for the better. But this isn't always the case. Too often, governments today, including Canada's, have strange and worrying priorities when it comes to how and when (or even if) to intervene to protect the public or the environment.

It's not that our governments don't care, it's just that they spend much more time worrying about the impact of public interest regulation on commerce than they do about the impact of already too-lightly-regulated commerce on human health and the planet. Our governments think it is completely normal and logical to regulate with a primary focus on trade, "innovation" and corporate supply chain efficiency. They even have a comically Orwellian name for it, "Good Regulatory Practices."

We should be alarmed by this trend in regulatory thinking. In particular, we should be asking why Canada is locking in these "good regulatory practices" through top-down cabinet directives that tie the hands of rank-and-file scientists and inspectors, and in binding free trade agreements like the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA), Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), Trans-Pacific Partnership and others.

"Good" for whom?

The long version of why we need to be suspicious of "good regulatory practices" (GRP) can be found in my new report, *International Regulatory Co-operation and the Public Good*, published in May by PowerShift (Germany) and the CCPA.

Former Mexican president Enrique Pena Nieto, U.S. President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau sign the "New NAFTA" in Buenos Aires, November 2018.
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The short version is that they are actually "bad regulatory practices" that weaken the precautionary principle and are undermining our ability to set strong environmental, worker, public health and consumer protections.

The basic tenets of this (de)regulatory ideology include a preference for voluntary standards and industry self-regulation over central rules enforced by an accountable public body; requirements to adopt (and therefore to trust) the regulations of major trading partners before considering new domestic rules; and the use of time-consuming regulatory impact or risk assessments to determine whether the proposed rules are limited to achieving a specific task, are based on available science and are not overly burdensome to business—or whether it would be preferable for government to do nothing.

"Good regulatory practices" require governments to provide industry stakeholders and foreign governments with multiple entry points into the regulatory process, again with the commercial interests of major domestic and foreign-based exporters in mind. To facilitate industry's close involvement in the development of international rules, countries are increasingly incorporating regulatory co-operation chapters into new free trade deals like CUSMA and CETA.

Canada is a global leader in the development of "good regulatory practices," through the OECD and in WTO discussions about how to lower so-called technical barriers to trade. It is also one of several pioneers in the use of cross-border working groups, like the Canada-U.S. Regulatory Co-operation Council (RCC) established by former prime minister Stephen Harper and former president Barack Obama in 2011, with the aim of developing compatible regulations that facilitate trade and get new products—new chemicals or new uses of existing chemicals, new GMOs, new medical devices, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, new plastics—onto the market as soon as possible.

As I describe in my report, these tables tend to be dominated by industry and corporate lobbyists, with only token representation from environmental, consumer and other civil society groups. And while some binational RCC decisions have led to benign or positive upward harmonization (to higher standards), such as Canada's decision to adopt stricter U.S. energy efficiency rules for consumer electronics, in many other areas regulatory co-operation has had harmful results.

For example, according to Canada's former transport minister Lisa Raitt, responding to a parliamentary study of rail safety after the deadly 2013 Lac-Mégantic disaster, alignment with U.S. rail standards and procedures happens "with a focus on international trade and commodity movement." She added that the results of Canada-U.S. RCC discussions "have and will inform decisionmaking on subjects such as tank cars and classification," and that "it is vital that both countries continue to co-ordinate regulatory and policy actions to the greatest degree possible."

While some progress was made to re-regulate the rail transportation sector under the Obama administration—by requiring two-person crews and electronically controlled pneumatic (ECP) braking systems on all trains carrying high-hazard liquids, for example—the current U.S. administration is rolling back these reforms. In the case of ECP brakes, which could have stopped the Lac-Mégantic derailment had they been in place, the Trump administration has cited a badly miscalculated cost-benefit analysis (a cornerstone of "good regulatory practices") as justification for not burdening the rail industry with new rules.

As Bruce Campbell, author of *The Lac-Mégantic Rail Disaster: Public Betrayal, Justice Denied*, told me while I was researching my report, Canadian regulators continue to hide behind pressure to align with the U.S. as an excuse for not moving more forcefully to remove faulty rail

Monitored

A DIG INTO THE *MONITOR* ARCHIVES
JULY/AUGUST 1999

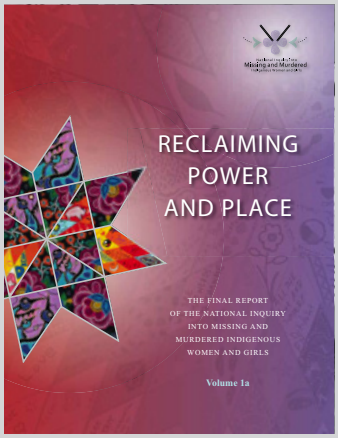
Rail barons: Jim Stanford assesses the results of the Chrétien government's privatization of the Canadian National Railway (CN) in 1995: "The railroad has become a profit machine under private ownership, churning out a billion-dollar-operating profit in 1998," he writes. But it did so mainly by cutting jobs "faster than the slide in revenues.... Dozens of communities have lost rail service completely, and more than 10,000 workers have lost well-paying jobs." Across the economy, writes Stanford in his *Monitor* editorial, the result of increased productivity was not generally business growth but "leaner" companies (i.e., with fewer people earning a living).

Finance rules: Later in the issue, Stanford writes about the "financial juggernaut" rolling through Canada, a boom in RRSPs and mutual funds fuelling a jump in financial assets of almost $2 trillion between 1990 and 1997. "A powerful ideology of 'playing the markets' has infiltrated every important decision our society now makes, ranging from how we'll pay for retirement to how we finance our mortgages, right down to how we educate our children," notes Stanford, who compares growth in finance capital (61%), banking profits (101%) and financial sector salaries (102%) between those years to growth in general employment (6%), average disposable income (-7%), GDP (4%) and average salaries across all industries (18%).

The road to Riyadh: Richard Sanders points out that arms sales grew significantly under the Chrétien government compared to the Mulroney government. Small arms sales tripled in value, from just above $8 million in 1994 to more than $23 million in 1997. Jumping to today, Canada has exported about 20,000 rifles per year to Saudi Arabia since the start of its war in Yemen, according to October 2018 Statistics Canada numbers.

Missed opportunities: The *Monitor* reprinted a *Le Monde* commentary by Jacques Attali, in which he argues Western powers were antagonizing Russia into a permanent stance of hostility, risking the security of Europe and an escalation of a new arms race. "Instead of realizing that nothing could be more dangerous than allowing a Slav front to re-form in the heart of Europe, instead of asking the Russians to help the allies force President Milosovic to give ground, instead of involving them in the West's decisions through the United Nations Security Council or the G7 group of industrialized nations, the United States has made it clear to them that they should keep their mouths shut and not interfere if they want to continue getting financial aid."

WORTH REPEATING



This process has changed me forever. For two years we went to the darkest places where the pain and hurt still lives. The National Inquiry has uncovered failure after failure in protecting the lives and rights of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. It is a system that, at its core, aims to destroy and pull families apart. Our reality is that we are watching the slow, painful destruction of Indigenous Peoples...

We all had moments of wanting to quit when things got too painful. In these moments of doubt we tried to stay focused and remind each other why we were doing this—and for whom. We are doing this for the sons and daughters of future generations, and it is only by sharing and knowing the truth that healing can begin. I'm proud to be standing with other survivors and family members knowing we did all we could to help the next generation of survivors and warriors.

— Barb Manitowabi, a National Family Advisory Circle member of the Truth-Gathering Process within the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, in her forward to the inquiry's final report, which was released at a ceremony in Ottawa on June 4. The report is available at www.mmiwg-ffada.ca.

cars, insisting on the highest standards for all present and future shipments of volatile goods, and setting a higher standard of labour protections that might have raised poor North American working conditions to levels where they would truly help us avoid such disasters.

The same dynamics were there for all to see in Canada's late reaction to the two recent crashes of Boeing aircraft (we didn't ground the planes until Trump did). Canada and the U.S. have also launched a "tested once" project for cosmetics, one of the most poorly regulated consumer products in the U.S. Our labelling regime for hazardous goods in transit is also in the course of being weakened—despite the risks to workers in the warehousing, manufacturing and transportation sectors—for the sake of creating a harmonized North American system.

The downward pressure on public protections runs both ways, according to Sharon Treat of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), who notes that in the U.S., "corporate lobbyists aren't waiting for ratification of the New NAFTA to attempt to use its regulatory co-operation provisions to eliminate port of entry inspections of imported meat, prevent hazard labeling of explosive grain dust or weaken controls of ozone-depleting gasses that contribute to climate change."

At a December 2018 RCC stakeholder event in Washington, D.C., Mick Mulvaney, director of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, praised the potential of Canada-U.S. regulatory co-operation to enhance the "deregulatory efforts" of the current U.S. administration. At a similar stakeholder meeting I attended in Ottawa a year earlier, Canadian officials suggested the Trump administration's deregulatory agenda was an opportunity to renew interest in Washington for co-operation under the RCC.

Deregulation and CUSMA

The Trudeau government introduced implementing legislation for CUSMA shortly after U.S. Vice-President Mike Pence visited Ottawa at the end of May. With the steel and aluminum tariff war behind us, the Trump administration would like Canada and Mexico to ratify the deal as quickly as possible, to put pressure on House Democrats to follow suit.

The speed with which that happens, at least in Canada, may depend to some extent on how seriously opposition parties want to challenge the government on the NAFTA replacement. I think there is a lot to challenge in the deal's "Good Regulatory Practices" chapter.

"A potential problem with regulatory co-operation and 'good regulatory practices' in trade agreements is that their effects are likely to be subtle, affecting the behind the scenes regulatory process rather than making headlines," says Dr. Gabriel Siles-Brügge, policy advisor to the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA). "They can strengthen the hands of those who wish to 'cut red tape' for businesses, which can come at the expense of public interest regulation, including in the area of public health."

Monique Goyens, director general of Europe's largest consumer advocacy network, BEUC, says this is a pretty good reason why "[a] trade agreement is not the appropriate tool to define how our decision-making processes such as impact assessments or legislative reviews should be conducted."

Trade deals routinely limit how we regulate in specific areas, as NAFTA did for energy, telecommunications, services, finance, foreign investment, etc. In fact, they include far more rules on how governments make policy and regulations than they do on trade and tariffs. The CUSMA goes even further by committing Canada, the U.S. and Mexico to regulate, in all situations, in a very specific, pro-business and non-precautionary way. Stray from the "good regulatory practices" outlined in the deal and you can be taken to a trade tribunal.

That CUSMA does this in the midst of a climate emergency, public demands to remove toxic chemicals from our food and consumer goods, planes literally falling from the sky as a result of sketchy industry self-regulation, and increasing proof that widely-used pesticides cause cancer and harm vital pollinators defies common sense.

STUART TREW EDITS *THE MONITOR* AND IS A PART-TIME TRADE RESEARCHER WITH THE CCPA.

Work Life

LYNNE FERNANDEZ

For the love of bacon

UPTON SINCLAIR'S FAMOUS 1905 novel *The Jungle* described the gruesome working conditions in Chicago's meat-packing plants. The mostly immigrant workers had no control over their workplace as they laboured in physically demanding and dangerous conditions.

Sinclair also exposed the shocking lack of sanitation and regularity of contaminants, including rats, in finished products. And it was this aspect of the novel, not the descriptions of the work, that drove its success. "I aimed at the public's heart and by accident I hit it in the stomach," the author famously concluded.

The Jungle led to legislation to regulate the industry, but it would take the efforts of many workers and unions to improve work conditions in the plants. Gains were made in the last century, then workers lost ground with the sweep of neoliberalism.

The meat-packing industry in Manitoba exemplifies how the sector has evolved. There are two major hog processing plants in the small urban communities of Brandon and Neepewa. The HyLife plant in Neepewa has just been sold to Charoen Pokphond Foods of Thailand. Canada exports 70% of its pig meat, much of it to Asia.

It's not just the pork market that now has global connections. Very few Canadians want to do this dirty and dangerous work for the wages on offer. Similar to the worker-employer relations profiled in *The Jungle*, Canada's temporary worker programs offer the perfect solution to meat packers—in the form of desperate, pliable workers from other countries.

Both of Manitoba's processing plants employ large numbers of temporary foreign workers and new Canadians. Many of these workers have been sponsored by the companies through the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), and if their work performance is satisfactory, the temporary workers will become permanent residents. Before then, however, they are just as vulnerable as other temporary foreign workers.

A new report by the MFL Occupational Health Centre offers a glimpse into the lives of the Brandon workers. I sat on the project advisory committee that led to the publication of *Building Support for Newcomer Workers in the Food Processing Industry*, and was able to see firsthand the excellent work the centre does. Study participants were from Eritrea and the People's Republic of China; all but one had permanent status. Although the sample size was small, some important themes emerged in both groups.

These newcomers make up just part of the large workforce in Brandon's plant, where 17,000 hogs are processed every day. They work in a variety of areas including the kill floor, the coolers, the cut floor, packaging and shipping. The hazards these workers face are typical of the meat processing sector: repetitive work injuries, cold and dampness, and vibration from the electric knives combined with the cold, leading to Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome; an unsustainably fast pace of work leading to injuries; and lack of training for health and safety. Worker compensation claims suppression—where employers discourage reporting injuries—is common in this industry and the participants confirmed experience with the practice.

Language barriers can hinder a worker's ability to understand directions, work safely, and voice concerns or suggestions. Workers are members of UFCW Local 832, which offers English classes, but many are too tired and busy with their families to attend classes after work. When workers cannot move their English beyond a rudimentary level they have little hope of moving out of the industry. Research by Dr. Jill Bucklaschuk in Manitoba found that many were trapped in meat-packing jobs that put debilitating wear and tear on their bodies.

The meat processing industry has transformed western Manitoba's rural and small urban communities. As global demand for pig meat grows, there is pressure to allow more and larger hog operations, heightening concerns about the treatment of animals and water contamination. Although Brandon and Neepewa now have a thriving newcomer community and growing population, the dependence of new workers on low-wage, difficult work, and their education and housing needs, cannot be ignored.

Conditions in the meat-packing industry have improved since *The Jungle* was published—for the workers, and to a lesser degree the animals. But the globalized marketplace continues applying downward pressure on prices, environmental standards, animal welfare and work conditions. The 21 recommendations from the Occupational Health Centre report should be applied across the sector. They include:

- The employer should provide English classes, with one hour on paid time and one hour on employee time.
- Workplace safety and health departments should prioritize regular workplace inspections with a focus on ergonomic issues.
- Worker compensation boards should conduct regular investigations into claims reporting practices.
- The federal government should provide permanent status on arrival to temporary foreign workers who are filling permanent labour needs in Canada.

What can regular Canadians do? We can push governments to challenge the North-South labour divide that is impoverishing developing countries and lowering labour and environmental standards in Canada.

Finally, when it comes to how we grow, process, transport and consume our food, we need to listen to our hearts as much as to our stomachs. M

STORY BY SHANE GUNSTER
ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT SHIELDS

EXTRACTIVE POPULISM AND THE FUTURE OF CANADA

Jason Kenney's victory in the recent Alberta election is but the latest manifestation of *extractive populism*, an inflammatory brand of political rhetoric that has increasingly taken centre stage across the country. Understanding how and why this rhetoric works, and developing strategies to challenge it, are essential in building a different vision for Canada — one that sees our well-being as dependent upon a transformative program of decarbonization anchored in principles of social, environmental and Indigenous justice.

The "grand bargain" championed by Justin Trudeau and Rachel Notley, in which support for a modest carbon tax afforded "social licence" for new pipelines and tar sands expansion, has proven a spectacular failure. Instead, those like Alberta Premier Jason Kenney, who seek to rally support for extractivism, are increasingly deploying a populist storyline built upon three core claims.

The first claim of extractive populism is that the extraction and export of resources such as oil, natural gas and coal constitutes the core of the Canadian economy and provides a wide range of benefits to *everyone* in the country. A robust and healthy extractive sector is positioned as *a public good* generating high-paying jobs for workers, opportunities for businesses, and revenues for governments and public services.

The recent "Keep Canada Working" campaign from the Alberta government is one example of the hundreds of millions of dollars that have been spent hammering home this basic message over the past two decades. In addition to paid advertising, this first claim of extractivism remains dominant within mainstream Canadian news media, and is especially prominent in the Postmedia chain, infamous for its aggressive and uncompromising advocacy on behalf of the oil and gas industry.

The principal rhetorical strategy through which "the people" and the petro-industrial complex are sutured together is *symbolic nationalization*. The fossil fuel industry in Canada is a corporate-driven, for-profit capitalist enterprise, managed and operated first and foremost in the interests of (often global) shareholders. Yet everywhere one looks it appears as if this industry has been nationalized and run to serve the interests of all Canadians.

It is worth reminding ourselves how bitterly the fossil fuel industry and Alberta resisted the National Energy Program in the 1980s, a very mild form of nationalization that was promoted at the time as delivering "Canadian oil for Canadians." While the oil and gas sectors fiercely opposed this "real" nationalization as a threat to corporate profit and private sector–led development, they gradually realized that *symbolic* forms of nationalization were extremely useful in legitimating the tar sands for publics outside of Alberta.

Consequently, over the last two decades Canadians have been subject to a flood of advertising and public relations, think-tank reports, speeches from politicians and corporate executives, sympathetic news coverage and, most recently, social media campaigns that consistently portray the oil and gas sector as if it *had* been nationalized, *was* a public enterprise designed to serve the common good, and that its primary purpose was the provision of jobs and tax revenue and energy security for all Canadians.

Wrapped in the flag, the capitalist logic of the oil and gas industry that puts corporate profits ahead of the public (and planetary) good recedes from view, and extractivism is positioned as a constitutive part of what makes us all Canadian. It is, literally, "who we are and what we do," as the late Jim Prentice memorably put it in a 2012 speech to the Business Council of British Columbia.

WE MUST VIGOROUSLY CONTEST THE PRESUMPTION THAT WHAT'S GOOD FOR SUNCOR AND IMPERIAL OIL AND THE BANKS THAT FINANCE THEM IS GOOD FOR ALL OF US.

The second claim is that *extractivism* is under attack, threatened by a small but highly vocal and surprisingly powerful constellation of political forces.

While cultivating fears of external enemies is a common tactic of industry advocates in Alberta (see Ricardo Acuña in this section), the rhetoric was fully nationalized when former natural resources minister Joe Oliver viciously attacked pipeline and tar sands opponents as "foreign-funded radicals" in January 2012. Environmental organizations and "other radical groups," he wrote, aim to "stop any major project no matter what the cost to Canadian families in lost jobs and economic growth." These groups "threaten to hijack our regulatory system to achieve their radical ideological agenda.... They use funding from foreign special interest groups to undermine Canada's national economic interest."

Similarly inflammatory rhetoric continues to be prominently featured in corporate media, which regularly affords industry shills such as Oliver, former B.C. attorney general Suzanne Anton and Gwyn Morgan, Fraser Institute trustee and founder of Encana, top billing to peddle this conspiracy theory. Such sentiments sponsor a head-in-the-sands worldview in which the challenges faced by the oil and gas industry are not predominantly driven by climate change or global markets or reduced demand, or even bad planning, but instead are the consequence of insidious forces seeking to sabotage the Canadian economy.

In a forthcoming Corporate Mapping Project–funded study of the pro-oil social media campaigns that have exploded in this country in recent years, the demonization of opponents was the most prominent theme in industry-friendly Facebook groups such as *Oil Sands Action*, *Oil Respect* and *Oil Sands Strong*. Their favourite targets are eco-celebrities such as Leonardo DiCaprio and Al Gore, easy marks that enable these groups to misrepresent any and all criticism of industry as a

foreign import, orchestrated by wealthy, liberal, hypocritical global elites who know or care little about Canada. Local activists and groups are positioned as "paid protesters" doing the bidding of wealthy U.S. foundations, thereby defining opposition to tar sands and pipelines as fundamentally anti-Canadian.

Such one-dimensional accounts overlook the diverse and vigorous homegrown resistance to extractivism growing in every part of the country, not to mention the majority of Canadians who recognize the need to transition away from dependence on fossil fuels. More alarming, though, is how toxic such petro-nationalism is in a social media environment that both enables and encourages the episodic swarming of activists, especially women.

The violent, often misogynistic sentiments that are morally licensed by the routine condemnation of environmentalists as traitors to their country—as actively working to undermine the livelihoods of Canadian families—is shocking and among the most alarming and repugnant features of extractive populist rhetoric. It betrays traditions of civility and respectful dialogue that Canadians have long valued as the cornerstones of our political culture.

And it is worth recalling that when this denunciation of external enemies was initially pioneered in Alberta in the 1980s, Canada—in the form of a federal government seeking "Canadian oil for Canadians"—was cast as the villain, not the victim. The "Eastern bastards," so to speak. Or, as our last prime minister once defined Canada in a 1997 speech to U.S. conservatives, "a Northern European welfare state in the worst sense of the term."

The conservative, nationalist and extractivist makeover of Canada and what constitutes the so-called national interest is surely among the most significant, shortsighted and corrosive changes to our politics in recent years.

Extractive populism's third major claim is that collective political mobilization is necessary to defend the "national interest" from the sinister forces that threaten it.

The remarkable success of Indigenous, environmental and local community resistance to pipeline projects, especially Northern Gateway, created a lot of anxiety in the C-suites of the oil and gas industry. Industry groups such as the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) worried that their traditional tools of corporate power—back-door lobbying, influence over corporate media, big-budget ad campaigns—were no longer as effective in shaping political discourse and opinion around oil and gas. Inspired by initiatives at the American Petroleum Institute, CAPP decided to aggressively mobilize those constituencies most likely to support their agenda: oil industry workers, resource dependent communities, conservatives.

Over the past four years, CAPP has poured significant resources into cultivating what the lobby group describes as "Canada's Energy Citizens," individuals willing to actively engage in the public sphere to defend industry through social media, attending rallies, writing their MPs, talking to their friends and neighbours, and so on. Some of this activity constitutes classic astroturfing—the re-presentation of corporate-driven public relations as grassroots campaigning. But it is a mistake to dismiss these efforts as simple industry propaganda.

In fact, the corporate resources going into these initiatives serve to *subsidize*—to activate, co-ordinate, influence and amplify—the voices of those who have come to believe that their prosperity and way of life is dependent upon extractivism. Channelling the deep and legitimate anxiety that so many feel about the future into support for one of the most powerful (and destructive) industries on the planet may well be the most Orwellian feature of extractivist political discourse.

Extractive populism can and must be challenged on many fronts. Among the most urgent tasks, we need to directly confront the symbolic nationalization that lies at its core, by developing distinctive visions of Canada in opposition to petro-nationalism. We must vigorously contest the presumption that what's good for Suncor and Imperial Oil and the banks that finance them is good for all of us.

Over the last several decades, much has been done to illuminate the darker corners of our country's history and politics, exposing the complicity of Canadian institutions in experiences of dispossession, oppression and exploitation. We have a much better understanding of how and why our government has operated, and continues to operate, as a colonial, capitalist petro-state presiding over a legacy of violence, inequality and injustice.

But if that is all that Canada is—if we are willing to accept a petro-nationalist vision in which, as Jim Prentice put it, extractivism *really is* "who we are and what we do"—it becomes that much harder to challenge one-dimensional accounts that equate our "national interest" with the fossil fuel industry. More importantly, it will be much harder to engage our fellow Canadians in the vital task of imagining what we want this country to become.

"We are not the country we thought we were." With those words, the late Gord Downie invited us to acknowledge and address the secret violence that lies at the core of our history. But they also serve as a call to action, to build a country and society more in keeping with the values of democracy, equality, justice, diversity, compassion and sustainability—values that so many Canadians continue to hold as the true measure of who we are and what we do. **M**

THE ARTICLES IN THIS SECTION BY SHANE GUNSTER, PAUL SAURETTE AND ROBERT NEUBAUER WERE COMMISSIONED JOINTLY WITH THE CORPORATE MAPPING PROJECT. THE CORPORATE MAPPING PROJECT IS A RESEARCH AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE JOINTLY LED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, CANADIAN CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES AND THE PARKLAND INSTITUTE. THE RESEARCH IS SUPPORTED BY THE SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL OF CANADA (SSHRC).

PAUL SAURETTE

Populism as good storytelling

Populist stories are powerful. Let's use them to champion progressive climate change policy.

If no political term has been more ubiquitous than "populism" over the last year, no topic has garnered more media attention during the same period than the incontrovertible evidence that climate change is a global emergency. Despite this, the two subjects—populism and climate change—are almost never discussed in the same breath. Few observers connect them or investigate the relevance and impact of populism for climate politics—and vice versa.

A number of us (Shane Gunster and Bob Neubauer, both in this issue, along with Mat Patterson, Simon Dalby and myself) believe this has to change. We are in the midst of writing a book titled *Climate Populism*, which argues that understanding the connections between populism and climate politics not only helps explain *why there isn't more support* for progressive policy responses to climate change, but also *how we might build wider and stronger alliances* to fight for more aggressive action.

Before we can get to this, however, we must first address a fundamental question: what is populism? Because the more pervasive the word has become, the murkier its meaning—with observers and commentators using it in a multitude of different ways. There are two main explanations for the diversity of definitions for "populism" in today's public discourse.

First, academics have applied the term to a wide variety of political phenomenon (both historically and geographically) many of which embody very different, even opposing, characteristics (including ideological commitments). For example, contemporary movements as diverse as Venezuela's neo-Marxist Chavismo (or Chavism), various right-wing populist parties in Europe, Trump's presidency, Ontario's 'Ford Nation,' and Jair Bolsonaro's authoritarianism in Brazil have all been dubbed political populism.

Moreover, scholars have studied these diverse phenomena using a variety of interdisciplinary theoretical traditions that employ very different methods. There are a dozen competing definitions and as many methods to study the phenomenon, each with their own pros and cons.

The second, related reason it is hard to pin down what we mean by "populism" is the fact that the word is used daily as a verbal weapon in political debate. Critics of populism (and non-populist political parties) treat it as a term of derision and dismissal; proponents as a sign of their political righteousness and a call to the banner for their parties.

If we step back, however, and try to avoid both the narcissism of small differences (that sometimes drives academic debates) and the tendency to employ populism as conceptual lance in a contest of verbal jousting, things are not as complicated as they might appear. For we can categorize most of the contending academic ways of defining/studying populism into two main traditions.

POPULISM CAN USEFULLY BE UNDERSTOOD AS AN ARCHETYPAL POLITICAL NARRATIVE—ONE THAT IS IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZABLE AND EMOTIONALLY POWERFUL TO MANY AUDIENCES.

The first tradition treats populism as a particular type of political and social movement that can be defined according a set of shared characteristics. Who supports the political or social movement? What motivates them? How does the movement recruit and mobilize current and new supporters? How are these organizations structured, where do they get their funding, what are their goals, and what strategies do they use to forward their political agendas?

The second tradition treats populism as an "ideational" phenomenon or worldview—a set of ideas or principles that both describe how the world works and prescribe how it should work. This is roughly what scholars mean when they say that populism "frames" the political view of its adherents: it strongly influences what people "see" and how they feel about politics (e.g., what issues matter to them, how they understand the relevant cause-and-effect factors, whether they judge something as being good or bad, what solutions they see as potential options, what they think they can and should be done about it, etc.).

Given our interest in understanding the impact of populism on debates about climate policy, the second, "ideational" approach to defining populism (roughly as worldview) is most useful for our project. Within this tradition, however, there is significant debate about the kind of phenomenon populism is. Some call it a "thin ideology," meaning that populism is an identifiable way of seeing the world, but one

that lacks a substantive policy or philosophical core and thus inevitably fuses with other substantive ideologies, like liberalism, conservatism, fascism, Marxism, etc., to flesh out its specific political program. Others claim populism to be a discourse, a political/moral imaginary, a performance, etc.

For a variety of reasons, including the fact that populism has proved itself far too malleable and diverse at the level of its substantive philosophical, moral and ideological commitments, we do not believe that populism is best defined as a coherent and consistent ideology, set of philosophical principles or even policy prescriptions. Rather, we believe the most useful way of grasping the ideational phenomenon of populism is to see it as a particular "rhetorical style," one that can be used by a wide variety of political perspectives to communicate their visions of the world and seek to further their political goals.

Now, rhetoric has a bad name these days. Most of us hear the word and conjure the proverbial snake oil salesman. Rhetoric in this case is the opposite of truth, a devious manipulation of language, used by unethical people without any concern for our interests or well-being, to sell us something (product or idea) we don't really need. Rhetorical style is, based on this vision, merely the verbal flourish and panache used by someone to hoodwink us.

That's not how we understand it. We use "rhetoric" much like the ancient Greeks did. For them, and many others since, rhetoric was the art of knowing how to use a wide variety of linguistic techniques—everything from the presentation of data, to argumentation through logic, to appeals to custom and tradition, to the structure of a speech, to challenging the credibility and self-interest of a given speaker, to the use of poetic metre and rhyme, to the practice of storytelling—to "move" your audience.

Even ancient philosophers who treated the political realm with relative disdain (in comparison to the contemplative realm of speculative knowledge) understood that rhetoric was an inextricable part of democratic politics. Far from being something shameful and manipulative, rhetoric is intrinsic to the very nature of any political system where decisions are made collectively through debate and deliberation.

So when we say populism is a rhetorical style, we aren't disparaging it. We are simply saying that populism is a relatively consistent way, or style, of using certain rhetorical techniques to communicate with, and usually attempt to persuade, an audience.

Of course, any given "rhetorical style" is made up of many different individual subcomponents, called rhetorical techniques or tropes. The rhetorical style of populism is no different. However, most rhetorical styles have a few components that are particularly central or defining. For us, the beating heart of the populist rhetorical style is the practice of talking about politics by telling the same story (more or less) over and over again, in a wide variety of contexts, about a wide variety of different issues.

While the details of any specific populist story can vary widely—in fact, this empirical flexibility is one of its key strengths—every populist story embodies three main elements, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly:

1. The lead protagonist of the story is always some variant of "the common people," invariably represented as morally upstanding and politically righteous.

2. The story always includes at least one and often many key antagonists. This cast of characters, inevitably portrayed as an "elite" in some way, are depicted not as only different than and separate from the common people, but also as suspect in various ways (morally, politically, etc.).

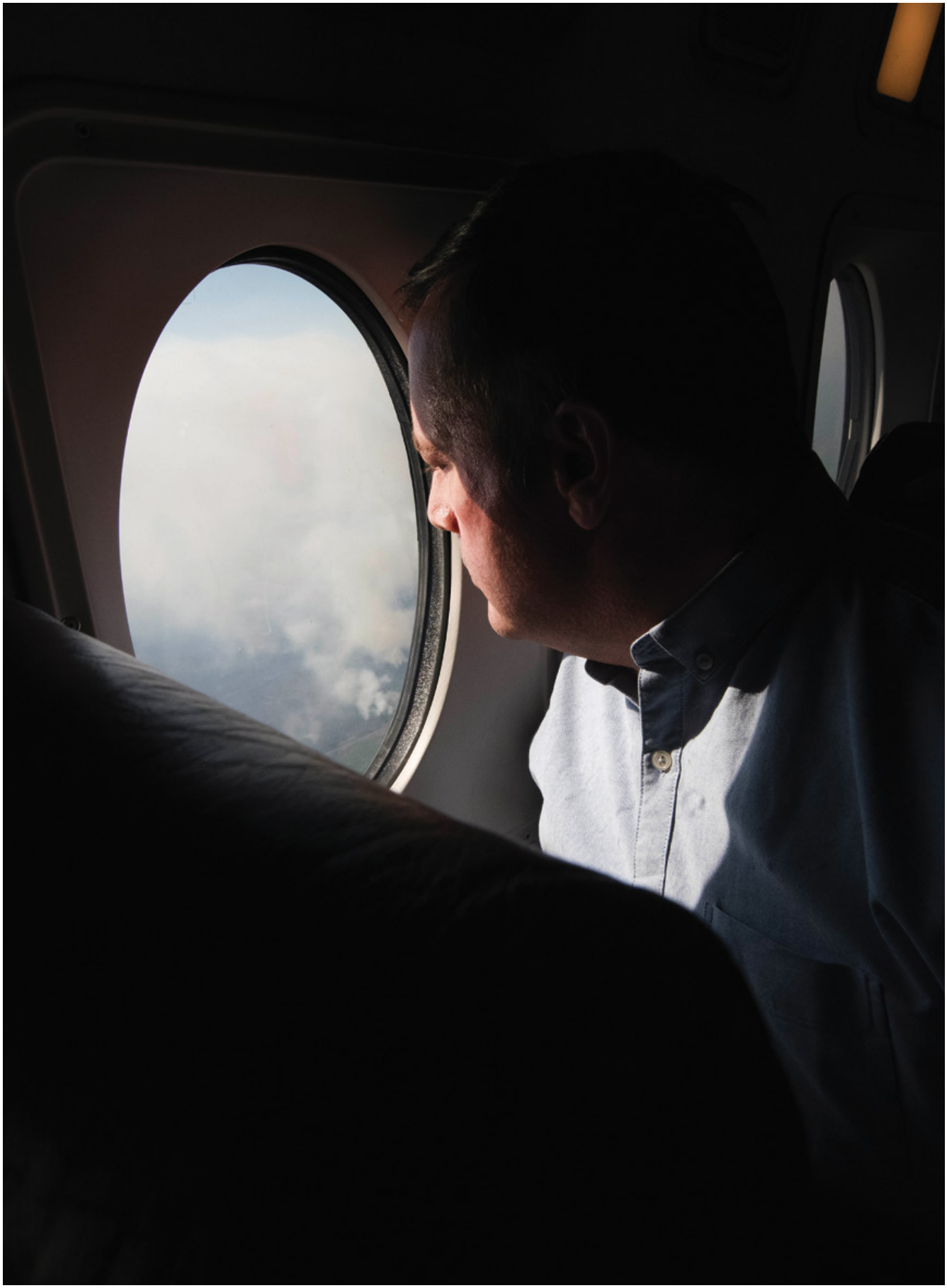
3. The main plot is almost inevitably structured as an emotionally charged clash between good and evil. The elite are not merely self-interested, thoughtless or out of touch with the people. They become a true villain, scheming against and oppressing the common people. The common people are thus cast both as the victim of nefarious elite conspiracies and as the hero who must rise up to overcome and vanquish the elites in order to restore the proper moral/political order, and ensure that what is good and right is respected once again.

In essence, then, populism is a basic story structure whose key characters and fundamental plotline can be used to tell a huge variety of different stories depending on what specific groups or individuals are cast in the role of the people and the elite, and what specific form of evil oppression, betrayal or conspiracy is described as taking place.

In academic terms, we might say that populism can usefully be understood as an *archetypal political narrative*—one that is immediately recognizable and emotionally powerful to many audiences in our current political context. That is not simply because the specific populist version of this story has been told so many times before over the last decade. More importantly, it is because the populist narrative itself follows deeper, older *archetypal cultural narratives* that have structured many of the basic stories in Western culture, religion and philosophy, over hundreds and thousands of years.

From this perspective, populist discourse is not simply a specific set of arguments or principles or ideological beliefs or values that frame our "thinking" or seek to *intellectually convince us*. Rather, populist discourse is an emotional story that tries to *move us emotionally*. Once we understand this, it is no longer surprising that it is something that can be used by a wide range of political perspectives which may differ ideologically or directly oppose one another. Nor is it surprising that populist rhetoric has become such an effective way of moving people, especially given the deep, shared anxieties—ranging from economic insecurities to a growing awareness of the existential threat posed by climate change—that characterize many political contexts today.

Many argue that we are living in a populist moment. Many others argue we are at an absolutely crucial tipping point of climate emergency. If both are true, it is imperative that we understand what populism is, the myriad and diverse ways in which populist narratives have impacted climate politics up to this point, and how they might help drive support for climate policies in the future. M



RICARDO ACUÑA

Kenney's enemies

A long-standing Alberta tradition of playing the victim is taken to new extremes

We Albertans are patient and fair minded, but we have had enough of your campaign of defamation and double standards. Today, we begin to stand up for ourselves, for our jobs, for our future. Today we begin to fight back.
— Jason Kenney in his election victory speech, April 16, 2019

For as long as Alberta has dealt with the inevitable boom-and-bust cycle of export-driven economies, political leaders have responded to economic downturns by identifying an enemy, placing the blame for Albertans' economic woes on that enemy, and rallying Albertans in opposition to it. William Aberhart ranted against the banks and "the 50 big shots in the east," whom he accused of "causing" 1930s poverty in Alberta. Decades later, Peter Lougheed would place the collapse of oil prices in the 1980s at the feet of Pierre Elliot Trudeau's National Energy Program. Then who can forget Ralph Klein, who as mayor of Calgary urged Albertans to "let the eastern bastards freeze in the dark" as a response to Alberta's struggling economy.

Yes, Alberta has a long tradition of presenting itself as victim. So it should not come as a surprise to anyone that Jason Kenney chose to exploit this tactic in his quest to become Alberta's premier, and that he will continue to exploit that tactic throughout his term. More interesting, perhaps, is the scale of the project. True to his reputation as an overachiever, Kenney did not settle on just one enemy to rally Albertans against. Upon his return to Alberta in 2016, and throughout his journey to become leader of the Alberta PCs and, eventually, of the United Conservative Party (UCP), Kenney laid the groundwork for directing Albertans' anger and frustration with the struggling economy at a rogue's gallery of alleged miscreants.

His first declared enemy was (big surprise) Rachel Notley. Kenney worked hard to establish the frame that Notley's minimum wage increases, her close ties the province's labour unions, her changes to the tax regime (including the carbon tax), and changes to the province's labour code were all responsible for the struggling economy and the job losses that many Albertans were experiencing. He also found a way to blame Notley for persistent low oil prices and dropping investment in Alberta's oil and gas industry. In doing so, Kenney laid the foundation for branding another villain as equally responsible for Alberta's plight: Justin Trudeau.

Kenney rarely spoke about the carbon tax and the failure to get pipelines built without referencing the "Trudeau-Notley alliance." This useful tool helped him aim Alberta's long-standing dislike and distrust of federal Liberals directly at Notley. The narrative was fairly straightforward: Notley and Trudeau both support carbon taxes and climate action; this makes them allies; Trudeau is not doing anything to get pipelines built; Notley will not go to war against her ally; therefore, Notley and Trudeau are both enemies of Alberta. Notley herself seemed to reinforce this narrative by repeatedly asserting that a lack of new pipelines was costing Alberta millions of dollars and tens of thousands of jobs every day. In that way, the NDP government helped establish the pipelines-equal-prosperity frame that Kenney exploited to put Notley and Trudeau at the top of the enemies list.

Past Alberta leaders would have been content with an enemies list of two, but not Kenney. B.C. Premier John Horgan quickly climbed to the top of the list as a result of his efforts to block the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion. Quebec also made the list, not only because the province steadfastly refused to endorse the Energy East pipeline, but also as alleged hypocrites for receiving equalization payments funded by Alberta bitumen wealth while refusing to allow that same bitumen to flow through the province. That particular frame was successful in helping Kenney set up the entire equalization program as an enemy of Alberta, despite the fact that he himself had signed off on it while a federal cabinet minister.

When HSBC announced in 2018 that, as part of its commitment to energy transition and sustainability, it would no longer finance new coal-fired power plants, arctic drilling or oilsands projects, including pipelines, the bank also quickly found itself on the Alberta enemies list. It didn't matter that HSBC, Europe's largest bank, maintains 17 local branches employing 330 people in the province, and has lent over $14 billion to Alberta businesses, including in the energy sector. To Kenney, they were yet another enemy of the province's workers and prosperity.

By this point the Alberta-as-victim frame had gained such traction that Postmedia columnists, industry front groups and other oilsands advocates not only began doing Kenney's research for him, but their mainstream and social media reach was such that they could facilitate an almost instant online mob against anybody they identified as an enemy. This dynamic was perhaps most evident when the University of Alberta decided to award an honorary degree to David Suzuki.

Kenney said giving the degree to Suzuki, who "makes millions defaming the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of Albertans," was an insult to Albertans. Prominent donors vowed to end their support of the university, the dean of engineering posted a scathing letter online, and even then

Premier of Alberta FLICKR CREATIVE COMMONS

premier Notley called the decision "a bit tone deaf." Kenney's strategy had clearly taken hold, and Albertans from all walks of life were helping it succeed.

It is in this way that one of Kenney's most successful victimization frames was given to him by pro-oil blogger and conspiracy theorist Vivian Krause. Krause is the person who came up with the theory that large U.S. foundations who derive their money from oil exploration and development have been funding Canadian activists to stop pipelines, as a way to lock-in Alberta bitumen and benefit U.S. oil. Her theories are mostly the stuff of conjecture and conspiracy, but facts rarely matter when trying to rile up an angry mob.

Kenney, Postmedia, Rebel Media, petro-turf groups all over the internet, and even the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) quickly began promoting Krause and her writings and providing further dissemination of her ideas. This narrative of Alberta as a victim of foreign-funded environmentalists gained so much traction in the province, and across the country, that it even came to occupy a place of prominence in Kenney's election platform. Both Krause and her Postmedia cheerleader Licia Corbella are painted as heroes. Tides Foundation and Tides Canada, the Pembina Institute, and Leadnow are also specifically named in the platform as some of the supposed perpetrators of this imaginary campaign of economic sabotage.

Not all of Jason Kenney's enemies are external or connected to pipelines, however. Throughout the campaign Kenney repeatedly declared war on the province's unions—particularly public sector unions, the Alberta Federation of Labour, and the Alberta Teachers' Association—for investing significant amounts of money in third-party campaigns to alert their members to what a UCP government would mean for them, their rights, and public services they seek to provide. He specifically targeted the AFL for its formal affiliation with the NDP, and repeatedly asserted that the AFL was behind the NDP's progressive changes to the Labour Relations Act, the Workers' Compensation Board, Occupational Health and Safety, and employment standards. All of which, he claimed, hurt small business, employment, and overall investment in the province.

On election night, Kenney doubled down on the Albertans-under-attack narrative in his victory speech: "Albertans have decided that we will no longer passively accept the campaign of defamation against the industry that has helped us to create one of the most prosperous and generous societies on Earth." He also used the speech to reinforce his role as Alberta's savior:

> *To the unemployed, to those who have given up, to the small business owners barely hanging on, to the young people who got their degrees and diplomas but can't put them to work, to those who have lost their homes and their hope after years of economic decline and stagnation. To them, tonight, we send this message: Help is on the way, and hope is on the horizon!*

Kenney's platform and legislative agenda lay out some the key initiatives (some of which have already been passed) that he will use to wage this battle against Alberta's present and future enemies:

- Bring into force legislation that would allow Alberta to "turn off the taps" to stop exports of oil to any jurisdiction that opposes new pipelines.
- Repeal the Alberta carbon tax and challenge the federal carbon tax in the courts as soon as the Liberals move to impose it on Alberta.
- Set up a $30 million "war room" in Calgary to "proactively tell the truth about how we produce energy with the highest environmental, labour, and human rights standards on earth." Postmedia has reportedly hired Kenney's former chief of staff, Nick Koolsbergen, to work with the government on this campaign.
- Launch a public inquiry into the foreign sources of funds to Canadian organizations that have opposed pipeline development.
- Strip the Pembina Institute, an environmental think-tank, of any provincial funding.
- Boycott companies like HSBC who refuse to do business in the oilsands by denying them government contracts or business.
- Pass resolutions to actively oppose federal legislation to ban tanker traffic in northern B.C. (Bill C-48) and impose new impact assessment rules for energy projects (Bill C-69). Both these resolutions passed unanimously in the Alberta legislature.
- Hold a referendum on removing equalization from the Constitution Act if Bill C-69 passes and/or if a coastal pipeline does not move forward.
- Target the AFL by prohibiting groups affiliated with political parties from running third-party advertising campaigns.
- Prohibit unions from funding "political parties and causes" without explicit opt-in approval from members.

On a personal level, Kenney says he will do everything in his power to secure the electoral defeat of Trudeau in the fall election and has already been stumping for key Conservative candidates in Ontario. Kenney's hope is that these antagonistic platform priorities and his public declarations will focus Albertans' attention and anger on their many alleged enemies, reinforcing the premier's position as the province's great defender.

Otherwise, Albertans might want to talk about the government's plans to cut spending by 14%, privatize provincial lab and laundry services, reduce the minimum wage for young workers, undo the modest progress made by the previous government on labour standards and occupational health and safety, eliminate the climate leadership plan, and reduce corporate taxes by one-third.

As the economy continues to flail deep into 2019, and Albertans begin to feel the impacts of the cuts in health care and education, the already well-established enemies will continue to provide an easy scapegoat for Kenney and his government. There are so many of them that even Trudeau's potential defeat in the fall will not negatively impact the strategy. The next four years promise to be interesting and exhausting—for Albertans and their enemies. M

SIMON ENOCH

The Saskatchewan government cares about the climate crisis, it just has no effective plan to deal with it

If there was a silver lining to the carbon tax/monster truck rally that rolled through Regina in April, it was how Premier Scott Moe and even some of the anti-tax demonstrators went out of their way to concede the realities of climate change and the need to address them. "Our government believes we need to take meaningful action to combat man-made climate change," wrote Moe in the lead-up to the rally. "But a carbon tax doesn't do that."

Identifying the most effective ways of reducing our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Saskatchewan would be a very useful debate to have. There are legitimate arguments against the efficacy of a carbon tax, particularly if it is the sole policy response to carbon mitigation. However, whenever pressed on what his government would do to address climate change in lieu of a carbon tax, the premier gestures toward *Prairie Resilience*, "Our own comprehensive, innovative climate change plan," released in December 2017.

The problem is that the government's plan doesn't get us anywhere close to where we need to be on emissions—is not at all effective, in other words—and the premier is rarely challenged on this point.

Saskatchewan currently produces about 75 megatonnes (MT) of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) per year. Since 2005, our emissions have increased by 11%, or 7 MT CO_2e. To reach the 2015 Paris Agreement targets—a 30% drop in emissions below 2005 levels by 2030—Saskatchewan needs to reduce its output to 48 MT CO_2e per year in just under 12 years. If, however, we wanted to strive to meet the revised IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) targets of 45% below 2010 levels by 2030, Saskatchewan would need to reduce GHG emissions to 38 MT CO_2e per year (half our current emissions) by 2030.

What does *Prairie Resilience* promise? If you set aside the wishful thinking that the federal government will grant us 12.5 million tonnes of carbon credits for carbon-sequestering agricultural practices (but won't knock us for carbon-producing agricultural practices), Premier Moe's plan gets us to 61 MT CO_2e per year by 2030. In other words, it is at least 13 MT CO_2e less effective than it needs to be.

A week after the monster truck rally, the government released its first climate resilience report. Again on the theme of silver linings, the document finally gives us a set of goals and targets against which we can measure progress on climate adaptation and mitigation in the province. Unfortunately, the report is far from "encouraging," as Environment Minister Dustin Duncan put it in April.

First, there are still no plans to achieve meaningful emissions reductions. Duncan acknowledged Saskatchewan's current 75 MT CO_2e annual output, but he claimed it would be futile to move faster than other polluting countries to lower emissions. "If we reduce that to zero, global climate change is going to continue," he said.

Obviously such a position, if universally adopted, guarantees climate catastrophe. It is the sort of nihilism that the government has used to justify inaction on climate change for over a decade.

Second, even our positive mitigation measures are too modest. For example, the Moe government commits to a 4.5 MT CO_2e reduction (40%) in GHG emissions from the flaring and venting of gas at oil and gas operations. These fugitive emissions, which do not help power our cars or produce electricity for our homes, constitute about 17% of total provincial emissions. Lowering them is a good idea.

But North Dakota, our southern neighbour, has much more stringent regulations regarding flaring and venting. The state requires producers to capture up to 85% of gases at the well-site, for example, and still breaks records in oil production.

Another glaring problem with the Moe government's resilience report relates to water. Weather extremes will guarantee the province gets too much of it at certain times—leading to increased flooding—and not enough at others—leading to increased drought and wildfires. Measure 23 in the report focuses on improving resilience to drought by reducing municipal water consumption.

While this goal is laudable and should be pursued, the report ignores the province's other largest consumers of water: agriculture and industry. Irrigation consumes 39% of provincial water use compared to 28% by municipalities; the resource industry (oil and gas, potash and other mining) consumes another 18%.

How will these industries adapt to scarcer water sources in the future, particularly given the government's desire to expand irrigated farmland and its ongoing efforts to encourage new oil and gas and mining development? As the province's water sources become more stressed, who will be given priority and who will be asked to sacrifice?

Many of us would welcome a robust debate on these questions, which all relate to what meaningful climate action should look like in Saskatchewan. It appears the debate Premier Moe and his government would prefer to have is about whose half-measures—the province's or federal government's—are more half-baked. M

RANDY ROBINSON

Sabotaging Ontario

The Ford government's tax cuts are weakening the province — just when the bill for climate change is coming due

It was a metaphor for everything the Doug Ford government is doing wrong.

In April, the Ontario premier showed up in the town of Bracebridge to lend a hand to a community facing heavy spring flooding. "We'll spare no resources to support the affected areas," he pledged.

It was the right thing to say, for sure. Unfortunately, his government had already cut — in half — the provincial funding to 36 local conservation authorities. Their main job? Flood control.

Ford knows climate change is real. "Something is going on and we have to be conscious of it," he said in April. Yet he shows no sign of taking the threat seriously. As soon as he arrived in office last year, he demolished the previous government's cap-and-trade program, cutting provincial revenues by at least $1.9 billion a year. Then he scrapped the green programs cap-and-trade was paying for.

Revenue cuts are not a climate plan. Aside from calling for volunteers to fill sandbags, the Ford government appears uninterested in the issue. It *is* interested in smaller, less muscular government. That means cuts: to public services and to taxes.

On the service side, the cuts just keep coming. In the 2019 budget, not one government ministry received enough funding to maintain its services at current levels. Many of the cuts hurt those who are already vulnerable. In social services—which exist to support children, and people with disabilities, and people with no income—the planned cuts will soon hit $1 billion a year.

The premier and his ministers don't bother with sympathetic noises. Dismissing the pleas of parents of children with autism, Ford said, "these are the same people that have their hands in the public trough... it's not sustainable."

That's not true. Taking care of people is sustainable, especially in a rich province like Ontario. It's a little-known fact, but Ontario is actually richer than it has ever been. Real GDP per capita, the most common measure of overall prosperity, is at a record level this year. But that prosperity isn't trickling down.

WORTH REPEATING

"It's just common hardworking people that don't have a voice; they aren't part of the elite; they aren't part of the establishment; they aren't part of the backroom boys club at Queen's Park.... They're tired of the government gouging them, every time they stick their hands in their pocket they have Justin Trudeau's hand in their pocket gouging them for more money."

Ontario Premier Doug Ford describing to the *Toronto Sun* who would be attending the annual "Ford Nation" BBQ on June 22, billed this year as an opportunity to "celebrate the achievements of Ontario's government For the People."

When it comes to public services, the Ontario government is a penny-pinching miser.

Ontario has the lowest program spending per capita of any province in Canada. According to the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario (FAO), we spend about $2,000 less per person than the average of the other provinces. There's a reason for that: compared to the average of the other provinces, Ontario brings in about $2,000 less per person in revenues.

It's not as if there's no need for spending. Hundreds of high school courses are being erased. Tens of thousands of families are waiting for affordable housing. Overcrowded hospitals don't have the surge capacity to meet the next pandemic.

And then there is climate change.

Rather than funding solutions, though, the Ford government is deepening the crisis. The FAO says that, by five years from now, the government will have cut program spending by a further *$1,100* per person (in 2018 dollars). With 15 million Ontarians by then, that means cuts that total over $16.5 billion — around 10% of total government spending today.

Much of the money saved through all these cuts will go straight to tax cuts. In the past year, the government has cut various taxes by over $4 billion a year. The FAO's analysis indicates more major tax cuts are coming, likely just in time for the 2022 provincial election.

The right-wing obsession with tax cuts is bad enough in normal times, but these are not normal times. As this year's spring flooding showed, the bill for our inaction on the climate crisis is coming due. It won't be a small one.

Back in the 1990s, Canada's insurance companies paid out about $400

million in weather-related claims each year. In the last 10 years, that number has averaged $1 billion. And last year it was $2 billion—$1.3 billion of it in Ontario.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada estimates that for every dollar insurers pay out for weather damage, governments pay out an extra three dollars to fix public infrastructure. That is barely manageable now. What will happen when climate-change damage doubles, then doubles again, and doubles again?

We do not know the financial impacts of what lies before us; we only know they will be big. Power outages from ice storms will weaken the economy. Hundreds of thousands of homes on flood plains will be unlivable.

Much of the conversation around climate change has centred around how to stop it, and rightly so. But adapting to change as it happens is equally urgent. And that will require money.

The price of climate-change adaptation is already too much for individuals to bear. "This is Canada, for heaven's sake," CBC journalist Neil Macdonald wrote recently. "The cost of flood-proofing this country will be largely paid for with tax revenue. It's inevitable."

If he's right (and he is), we need to increase our capacity to deal with emergencies, not handcuff ourselves with unnecessary tax cuts. By sabotaging our capacity to raise revenues, the Ford government is weakening the province—just when it needs to be strong. M

Ontario Premier Doug Ford surveys flooded areas in Ottawa on Friday, April 26, 2019.
THE CANADIAN PRESS/ADRIAN WYLD


NO KINDER MORGAN
NO CONSENT
NO PIPELINE
INVEST IN CLEAN
SHAME
K-M
NO
BROKE
THE NATION
Dear Ottawa
NO permission
NO pipeline
STOP KINDER MORGAN
NO KINDER MORGAN
TURTLE ISLAND FOREVER!
UNITED AGAINST KINDER MORGAN

ROBERT NEUBAUER

For an ecological populism

Mobilizing against the pro-pipeline elites

For the last decade, oil and gas industry supporters in media, civil society and government have honed a populist narrative revolving around two core arguments:

1. Fossil fuel development is vital to the national economic interest.

2. Environmentalists are elites who hypocritically threaten that national interest; wealthy celebrities, radical ideologues or paid protesters funded by foreign foundations are, we're told, sabotaging the well-being of Canadian workers and taxpayers.

Whether promoted by politicians like Alberta Premier Jason Kenney or industry-backed campaigns like Oil Respect (tagline: "Standing Up for Canadian Oil and Gas Families"), this right-wing populist story implies that "average" Canadians benefit from fossil fuel development more or less equally. In reality, the benefits and risks of development are distributed in highly inequitable ways—a fact recognized by *ecological* populist narratives emerging from some pipeline opponents.

At the forefront of this countermovement have been organizations active in the Indigenous-led movement against new pipeline and tanker projects. Enbridge's now defunct Northern Gateway and Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline (the latter bought by the federal government for $4.5 billion in an effort to save the faltering project) both generated massive grassroots resistance, especially in B.C. where many First Nations, communities, environmental groups and local governments have mobilized against them.

Through this resistance, prominent opponents like the environmental citizens' group Dogwood Initiative or the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs' Coast Protectors have developed their own anti-pipeline populist narrative (see the articles by Shane Gunster and Paul Saurette in this issue). The core of that narrative is that *local ecosystems*—and the communities that depend on them—are under attack by industry-supporting elites who have rigged the system.

This *ecological* populist narrative demolishes the claim that pipelines benefit everyone, and that only radical elites who don't care about everyday people could possibly oppose them. Repeatedly, opponents point out the fundamental inequities baked into these projects.

Most of the economic benefits from the Trans Mountain expansion or southbound Keystone XL pipeline, both designed to increase upstream bitumen production in Alberta, would go to Albertan and international oil companies, the banks that finance them, and the Alberta government, which is currently in the mood to spend increased tax revenues on corporate tax cuts. Communities along the project routes, however, receive few long-term jobs while absorbing significant risks from a pipeline or tanker spill. Such a spill could devastate the traditional lands and waters of many First Nations, wiping out salmon runs or poisoning water supplies. It could also destroy local economies dependent on fisheries or ecotourism, while leaving taxpayers liable for cleanup costs.

This emergent ecological populist narrative attacks inequities along both socioeconomic and regional lines, noting these pipelines would benefit powerful elites and particular regions at the expense of less powerful actors and other regions. This account inverts the "foreign-funded radical" storyline of pipeline supporters, with traditional Tsleil-Waututh territories, British Columbian fisheries, and coastal residents under attack by an alliance of Ottawa politicians, Albertan and international oil companies, and Bay Street banks.

Another core claim of this anti-pipeline narrative is that elites have rigged the regulatory system to impose projects without appropriate consent. The proposed routes for both Northern Gateway and Trans Mountain pass through swaths of unceded Indigenous territory in B.C.. According to many opponents, the federal reviews lack the authority to make decisions about that territory. Further, opponents claim these panels' superficial consultations don't meet the government's constitutional responsibilities to First Peoples (an argument repeatedly validated in court).

More broadly, the reviews are criticized for being captured by industry, with the National Energy Board—an industry-funded body mostly staffed with corporate insiders—in the driver's seat. They are also critiqued for having no regional democratic accountability. Not only did the Harper government pass legislation to limit public participation in reviews, but the previous B.C. government agreed to waive the province's right to hold its own assessment. Little wonder that Coast Protectors has attacked the

Indigenous leaders and environmentalists march in protest against Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline in southern Burnaby, B.C., March 2018.
REUTERS/NICK DIDLICK

federal Liberals for "helping a Texas company override local democratic control of our lands."

Hence another key claim in this populist narrative: that pipeline-supporting elites are corrupt and dishonest, and therefore can't be trusted with the well-being of our environment and communities. After the federal buyout of Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline, Dogwood denounced giving "Canadian taxpayer dollar[s]" to a company run by "former Enron executives"—evoking the notoriously corrupt U.S. energy company whose dishonesty led to the fleecing of its investors. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Environment Minister Catherine McKenna were mocked for being "the heroes Texas oil billionaires have been waiting for," shamefully "stealing from the poor and giving to the rich."

This corruption framing helps mobilize people who feel betrayed by a government that promised to pursue Indigenous reconciliation, respect local communities and fight climate change, but which has instead decided to bailout an American oil giant. As Coast Protectors noted, that money could be used to provide "clean water for all Indigenous peoples." Or fight climate change. Or create green jobs. That's a powerful, popular argument.

While the extractivist populism sold by fossil fuel boosters like Kenney often invokes an implicitly unified "Canadian people," anti-pipeline populists don't describe their constituents as part of a homogenous society. That would be a tough sell for an Indigenous-led movement that has helped mobilize thousands of settler Canadians living on unceded territory. Instead, these groups describe a popular but diverse social movement made up of everyday people whose dependence on local ecosystems compels them to band together and "defend their coast."

For instance, during the Northern Gateway campaign, Dogwood's Will Horter positioned their "broad grassroots movement of working families, First Nations governments, municipalities, and fishermen" against a powerful elite cabal that included "Enbridge—the largest pipeline company in Canada, a consortium of international oil companies, and a pro-oil sands federal government."

If pipeline-pushing elites were seen as all-powerful, this storyline would be demoralizing. But in populist narratives the people always have the power to win, which inspires them to keep fighting in tough situations. Pipeline opponents always assure supporters that, if united, they can stop these projects, whether through mass protests or fundraising for Indigenous legal challenges. Even the Kinder Morgan bailout was framed as a kind of victory, forced on a desperate government after opponents had, as Indigenous activist Melina Labaocan-Massimo put it, sent the "biggest oil company in the world [packing] back to Texas."

I think there are serious strengths to this populist narrative of place-based resistance. It disassembles the "national interest" claims of extractivist populism, directly targeting those who benefit from others' harm. It also champions diverse actors whose solidarity comes from their mutual dependence on fragile ecosystems. And this narrative seems to have helped inspire sustained mass mobilizations that we don't see often in Canadian environmental organizing.

That said, there may be limitations to this populist narrative. For one, it implies diverse communities are allied in defence of local places and regional democracy, even though settler opponents' concerns with both are arguably rooted in an ongoing colonial project. The appeal of this narrative might be undermined if settler opponents don't make longer-term commitments to Indigenous reconciliation. Just think about the current B.C. government, considered an ally in the Kinder Morgan fight, being criticized for violating Indigenous rights in support of the Site C megadam, or Trans Canada's Coastal Gas Link.

Also, this new populist narrative has been used almost exclusively to fight against specific noxious projects. This is understandable given opponents' immediate need to protect their homes, families and territories. But to date, we've seen fewer attempts by the broader environmental movement to use similar narratives to fight for a concrete vision of the policies that should replace today's extractivism.

With extractivist populism already posing a clear threat to even moderate federal climate policy, it seems clear that any bold climate initiatives will require the same type of militant, people-powered movement anti-pipeline activists have built. This type of strategy could be low-hanging fruit.

The problems with fossil fuel development go beyond pipelines. The oil and gas industry in this country more broadly is purposefully structured to make corporations huge profits, with small shares of revenue going to workers or taxpayers—even during boom times. And let's be clear: the boom times are likely over.

Furthermore, mass investments in clean energy, public transportation or high-speed rail aren't just environmentally necessary; they have huge populist appeal. Why use government to prop up a dying oil industry that disproportionately enriches big corporations when we could be investing in clean jobs? Why should communities in Northern B.C., many of them Indigenous, depend on U.S. bus companies to travel safely to work or visit family, only to be stranded when these companies abandon them in the name of corporate profit?

Looking around the country, we can see the immediate danger that extractivist populism poses—not just to the environment, but to working people and vulnerable groups from coast-to-coast. But we can also see the political traction being gained by populist climate politics around the world. Alaxandria-Orcasio Cortez' Green New Deal is winning advocates inside and beyond the United States; in Canada it is pumping new life into the 2015 Leap Manifesto and campaign.

These campaigns don't just champion climate friendly policies; they directly target the elites that profit from climate chaos, while offering benefits to working people. Now seems the perfect moment for the environmental left in Canada to pursue similarly bold policies. But to do so, we will need to explicitly target climate-killing elites while offering the people a future they will want to fight for. M

MOHAMMAD AKBAR

Ontario brings anti-union fight to post-secondary education

The one-year-old Ford government in Ontario has a transformational agenda that includes plans for remaking public health care, education and, of course, alcohol distribution. His cuts to post-secondary education, however, are a telling sign of what the future might hold for areas the government has been cautious to not target quite yet.

One of the new government's first forays into enforcing its vision of post-secondary education was mandating "free speech" policies at universities and colleges. The policy announcement came only a few months after white supremacist Faith Goldy was stopped from speaking at Wilfred Laurier University by strong student protest. Many were quick to point out the irony in "mandatory free speech" for known bigots, with the target being those exercising their right to protest against hate speech.

Beyond attempting to stifle critics of oppressive, racist and sexist events, and quashing dissent under the guise of providing "a space for open inquiry," this policy was also a test of how far the Ford government could go to encroach upon post-secondary education without facing blowback from school administrations. On this, the premier got his agenda through with little to no pushback. While Universities and colleges were careful—they did not want to imply that the government had any authority over the governance of their institutions—all meekly complied with the "free speech" policy.

With this victory in hand, the Ford government pressed a far more insidious plan: the inaccurately named Student Choice Initiative, which introduced voluntary student unionism to Canada for the first time. The Ontario policy applies to student unions, Ontario Public Interest Research Groups (OPIRGs), campus media, and a wide variety of other student services deemed non-essential. Students may now choose to opt out of funding these services. Building or athletic fees, however, will remain mandatory under the Ford plan.

A telling report by OPIRG Carleton in Ottawa showed that despite the government's stated intention of reducing fees on students, approximately 90% of ancillary fees charged to students would remain mandatory after implementation of the Student Choice Initiative. Only $126.54 of the $1,105.01 Carleton students paid in fees in 2018–19 are considered non-essential and therefore optional. In addition, the fees that students choose to pay would *not* be covered by the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) as they were in the past. In essence, Ford's Student Choice Initiative simply deprives students of necessary services while also taking money quietly out of their pockets.

As if the silencing of disssent and the destruction of student unions and student power were not enough, the Ford government introduced other massive changes to OSAP: reducing the family income threshold for funding and essentially eliminating the "free" tuition fee program; reducing the Ontario Student Grant; implementing a higher age for mature student status; and eliminating the interest-free grace period on student loans, among a host of other changes.

The government attempted to use a stated 10% tuition fee reduction to buy student support for his post-secondary restructuring. But many students recognize that only a handful of them will truly benefit from the cut. They can see there is no guarantee tuition fees will remain reduced, or that they will even be matched by provincial funding.

The last big change that Ford has made is his effort to redefine the "accountability measures" the government uses to characterize the success of post-secondary institutions. The government plans to tie 60% of funding for post-secondary institutions, over $3 billion a year, to 10 key metrics (there are currently 18) by 2021. These metrics include graduate earnings and completion rates, among other categories.

As the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations points out, the change "works against quality improvement and punishes students studying at already cash-strapped institutions facing further funding cuts." Given the underfunding that already exists in the sector, the result of this change is an inevitable focus on cost cutting, larger class sizes, more online classes and an even more direct attack on workers. Inexplicably, none of these measures seem too focused on the quality of education.

Unfortunately, there is no end in sight to the transformational cuts coming to post-secondary institutions and the very fabric of post-secondary education in Ontario. There is a clear indication that Ford will interfere in collective bargaining as well. What else may be on his government's agenda after its long, self-imposed summer break?

What many may not know is that voluntary student unionism was originally proposed in Tim Hudak's failed "Changebook" platform. Hudak also proposed U.S.-style "right to work" legislation for Ontario. If one looks at the Student Choice Initiative, it appears eerily similar to voluntary union dues laws in place in many U.S. states.

The Ford government's first year was chaotic and disruptive, and there are three more years to go. It is essential for Ontarians across the province to learn from what has happened to post-secondary education so far, so that we can prepare ourselves for perhaps even more drastic restructuring ahead. M

GREG ALBO

Hard right turn in Ontario

Provincial populism serves a neoliberal economic strategy that hinges on ever more speculative, politicized and extreme forms of accumulation

A decade after the global financial crisis, few of the initial political calculations on the trajectory of world capitalism remain intact. The assessments made by liberals and social democrats alike on the end of neoliberalism and a revival of Keynesian state intervention now seem like a bad joke. And the readings from many on the radical left that the economic slump would be met by a wave of social resistance and an opening for political rupture have fared no better in either economic analysis or political guidance. Indeed, neoliberalism has regained its pre-eminence in economic policy, through re-financialization and austerity, despite its ideological discredit and the endless multiplications of its contradictions.

It is more than a little alarming that it is right-wing political forces that have gained more and more political space in the wake of the crisis. The range of forms of this insurgent right defies a single classification—electoral victories opening political space for a hyper-nationalist alt-right (U.S. and Germany); incorporation of neo-fascist forces into "formal" liberal democratic states (Italy, Hungary, Poland, the Philippines, Austria, and others); exceptional judicial-political coups (Brazil, Honduras); authoritarian constitutional regimes (Russia, China, India, Turkey); military coups (Egypt, Thailand); and still others.

It is often claimed, in the simple-mindedness that passes for political analysis in Canada, that our inclusionary polity has been innocent of these developments (although Canada is, perhaps, the most orthodox adherent to neoliberal policy precepts in the world). But with the far right gaining political space inside and outside the Conservative Party—as in the decade-long Harper government (and now with Andrew Scheer as his successor as leader of the Conservative Party), the United Conservative Party in Alberta, the People's Alliance in New Brunswick, and the Saskatchewan Party and *Coalition Avenir Québec* governments—this claim bears no scrutiny.

AUTHORITARIAN NEOLIBERALISM

The election of the Doug Ford–led government in Ontario, Canada's largest province by output and population, should leave little doubt that an authoritarian phase of neoliberalism is sinking deep roots in Canada. Ford's election platform, "A Plan for the People," played to the "Ford Nation" built by his late brother Rob, as mayor of Toronto, in its themes of social conservatism, law and order, unwanted "illegal" migrants, and market populism.

Ford adopted much of the inflammatory rhetoric of Donald Trump, including a parallel narrative of "making Ontario great again" after years of "criminal" Liberal spending (with the same chants of "lock her up" for then-premier Kathleen Wynne as Trump supporters targeted at Hilary Clinton), and domination by cultural "elites" in Toronto. In this, Ford fused a suburban, multi-racial bloc of voters with traditional conservative support—many with long-standing hard right leanings—among rural and wealthy voters. In turn, Ford empowered even more militant, and some fascistic and openly racist elements of the far right. (Ex–Rebel Media figure Faith Goldy, recently kicked off Facebook, placed third in a run for Toronto mayor.)

There is no policy handbook that guides these emergent authoritarian regimes as they blend nationalism with neoliberalism. Still, features of the Ontario government policy matrix under Ford that fit this pattern can be discerned.

THE NEW ONTARIO GOVERNMENT

First, the new Ontario government is committed to further "liberalization" of the economy and have even erected "open for business" signs at each border crossing. These policies will be layered into a growth model that is as *extensive* (larger market) as it is *intensive* (higher productivity), and sustains Ontario as a low-cost, low-tax regional production system.

Some of the new government's first moves were to scrap the carbon trading system while simultaneously cutting the gas tax, 750 renewable energy projects and the Green Ontario Fund (shamefully leaving Ontario without a climate change policy). Shortly after, the premier tabled legislation to roll back modest labour reforms addressing some of the problems of low-paid workers and to freeze a planned increase to the minimum wage (to $15 per hour from its current $14), while also cutting back workplace inspections. New spaces for accumulation are to be pushed into the Ring of Fire in Northern Ontario (for mining), the province's "green spaces" (for ex-urban development sprawl), and further cannabis privatization.

Second, Ontario fiscal policy has been constrained for decades with targeted maximum fiscal deficits (normed, more or less, to move to balanced budgets, with total debt targeted for a range of 30-35% of provincial GDP). This has meant a budgetary practice under the Liberals of keeping program spending below

the combined rates of inflation and growth, to reduce steadily the size of government as a portion of the economy (with Ontario now having the lowest per capita programme spending in Canada).

For the election, however, the Liberals allowed a modest deficit to fund a range of programs. Ford, in turn, "ginned-up" charges of reckless Liberal spending and appointed a Financial Commission of Inquiry, and an Ernst and Young Canada "audit" of the books, to produce a $15 billion deficit (with some dispute over accounting procedures, in the same range as the Liberal projections). Nonetheless, the Conservatives promised during the election to increase spending on public transit, housing, child care, and long-term care beds; no cuts to services and public employees; and gas, income, small business and corporate tax cuts. This is all to be funded, Ford argued, by $6 billion in savings through unnamed "efficiencies."

This is, to say the least, a confused and incoherent fiscal policy that cannot hold. Indeed, it is austerity that has already been rolled out: a public sector spending and hiring freeze; axing of a pharmacare program for young people; cuts to a school repair program, cycling infrastructure, and mental health funding; and appointment of a task force on health care reform led by a two-tier advocate. The precise mix of spending cuts, user fees, and monetization and privatization of assets will be sorted out in the coming economic statement and budget.

Third, the neoliberal deepening of economic institutions works in conjunction with measures that promote "social discipline" as the hard right sees it. The Ford government has, for example, moved quickly to turf a modernization of the sex-ed curriculum as well materials to deal with reconciliation with First Nations; legislate CUPE back to work at York University; cut a basic income pilot program and social assistance rate increases (on the road, it seems, to revise some form of workfare); withdraw from provincial obligations to settle and house refugee claimants; block new oversight laws on the police; and re-establish specialized policing units (the "guns and gangs" forces associated with extensive carding of racialized groups) in "high priority" neighbourhoods. This is only a partial inventory of the ideological and economic mechanisms to instill a culture of fear and market discipline that Ford is deploying.

Finally, the Ford regime has been unhesitating in reinforcing the anti-democratic and authoritarian tendencies that have been integral to neoliberalism. Indeed, the government's most dramatic initial move was a unilateral cut to the size of Toronto city council in the midst of an election (as well as eliminating the elections of several regional government chairs). Ford was so keen to reduce the space for electing, as he put it, "lefties" in Toronto that he belligerently invoked the constitutional notwithstanding clause to limit judicial oversight.

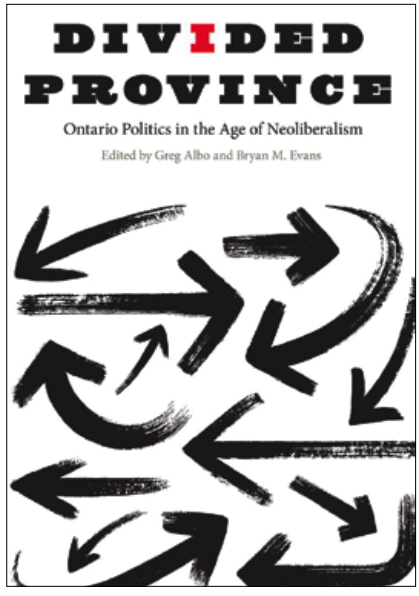
The personalization and concentration of power around Ford is notable: the hyper-centralization of executive power in the premier's office; the ending of public ministerial mandate letters; the centralization of control over ministerial staff appointments and media contacts; the naming of special advisors and commissions to the premier's office; the demotion of the ministerial status of First Nations issues; and the altering of parliamentary rules to limit the capacity to oppose government bills.

HARD TIMES, POLITICAL CHALLENGES

In sum, Fordism in Ontario is an extraordinarily contradictory, and dangerous, agenda. The anti-state, market populism used to sustain the rate of accumulation at any cost exists alongside— indeed, depends upon—an increasingly interventionist and authoritarian state mobilizing its resources and re-ordering its administrative apparatuses to buttress this process. Ford's "government for the people" thus pivots, like Trump's regime in the U.S., around ideological appeals to a hard-right provincialism, patriarchal family values set against a hostile world of crime and terrorism, mobilization of ethnic and racial chauvinisms, and mystical market solutions for every ill.

Ontario under the Ford government has not mutated into an exceptional regime existing, as it does, within the faint veneer of liberal democracy. But the premier operates with ever fewer constraints—a nascent Bonapartism?—over his exercise of power. Both Ford's core populist instincts and political calculations authorize and sanction the hard-right sections of his caucus, party and extra-party militants; his economic strategy hinges on ever more speculative, politicized and extreme forms of accumulation.

It would be utter folly to predict where this will end (no less in other regions of Canada). It is clear, moreover, that the Liberals are indicted in these very same processes, and the NDP has proven more inept than capable of developing an alternative to neoliberalism, as these policies have also made their claims on its vision and platform. Political fronts, a fighting and transformed union movement, ambitious socialist organizing and alternatives have seldom been more urgent to confront the challenges of these uncertain and hardening times. M



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HOW THEY'LL REMEMBER US

CANADA

... By 2019, Canada had one of the highest carbon emission rates per capita in the world and was warming twice as fast as any other country due to its northern location. Still, many local governments, Alberta and Ontario in particular, believed the bigger problem facing the country was a lack of investment in polluting industries. On taking office, the leaders of Canada's two highest-emitting provinces chose to scrap the cap on emissions from oil sands production in Alberta and get rid of Ontario's cap-and-trade program (see Ricardo Acuña and Randy Robinson in this issue). The Trudeau government's plan to meet the climate emergency with new pipeline capacity—it purchased one Alberta–B.C. pipeline in 2018 for $4.5 billion—was ridiculed by environmentalists. In the lead-up to that year's federal election, Andrew Scheer's Conservative Party promised to revoke a moderately effective, low-cost carbon tax that was being challenged in court by several provincial governments...

UNITED STATES

... President Donald Trump believed climate change was a hoax, and on taking office in 2017 began to widely deregulate across much of the economy via Executive Order 13771. As of June 11, 2019, there were 40 completed "deregulatory actions" posted on the Environmental Protection Agency's website affecting air and water quality testing, "relaxation" of fuel quality and emissions standards, and other areas. A further 48 deregulatory actions were planned heading into the 2020 presidential election. Though Trump can't be credited with the country's shale oil and liquefied natural gas boom, which began under the previous Obama administration, his Republican administration upped the ante by fast-tracking licences for drilling on public land and in the Arctic. Two further executive orders permitted the U.S. president to issue, amend or deny approval for pipeline projects and limit the power of the state to deny these projects in the future...

BRAZIL

... Only hours after taking office in January 2019, Brazil's extreme-right president Jair Bolsoraro signed an executive order opening up protected Indigenous territory in the Amazon as a gift to the country's powerful agricultural lobby (see Asad Ismi in this issue) and a snub to international NGOs the president accused of "sticking their noses into Brazil." At the time, the Amazon was home to 10% of the world's species and was considered a crucial carbon sink—a way to pull carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. Bolsonaro's move was considered an aggressive assault on Indigenous peoples, who strongly resisted the reforms, and a handout to global mining companies, including Canadian ones, who could now more easily encroach onto Indigenous lands...

AUSTRALIA

... Along with Canada, Australia was one of the world's worst per capita greenhouse gas emitters, with coal becoming the country's top export by value in 2019, much of it going to Japan and China where it was burned to generate power. Regular bushfires in Australia during its dry seasons became much worse as the climate emergency progressed. Ahead of the 2019 election, more than 20 former fire and emergency chiefs from across the country warned all parties that they needed to put many more resources toward "national firefighting assets" such as aircraft if the country was going to meet the threat. Australia's prime minister, Scott Morrison, who in late 2018 told student climate strikers to "get back to school," was less concerned with capping emissions than putting a cap on refugees and immigrants. When asked by a radio host if Australia would meet its Paris Agreement climate change emissions targets, Morrison said: "No we're not held to any of them at all...nor are we bound to go and tip money into that big climate fund, we're not going to do that either. So, I'm not going to spend money on global climate conferences and all that sort of nonsense"...

RUSSIA

... Russia signed the Paris Agreement in 2016, after pledging a year earlier to reduce emissions to 25–30% below 1990 levels by 2030. But by 2019 the country had still not ratified the agreement. A November 2018 assessment of global emissions reduction strategies published in the journal *Nature Communications* found that world temperatures would rise by more than five degrees Celsius under the Russian, Chinese and Canadian targets. At the same time, according to the Centre on the Problems of Ecology and Productivity of Forests at the Russian Academy of Sciences, poor forest management was removing the carbon-sink potential of Russia's vast boreal forests, which accounted for 19% of the world's forest reserves by surface area in 2019. Meanwhile, Russia was positioning itself to be the main beneficiary of climate change–related ice melt in the Arctic. The Far North is estimated to contain 22% of Earth's undiscovered natural gas and oil fields, 60% of them in Russian territory...

CLAUDE VAILLANCOURT

François Legault, Quebec's centre-right of attraction

An extended honeymoon seems to have set in between François Legault and the people of Quebec. The premier skilfully addresses them with simple, laid-back language. He remains attentive and responds quickly to difficulties. He was, for example, very active on the scene of the floods that hit the province this spring.

The moderation shown by this government, and the centrism at the core of its policies, were hardly predictable. Remember that the Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ), founded by Legault in 2011, was established by absorbing the resolutely right-wing Action démocratique du Québec (ADQ) and advocated a major reduction in the role of the state.

The transition from one party to the other was relatively hurdle-free. Only six months before the last election in October, the CAQ website was replete with familiar slogans: Quebecers needed a "tax break" when instead the government had its "hands in taxpayers' pockets." Words like "oil" and "shale gas" (which absolutely had to be exploited, according to early CAQ statements) have disappeared from the site.

The program of the CAQ was not very different from that of the Liberal Party of Quebec (PLQ), confirmed by the game of revolving doors from one party to the other. Ex-Caquistes Dominique Anglade, Sébastien Proulx and Gaétan Barrette became ministers in the Couillard government, while former Liberal Marguerite Blais is now a Caquist minister. "Du pareil au meme" (it's all the same), went one campaign launched by unions. The CAQ would only reproduce, and perhaps bungle, the policies of the Liberals.

The party was able to correct the situation by taking a surprising turn toward the centre. The previous Liberal government's austerity plans had angered the public so much that it would have been highly risky for the CAQ to continue in this direction. Accumulated government surpluses from years of deprivation are high enough that even the conservative Legault had no excuse but to distribute them.

The flexibility of Legault contrasts nicely with the ideological stiffness of his predecessor Philippe Couillard. The latter, for example, distributed his essay *The Fourth Revolution*, a publication typical of neoliberal orthodoxy, to family and colleagues. Legault, who served as a minister in a social democratic party (the Parti Québécois), is more apt to put water in his wine, which Quebeckers seem to appreciate.

But clearly Legault is not leading a progressive party, and many of the CAQ's choices in government display its roots on the right. The environment, for example, was not one of the government's priorities. Neophytes in this field, poorly prepared and, until recently, advocating resource exploitation at all costs, Legault and his party were out of step with the people on this growing concern. A very strong environmental movement in Quebec forced him to change his plans. At a general council held last May, the party took its green shift. It was clearly not enough to embark on a real energy transition, but it was a step forward all the same.

Two of the CAQ government's promises worry opponents. Kindergarten for four-year-olds, touted as a miracle solution by Legault, is inadequate to the task of fixing a school system that suffers from a shortage of teachers. And the proposal to construct a third bridge in Quebec City, connecting the north and south shores of the St. Lawrence River, will only promote automobile-focused development that is harmful to the environment.

Speaking of cars, Transport Minister François Bonnardel showed how easily he could yield to the demands of private enterprise, in this case Uber. As requested by the car-sharing app, the CAQ government has deregulated the taxi industry, raising the ire of taxi drivers who feel cheated and helpless. Legault has also shown obvious employer sympathies in the high-profile labour dispute involving workers at the ABI smelter near Trois-Rivières, who have been locked out for nearly a year and a half.

The premier launched a battle for secularism, with a bill banning religious symbols in several public sector workplaces. Debate around the law, which passed June 16, continues to divide, which goes against Legault's quest for consensus. The manoeuvre is clearly election focused: it seems to have been set up to reassure the party's electoral base, mainly the population of the suburbs of Montreal and Quebec City.

An important test awaits the Legault government—that of negotiating a new collective agreement with public sector unions. Everything in the party's history suggests that the CAQ government will take a hard line against state employees. However, the considerable budget surplus—about $9 billion, according to journalist Gérald Fillion—significantly favours public sector workers who have been waiting for a raise for some time. So does Legault's election promise to create well-paying jobs.

So far, François Legault has had it relatively easy. In the absence of bold and inspired policies, his pragmatism reassures many people. Unlike his predecessor Couillard, he does not seem deaf to social demands. But how long will Legault, he who listens, prevail over the businessman he never really ceased to be? M

ROXANNE DUBOIS

Politics of light and shadows

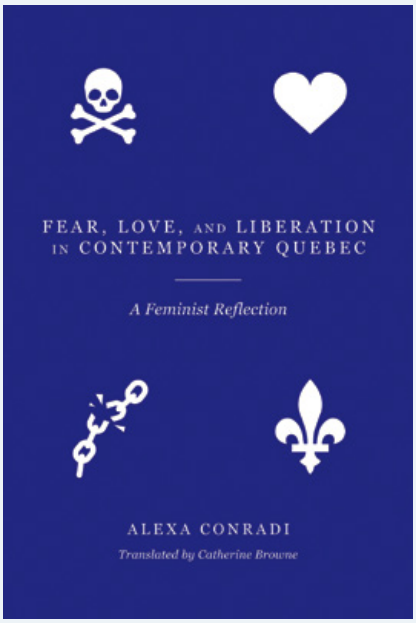
Alexa Conradi's call for a feminist line in conservative times

The post-crisis rise of right-wing populism garners considerable international attention today. But it wasn't that long ago that Canada dealt with its own brand of antagonistic conservative politics under Stephen Harper's federal government. At the time, community activist and feminist Alexa Conradi was the president of the Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ). During her tenure, the FFQ took part in broad societal debates that uncovered resistance to feminist ideas, and hidden layers of intolerance, racism, homophobia and other harmful sentiments that were often masked by notions of exceptionalism.

Conradi reflects on this moment in a new book-length essay, *Fear, Love, and Liberation in Contemporary Quebec* (Between the Lines, April 2019), published in French under the title *Les angles morts*, or "blind spots." She is concerned, therefore, with issues or views that escape our field of vision—things we don't talk about, perhaps because the answers are hard to explain. Conradi cautions that these blind spots, in particular those related to gender equality, can trap us; the myths they encourage will fester below the surface if the opportunity to dispel them is not taken.

Among the examples approached by Conradi in her reflections are the public understanding of rape culture and gender-based violence, the legacy of colonialism and the importance of solidarity with Indigenous communities, the rise of Islamophobia and the consequences of racism, and the role of education in preventing a return to religious fundamentalism. Anecdotes are nourished by experiences in the field and thoughtful recollection of years gone by. Throughout, Conradi asserts the need to uncover the underlying sentiments that may contribute to a climate of fear and division, and to address them through conversation and action.

As an example, Conradi describes how she and the FFQ, adopting a feminist posture, opposed the militarization of society under the Harper Conservative government. A hard-hitting, but somewhat clumsy, video produced by the FFQ—featuring a mother refusing to send her son to be cannon fodder in Canada's contribution to the war in Afghanistan—caused an immediate backlash, especially by right-wing media who declared it insensitive and opportunistic. While the video was taken down and edited, the attention it garnered allowed Conradi and the FFQ to lead a weeklong dialogue on militarism. This was a platform they had never hoped would open up in Quebec's media scene at the time.



Conradi also reflects on the question of reasonable accommodation, which is still an active discussion today in light of the current CAQ government's proposed law restricting visible religious attire for public sector workers in the name of secularism. Conradi says the result was inevitable: with the rise of Islamophobia in Quebec (but not exclusively there), it was tragic but not surprising that a mosque in Quebec City would be the target of a gunned attack, in 2017, resulting in the death of six people.

While the right uses division and xenophobia, Conradi proposes a political path that rests on love and a good life for all. A political program aimed at bringing people closer together by fostering thoughtful and conversational politics appears to be the only way out of the current politics of fear and division.

This essay is well-suited for an activist audience, and for individuals who may happen to carry the weight of social progress, as slow and heavy as that might be. It is for those who aim to sharpen their understanding of the wide array of topics that matter for the left. Conradi's book is also for those who want to build and strengthen the social movements that have the potential to change the established state of the world. Written in a pensive and decidedly hopeful tone, she assess her own difficult and at times personally costly involvement in past struggles in order to better affect change in the future. M

LYNNE FERNANDEZ AND SHAUNA MACKINNON

The Pallister government shifts into high gear

Explaining the transition from "regressive incrementalism" to more sweeping social, economic and energy policy reforms

Over 15 years in government (1999 to 2016), the Manitoba NDP made incremental changes to social and economic policy that moved the province in a more progressive direction. Many progressives say these changes did not go nearly far enough. In some areas, however, as a result of persistent pressure from civil society, the government engaged in "radical incrementalism," described by American political scientist Sanford Schram as the undertaking of steady, incremental policy changes that lay a foundation for transformative change.

We propose that the current Progressive Conservative government led by Premier Brian Pallister initially engaged in a mirror-image version of this policy we call "regressive incrementalism." The strategy—to gradually unravel promising changes made during the previous government—is similar to that adopted by the conservative Filmon government of the 1990s. But Pallister has since proposed more sweeping reforms with the intention of permanently weakening labour and compromising future governments' ability to use public services and Crown corporations to foster more equitable and sustainable economic development in the province.

"RADICAL INCREMENTALISM" AND PROGRESSIVE CHANGE

Among the progressive policies put in place by the last NDP government to help equity-seeking groups were regular, above-inflation increases to minimum wage, investment in child care, a significant expansion of social housing, and Rent Assist, a program to help low income people access private-sector housing. While these incremental changes did not transform existing power structures, they did moderately shift the balance.

The NDP in government strengthened public institutions such as Manitoba Hydro, which was mandated to act in creative ways to support social enterprises (and the training and employment of multi-barriered workers) while investing in alternative energy generation such as geothermal. In an example of larger-scale commitments, the government invested heavily in new hydro development with the goal of increasing exports and improving energy security. It used Manitoba Hydro as a way to implement project-based labour agreements that benefitted unionized and non-unionized workers. The utility also entered into agreements with First Nations for shared ownership of new hydro developments, and training and employment opportunities for First Nation workers.

THE LOOMING LOSS IN PST REVENUE COUPLED WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S FIXATION ON THE DEFICIT HAS MEANT A STEADY STREAM OF CUTS SINCE 2017.

The NDP government also supported Manitoba's labour community with friendlier legislation. It invested in post-secondary access programs initially introduced (by another NDP government) in the 1980s to help multi-barriered students succeed in their university studies. The government significantly boosted support for inner-city revitalization through a popular Neighbourhoods Alive! initiative. In response to concerns raised by non-profit organizations working on the frontline with Manitoba's most vulnerable, the NDP government signed multi-year funding agreements with more than 100 community-based organizations, making Manitoba the envy of similar groups across Canada.

In 2009, the Manitoba government released an important poverty reduction strategy, which it enshrined in law in 2011. Among its priorities, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Act required the government in each fiscal year to "take the poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy into account when preparing the budget for that fiscal year," and to "prepare a statement that (i) summarizes a strategy and sets out the budget measures that are designed to implement the strategy, and (ii) sets out the poverty reduction and social

inclusion indicators prescribed by regulation that will be used to measure the progress of the strategy."

REGRESSIVE INCREMENTALISM, THEN AND NOW

In 2016, Brian Pallister's Progressive Conservatives unseated the NDP and began reversing the course of provincial policy in a process we call "regressive incrementalism." The same process unfolded in the 1990s when the PC government of Gary Filmon dismantled programs and policies implemented by the NDP government that preceded it.

For example, the Filmon government gutted programs to help students access post-secondary education, starved public housing, implemented workfare policies and withdrew funding from 56 community-based organizations, leaving a gap in service for many vulnerable Manitobans. As result, many low-income individuals and communities went through difficult times in the 1990s. It has taken nearly two decades for new capacity to be built and for communities to begin to rebuild.

The Filmon government made other, irreversible changes such as the privatization of Manitoba Telephone System (MTS), now owned by Bell. In 1996, the government also attempted to privatize homecare services. That experiment failed for a number of reasons and homecare services were brought back into the public sector a year later. The subsequent NDP government was able to reverse course in many areas during its 15 years at the helm, but many of those gains are now being rolled back once again.

The Pallister government's regressive strategy was immediately applied to the civil service and Crown corporations. First the government eliminated the card check system for union certification, forcing workers who want to organize into secret elections. Then the government introduced legislation to freeze public sector wages for two years, mandating a 0.75% wage increase for the third year and a 1% increase in year four. This legislation has been contested by the Manitoba Federation of Labour on the grounds that it violates a union's right to collectively bargain on behalf of its members. The province has also forced health care unions to reduce the number of bargaining units, putting them in a long, disruptive process of jockeying for members.

As for the Crown corporations, in 2017, Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Public Insurance and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation were all ordered to trim personnel and reduce management by 15%. Manitoba Hydro eliminated 900 jobs and cut management staff by 30%. The main reason given for the cuts was that the province had to reduce its deficit, which was not nearly as serious as the government claimed. At the same time, the Pallister government is proceeding with its campaign promise to cut the PST by 1%. This will reduce provincial revenues by $325 million over the next fiscal year.

The looming loss in PST revenue coupled with the government's fixation on the deficit has meant a steady stream of cuts since 2017. The province has held back funds for much needed infrastructure repairs, stopped investing in the expansion of social housing, cut funding to universities and school divisions, is decreasing social assistance benefits, and is scaling back Rent Assist. But the attack on the public sector is still escalating. The province has eliminated inexpensive but very effective programs

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

such as Neighbourhoods Alive!, the previous government's community revitalization initiative, and community-based organizations are worried their multi-year funding agreements with the government are not being renewed.

This April, Crown corporations received a letter from Minister Colleen Mayer reminding them that they "must align with our government's mandate to fix our finances, repair our services and rebuild our economy," and that "the old way of doing things, where government just got bigger and more expensive is over" (sic). The quickest way to shrink government and make it less expensive is to get rid of workers. The ministerial letter to Efficiency Manitoba, the new Crown corporation responsible for energy efficiency and conservation, was clear on this point: programming must improve, "but at a significantly smaller percentage of the costs and materially less labour costs" (sic).

Each Crown corporation is now expected to follow the province's example of shrinking the civil service and reduce their workforce. This will result in a further 15% reduction in management positions and an 8% cut in regular staff. A May 2 *Winnipeg Free Press* story reports that Manitoba Hydro is hesitant to comply. The corporation's Bruce Owens states, "We believe that further staff reductions would significantly increase the risk of public and employee safety, of system reliability, and as well our ability to provide reasonable levels of service to our customers."

FROM INCREMENTALISM TO SWEEPING CHANGE

The mandate letters, combined with previous changes to health care and the soon-to-be launched educational reforms led by a finance minister from the Filmon years, would indicate that the Pallister government is shifting gears, from incremental to sweeping change. Some of these regressive changes will be near impossible to reverse.

Early on in its tenure, the Pallister government made incremental changes to the health care sector, including consolidation, privatization and service cuts. But the pace intensified in April 2017 with the closure of three emergency departments and the announcement that two more would become urgent care units. The reorganization is meant to reduce wait times, but some doctors point out that the real issue is the lack of hospital beds—a problem that would require money, not reorganization, to fix.

Nova Scotia doctor-turned-consultant David Peachy designed the plan for these changes. As reported in the *Winnipeg Sun*, Peachy was summoned back to Winnipeg in May 2019 to explain why two of the three ER closures are now on hold. The massive shift of staff and level of service is being blamed for the increase in wait times at emergency rooms and unprecedented increases in mandatory overtime for nurses. When pressed by the media to explain why his consolidation plan was having the opposite effect it was supposed to, Peachy's response was bizarrely incomprehensible and misleading. He claimed that the nurses were pleased with the changes when in fact they are on the frontline pushing back.

FIRST THE GOVERNMENT ELIMINATED THE CARD CHECK SYSTEM FOR UNION CERTIFICATION, FORCING WORKERS WHO WANT TO ORGANIZE INTO SECRET ELECTIONS. THEN IT INTRODUCED LEGISLATION TO FREEZE PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES FOR TWO YEARS.

A Manitoba Nurses Union press release explained their actual assessment of the meeting they had with Peachy and comments he made at the media conference: "To characterize the response from nurses as anything short of severe disappointment with the consolidation plan is completely misleading. These changes have caused massive problems in our health care system, from overcrowding in ERs, to a loss of experienced nurses in highly specialized units, and severe workload issues."

WE SAW IT COMING

Since Pallister's election, progressives have been worried about the comeback of 1990s-era changes to health care and education. These concerns are now festering in the health care sector and will likely escalate once the promised education reforms get underway. We have also been wondering if and when the privatization of Manitoba's Crown corporations would raise its ugly head.

The mandate letters to all provincial Crowns offer some proof that there is more afoot than incremental change. Of particular concern is the direct order to Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries to look for ways to engage the private sector more in the sale of alcohol. And in November 2018, the government hired B.C.'s ex-premier Gordon Campbell to head an inquiry into the prevous NDP government's capital investments in Manitoba Hydro's generation and transmission capacity. The Pallister government has been highly critical of these projects and it is anticipated the inquiry's final report will further admonish its predecessor, the investments and the utility.

Pallister's strategy is similar in many ways to that of his conservative forebear. Despite promises to never privatize MTS, Filmon's PC government followed what has become a tried and true blueprint for privatizing Crowns in Canada, one that Campbell is very familiar with. It looks like this:

- Tell the public there is a major problem with the Crown corporation.

- Hire private sector consultants to confirm and cement the narrative that the problem is one of too much government interference.
- Separate divisions of the Crown, ostensibly to make it run more efficiently.
- Begin to sell off the divisions to the private sector.

Campbell has since been removed from the inquiry. If whoever takes over is able to exploit the Progressive Conservatives' constant barrage of criticism about Manitoba Hydro, any number of privatization schemes could unfold. The separation of its demand-side management program into the independent Efficiency Manitoba Crown corporation suggests we could be about to enter the final stage of a privatization strategy.

The overhauling of the health care system, cuts to social services, legislative changes affecting workers, anticipated changes for education and increasingly bold moves around Crown corporations show that Pallister's government has shifted from incremental to substantive change. Their sudden cancellation of the Manitoba carbon tax would indicate that they are emboldened by the blue wave saturating provinces from Ontario to Alberta, a wave that also threatens to destroy the moderate progress made in those provinces and push all of Canada into rewind.

THE OVERHAULING OF THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM, CUTS TO SOCIAL SERVICES, LEGISLATIVE CHANGES AFFECTING WORKERS, ANTICIPATED CHANGES FOR EDUCATION AND INCREASINGLY BOLD MOVES AROUND CROWN CORPORATIONS SHOW THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS SHIFTED FROM INCREMENTAL TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE.

MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS

As we analyze the changes taking place in Manitoba, a few lines of questioning arise. First of all, to what degree did the NDP in government make a conscious decision not to take the kinds of bold steps required to ensure transformational progressive change in the province? While it is common for governments to move to the centre when elected, could the NDP have pushed the envelope a bit further while maintaining office? In other words, were they more cautious than necessary?

A thorough treatment of that question cannot be addressed here, but it is fair to say that there was not any sort of consensus across the government. While some cabinet ministers and advisors were more cautious, others were able to gently push certain departments in more progressive directions. But the transformation from incremental to structural change never occurred.

Aligned with this is the observation that conservative governments seem far more willing and able to implement sweeping changes when in office than more left-leaning governments. Why is that? It could be that the conservative base, with its much deeper pockets, is more willing to jump on the political bandwagon and support big ideas when they arrive.

The Progressive Conservative party in Manitoba is itself better resourced and equipped to see unpopular changes through. In power it has proven more willing to take the plunge on risky policies—cutting back on education and health care, for example—than the NDP has been to bring in more aggressive anti-poverty measures or more effective environmental protections. As we in Manitoba know, if you increase the PST by 1% there will be a public outcry. But if you decommission Neighbourhoods Alive!, or cut welfare benefits, you're probably in the clear.

Which raises a final question: Did progressive community organizations and labour unions miss an important opportunity when they had greater stability under an NDP government? Could they have done a better job educating and politicizing their constituents, and to prepare them to push back when the cuts came? We now need to reckon with the fact that we have not managed to politicize those who work on the frontlines.

Effective resistance to an increasingly sharp right turn has been slow to materialize. A new labour-community health coalition is gaining traction, but building momentum takes time. Unions are also focussed on particular issues such as nursing shortages and overtime, and a Manitoba Federation of Labour initiative to take the province to court over its civil service wage-freeze legislation. These campaigns are necessary and welcome, but we'll need to do much more.

The blue wave in Canada is going to make it much harder to make progress on the climate crisis and inequality (in its many forms, and especially between Indigenous and settler communities)—the two most pressing problems our country faces. The Kenny and Ford governments' conservative radicalism is emboldening Manitoba's Pallister government to play a similarly backward spoiler role on both fronts. Will Manitobans find the energy to fight back?

Labour needs to join with a variety of strong advocacy groups like Make Poverty History Manitoba, Manitoba Childcare Coalition, The Right to Housing Coalition and environmental groups if we are to build the sort of broad-based movement needed now that regressive incrementalism is evolving into radical conservative change. It's the only way we can respond to the cumulative damage being done to all Manitobans, especially to the most marginalized. M

STORY BY MICHAELA MAYER / ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALISHA DAVIDSON

Protecting our freedom to disagree

More than a theoretical concept, enabling civil society can be an active strategy to defend democracy and the right to dissent

"There is no time for complacency.... If there is one lesson above all that was the most sobering for me from my experience of over a decade [of the Harper government], it was to see how easy it was for the government... to start stripping away rights left and right, punishing dissent, advocacy and human rights in our Canada."

Alex Neve, secretary general of Amnesty International Canada, looks up from the podium at the University of Ottawa's Alex Trebek Memorial Hall where he is addressing an audience of Canadian human rights defenders. His words have hit their mark. Just a few days earlier, Alberta's United Conservative Party leader Jason Kenney had vowed, in his victory speech following Alberta's recent provincial elections, to start a political war against environmental and other civil society groups.

Kenney pledged to launch investigations and public inquiries on environmental organizations that he accused of "spreading lies" about the impacts of resource development, and of relying on foreign funding. The Harper government used identical tactics to undermine and silence dissenting voices in Canada, as Neve and those gathered for the April launch of the Voices-Voix conference report, *Enabling Civil Society: Democracy and Dissent*, know all too intimately.

The Voices-Voix coalition was formed in 2010 to investigate and disseminate information on the systematic and deliberate way the Harper Conservative government was shutting down dissenting voices in the country. Pearl Eliadis, a Montreal-based human rights lawyer and one of the initiators of Voices-Voix, described the government's tactics in a chapter for the CCPA ebook *The Harper Record 2008-2015*, highlighting the role that defunding civil society organizations played within a series of cascading and interdependent strategies designed to undermine the effectiveness of rights advocates and Indigenous organizations.

Many groups had their charitable status revoked, compromising their fundraising capacity, their reputation, and the privacy of many individuals. Other government measures included "political audits" of charitable organizations, denying access to information, public vilification, harassment and surveillance. The Harper government also shut down public sector voices by interfering directly with independent institutions, firing or sidelining the heads of independent arm's-length bodies, and restricting government scientists from publishing and speaking out. Those measures created an advocacy chill that was felt throughout the social, human rights and environmental sectors.

CANADA HAS POSITIVE OBLIGATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL LAW TO RESPECT, PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE COLLECTIVE DIMENSION OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS THAT WOULD FOSTER AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

In response to the hostile environment experienced by civil society groups during the Harper government years, the research initiative Enabling Civil Society was spearheaded by Voices-Voix in 2013 and pursued by Canadian non-profits, human rights defenders, labour unions and academics. In October 2017, a multidisciplinary and multi-partner conference was held at the McGill Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism in Montreal where participants honed in on the idea of an "enabling environment" as a key catalyst in promoting the vitality of civil society. But to be even more effective, Eliadis said at the time, advocates should turn the static concept into an active verb, "enabling civil society," which offers a more vibrant imperative for action.

The conference also invited participants to reimagine the relationships that civil society organizations have with citizens, government and with each other, and to integrate international human rights, equality rights and fundamental freedoms within the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms into the work they do to promote collective rights to dissent, such as freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. The resulting conference report, launched in Ottawa in April 2019, synthesized the main outcomes of the wide-ranging panel discussions and presentations of activists, organized labour, academics, and UN mandate holders.

RED TAPE FOR RADICALS

The Enabling Civil Society report identifies structural weaknesses in the federal regulatory framework for charities and the not-for-profit sector that were discussed during the October 2017 conference, and that were at the root of the Harper government's ability to "disenable" civil society and restrict the fundamental freedoms of civil society actors. One of the most prominent examples of structural weakness was the use of "political activity audits" by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to restrict or chill the advocacy work of charities.

Registered charities enjoy certain fiscal benefits in Canada, but Section 149.1 (6.2) of the Income Tax Act required that "substantially all" of their resources should go toward charitable activities. "Substantially all" has been interpreted by the CRA in its guidelines to mean 90% of a charity's resources. Consequently, charities could only put 10% of their resources toward poorly defined "political activities"—a restriction that was entirely separate from the legitimate ban on partisan activities (e.g., supporting or opposing a specific political party or candidate).

In 2012, under the Harper government, several political audits were initiated by the CRA against charities that were critically speaking out on federal policies. These audits appeared to target environmental organizations criticizing the oil and gas industry, as well as human rights groups and those opposed to federal social and economic policies. The possibility that organizations might be forced to put extensive personnel and financial resources toward justifying that their activities were non-political, based on an unclear definition of what that meant, created an "advocacy chill" throughout the charitable sector.

(Editor's note: The CRA launched a political audit against the CCPA in 2014, claiming the centre was engaged in potentially "biased" research or "partisan political activities." The CCPA's executive director at the time, Bruce Campbell, told CBC News: "We're in the policy research and public education business. Our work, I think, is a pillar of democracy. It feeds into the political debate. It fosters informed debate.")

While the Trudeau government promised to end the "political harassment" of charities, it was the landmark decision by the Ontario Superior Court of Justice on July 16, 2018, in the case of *Canada Without Poverty vs. Attorney General of Canada*, that eventually forced the government to alter its practice of treating advocacy and communications activities as political and therefore non-charitable. In his decision, Judge Morgan ruled in favour of the anti-poverty group, agreeing with Canada Without Poverty (CWP) that the "10% rule" was a violation of freedom of expression under Section 2 of the Charter.

CWP is a registered charity dedicated to the relief of poverty in Canada by following the UN Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development to promote civic engagement and public dialogue. During its audit process, the CRA interpreted the CWP's public policy activities as 98.5% "political" and questioned the organization's charitable status. At the Enabling Civil Society conference report launch in April, Leilani Farha, executive director of CWP and UN Special

Rapporteur on adequate housing, recalled her realization that the "political activities" rules violated the Charter:

> *I became aware that what was asked from me was to constantly monitor our staff and the members of our organization and to determine if they had made a public statement about current laws or policies…and strictly limit them once we have reached 10%.*

In his decision, Justice Morgan confirmed that it was not possible for the charity to pursue its charitable purpose "while restricting its politically expressive activities." Farha mentioned during the report launch that she sees the ruling as a victory for democracy and freedom of expression in Canada, but specifically for all people living in poverty who are often left out of the public discourse.

Tax issues are not the only areas of concern. National security continues to be used to justify measures that restrict the work of civil society groups. Surveillance measures and security legislation such as the Anti-Terrorism Act (2015), and Bill C-59, currently before Parliament, can target dissenting viewpoints, in particular those expressed by vulnerable or marginalized communities, as threats to the national security. In the Voices-Voix conference report, the U.S.-based International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) highlights an increase in the number of such measures used by the Trump administration to restrict the rights to protest and association.

Leilani Farha, executive director of Canada Without Poverty, at the UN Human Rights Council in February 2018. UN GENEVA, FLICKR CREATIVE COMMONS

None of the measures used by the Harper government to "disenable" charities required the government to introduce new legislation or even make major policy changes. Rather, the government simply exploited existing structural weakness in the regulatory framework to restrict open spaces for civil society and to silence dissenting voices.

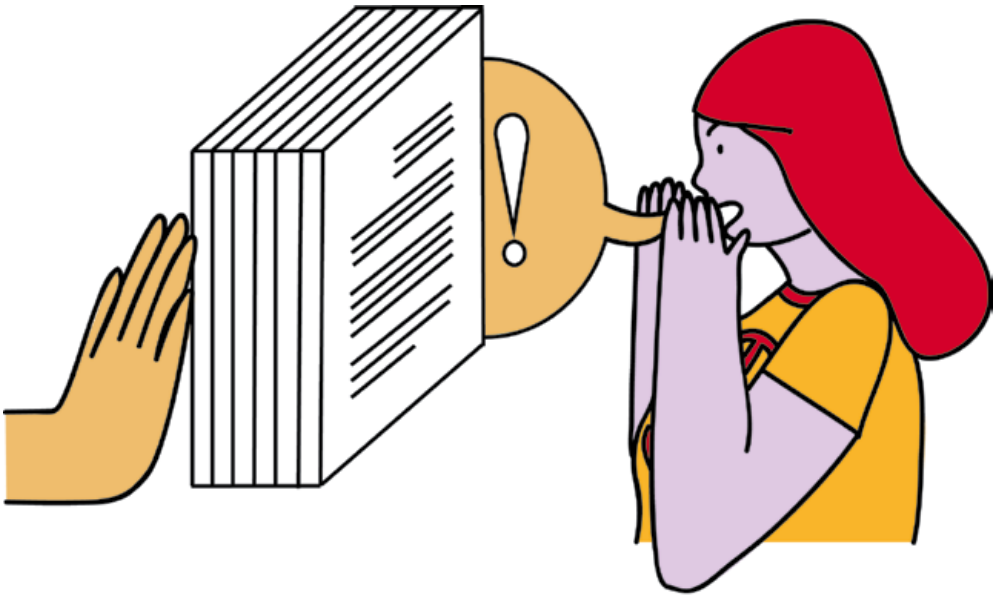
Amendments to Canada's charities laws would improve the independence and impartiality of legal frameworks for charitable organizations by creating independent regulatory bodies whose primary objectives are transparency, accountability and the public good. More broadly, Canada has positive obligations in international law to respect, protect and promote the collective dimension of rights and freedoms that would foster an enabling environment for civil society, and would ensure that human rights defenders and other advocates can carry out the work needed to advance their missions.

MAKING CIVIL SOCIETY MORE INCLUSIVE

The Enabling Civil Society conference report also discusses strategies for how to widen the circle of voices represented within the human rights and other advocate communities. Women's organizations, LGBTQ2I defenders, Indigenous communities and persons with disabilities still face severe obstacles to participating effectively in public dialogue. They are also at higher risk of being silenced when civic spaces are restricted. Establishing "safe spaces" can offer them a possibility to speak and to develop ideas on participatory engagement that can later be shared with the public at large.

The report further highlights concerns about what Eliadis calls "projectizing human rights," or the move by funders and philanthropic organizations away from a holistic approach to human rights as being indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. This can be seen in the shift, over the last two decades, from funding for a charity's overall mission to a project-based funding model. This strategy can further marginalize the very groups charities are trying to help, while keeping the salaries of staff—especially in smaller organizations—near poverty levels.

The emphasis in a project-based funding model is, furthermore, often placed on measurable outcomes and "innovative" projects that, while important, can distract from more pressing initiatives and undercut long-term (sustained) measures and advocacy priorities. The report discusses the women's movement as one example where restrictions in funding effectively reduced the activities of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) to delivering services rather than policy and advocacy work.



RESILIENCE IS PREVAILING

Despite the shrinking civic spaces in Canada and internationally, civil society organizations and human rights defenders around the world remain resilient. John Packer, director of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre at the University of Ottawa, which hosted the Enabling Civil Society report launch in April, highlighted the significant role that civil society is playing in democracies around the world:

> *In an increasingly diverse and interrelated world, it is absolutely imperative to have not only an open society, but an enabling civil society.... This is the robust, dynamic society we aim for, the civil society that many people seek to come to Canada for, to participate and for the opportunity to express themselves, to pursue their interests and aspirations.*

Joanna Kerr, president and CEO of Tides Canada—a popular target of the Harper government and now the Kenney government in Alberta—was also at the report launch this spring. She underscored how important it is for civil society to show collective strength and solidarity in the continuing fight for democracy and dissent in Canada. Kerr mentioned that universities can play a decisive role by hosting events like Enabling Civil Society, where dissenting voices can come together.

Charitable organizations and other civil society advocates often represent the most marginalized and poor among us; they push and test the boundaries of social norms and pressure government for change. Governments can respond by fostering an open dialogue with civil society and by implementing regulatory frameworks that ensure the fundamental freedoms of citizens are upheld.

The reality is that many governments respond, instead, by trying to hinder civil dialogue by restricting civic spaces and silencing dissent. Past experiences during the Harper government in Canada and with emerging populist and nationalist movements around the world suggest an increasing tendency toward this position.

The numerous case studies that Voices-Voix has documented and the outcomes of the Enabling Civil Society initiative reveal that even in a country like Canada, with long-standing democratic traditions, civil society cannot take rights and freedoms for granted. This is, indeed "no time for complacency." M

THE AUTHOR THANKS PEARL ELIADIS, JOYCE GREEN AND ALEX NEVE FOR THEIR COMMENTS AND ASSISTANCE ON EARLIER DRAFTS OF THIS ARTICLE.

ASAD ISMI

Bolsonaro's clearcut populism

Resistance to environmental and social reforms is growing among Indigenous peoples, teachers, students and organized labour

"The barbarism has begun," declared the Pankararú Indigenous nation after Jair Bolsonaro, Brazil's neofascist president, won fraudulent elections in October 2018 amidst accusations of breaking financing rules and shamelessly spreading fake news. The Pankararú inhabit a northeastern part of the Amazon rainforest, which Bolsonaro has pledged to open up to large-scale ranching, farming and mining operations, in violation of Indigenous land rights. According to Global Forest Watch, Brazil was already the global leader in rainforest destruction in 2018.

"The Bolsonaro regime poses the most significant threat to human rights and environmental protections in the Brazilian Amazon in a generation," says Christian Poirier, program director at the U.S.-based Amazon Watch. The Amazon rainforest covers an area larger than the United States and produces 20% of the world's oxygen, which is why it is called "the world's lungs." The Amazon also contains 20% of the world's freshwater, one-third of the Earth's plant and animal species, 400 Indigenous nations, and acts as a crucial carbon sink, thereby reducing global warming.

Marina Silva, a former environment minister in Brazil, warned in early May that Bolsonaro was transforming Brazil into an "exterminator of the future." She and seven other former Brazilian environment ministers from both left-wing and right-wing governments criticized Bolsonaro for "trying to destroy Brazil's environmental protection policies." Jose Sarney Filho, who served as environment minister under the right-wing Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Michel Temer governments, added: "We're watching them deconstruct everything we've put together. We're talking about biodiversity, life, forests...the Amazon has an incredibly important role in global warming. It's the world's air conditioner; it regulates rain for the entire continent."

Bolsonaro's top security advisor, however, told a Bloomberg news reporter in May that it was "nonsense" to think of the rainforest as a world heritage, and that it "should be dealt with by Brazil for the benefit of Brazil." Echoing a position spouted by conservative climate deniers in Canada since the Harper government, General Augusto Heleno Pereira claimed, "There's a totally unnecessary and nefarious foreign influence in the Amazon.... NGOs hide strategic, economic and geopolitical interests."

Alarm at the actions and policies of the Bolsonaro government during its first half-year in office extends to the areas of education, economic reforms, foreign and trade relations, as well as crime and corruption. Partly for this reason, Bolsonaro's approval rating plummeted to 34% in March from 49% in January, when he took office. This is the lowest rating ever recorded for a Brazilian president after 100 days in power.

"Brazil is engulfed in a clear governability crisis...with Bolsonaro incapable of meeting the economic and social challenges of the country," says Brazilian political scientist Helder Ferreira Do Vale of Hankuk University in South Korea. He attributes this crisis partly to Bolsonaro's ideological basis for policy-making rather than "facts and data." The president's foreign policy is a case in point.

Bolsonaro wants to abandon Brazil's longstanding role as a progressive leader of the Global South. Instead, he would have Brazil become Washington's junior partner in a deranged crusade to save "Western civilization" from decline by establishing its superiority over Asia and the Muslim world. Ferreira Do Vale calls these ideas the "obscure thoughts" of Ernesto Araújo, Brazil's current foreign minister, who has written about recovering Brazil's "Western soul" and would base Brazil's foreign policy on "Christian values."

In this worldview, according to Ferreira Do Vale, only the United States really matters to Brazil; relations with other Latin American countries are to be downgraded while China and Russia are now considered adversaries. This will be difficult to pull off in practice.

Seventy per cent of Brazil's trade is with China. The agribusiness lobby, a major supporter of Bolsonaro and a very powerful group within his administration, alone accounts for 40% of Brazil's total exports and 23% of the country's GDP. (For comparison, agrifood accounts for 11% of Canadian GDP and 10% of merchandise trade.) Given that he was elected, in part, to solve Brazil's economic crisis, Bolsonaro cannot afford to harm the crucial Sino-Brazilian economic relationship that is strongly supported by big agriculture.

Ferreira Do Vale also points out that Bolsonaro's other major backer, the Brazilian military, from whose ranks several cabinet ministers were pulled, is skeptical about his rush to become a U.S. puppet. Parts of the military believe that such a "blind alignment might compromise the image of Brazil as being an autonomous strong country, which would have an impact on its leadership in Latin America and beyond," he tells me.

The military is particularly concerned about Bolsonaro's decision to hand over control of Base de Alcântara—the aeronautics and space military site located in Brazil's

northeast region—to the United States. Bolsonaro announced this when he met with President Donald Trump in Washington, D.C. this March. Trump gave Bolsonaro nothing in return.

"Brazil has accepted the Monroe Doctrine [that] gives the U.S. the right to intervene in the affairs of Latin American countries, which it has done 59 times since 1890," says Conn Hallinan, an analyst with Foreign Policy in Focus. "This will mean increased efforts to overthrow the governments of Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua. In the long run it will mean that Washington dominates the region once again. This is good for U.S. capital, not so good for the people of the Western Hemisphere."

As with foreign and trade policy, economic reform, which is considered crucial to getting Brazil out of its prolonged recession, also appears to be out of Bolsonaro's grasp. The president's backers in the Brazilian financial sector and abroad, as well as international and domestic investors, want significant reforms to the country's pension system passed by the Brazilian Congress. These powerful business interests see pension reform as the litmus test to determine whether the country is worth investing in.

Last year, 44% of Brazil's budget (8.5% of GDP) went to social security and pensions, which is high compared to most OECD countries. (In Canada in 2017, 15% of the federal budget went to old-age benefits, while pensions are independently financed.) Bolsonaro has pledged to save 1 trillion reals ($330 billion) by raising the pension age and requiring workers to pay into the program for longer. But his party does not have a majority in Congress where a three-fifths favourable vote is needed to pass the reforms. As *Reuters* reported in late May, Brazilian markets "have wobbled" due to this political infighting.

Ferreira Do Vale warns that "Bolsonaro's lack of political capacity to co-ordinate the approval of his economic reforms before Congress is compromising both short and long-term prospects of economic growth." The professor attributes this incapacity to Bolsonaro's falling popularity, "which reduces his leverage power in the negotiations behind reform," along with "political divisions within his party and cabinet ministers, and the bickering between Bolsonaro and political allies in the national congress such as Rodrigo Maia, the speaker of the House of Representatives."

Bolsonaro's pension reform is opposed by major Brazilian labour unions. Lenin Cavalcanti Brito Guerra, a professor of management at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte in Natal, Brazil, tells me the reform "can also worsen the [economic] crisis, since the poorest people will be more affected by it. The decrease in purchasing power for the poorest could increase impoverishment."

Marcos Napolitano, a professor of history at the University of São Paulo, says the Bolsonaro government "has proved more disoriented, in political terms, than expected, investing more in the cultural war against the left-wing and progressive values than in an institutional agenda, even a conservative one, for governance."

Striking a similar tone, Rosemary Segurado, a sociology professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, tells me that Bolsonaro's government, "so far is worse than I imagined back in the elections. He doesn't have a president's attitude. He's still in the mood of the election campaign. He does not have a plan to stop the economic crisis in the country." She points out there are more than 13 million people unemployed in Brazil and that many workers are stuck in precarious jobs.

"Poverty is rising day by day, economic instability is growing and investors don´t feel safe in bringing their business to our country," she says. "The image of Brazil in the world has never been so damaged, because of the controversies that the president and his ministers generate on many subjects, like his opinion about global warming, which is exactly the same as Donald Trump's."

While Bolsonaro appears ineffectual in carrying out his far-right agenda, public opposition to his presidency and his government is mounting significantly. On May 15, more than a million Brazilians demonstrated against Bolsonaro's intention to cut the country's education budget by 30% and his pension reforms. According to *The Guardian* (U.K.), the announcement sent "shockwaves" through federally funded universities. Teachers, students and workers marched in 180 cities in all Brazilian states.

Barbara Ottero, a 29-year-old master's student, told the *Guardian*, "They will make education totally inaccessible. It's practically privatizing." Segurado agrees that privatization is likely Bolsonaro's ultimate goal. Teachers unions held another mass demonstration on May 30, while a general strike co-ordinated by organized labour unions was scheduled for June 14.

Meanwhile, the Guajajara Indigenous nation in the Amazon rainforest has taken matters into its own hands to stop illegal logging, fishing and hunting. A group of 120 Guajajara natives calling themselves "Guardians of the Forest" have set fires to illegal logging camps. Since late 2012, when the group was created, the Guardians have destroyed 200 camps.

Olimpio Santos Guajajara, the leader of the Guardians, told *Reuters* in May, "I ask the world to look at our struggle and recognize our activities as legal…because we are fighting for our lives and also for the lungs of the world." Laercio Souza Silva Guajajara, another guardian, added: "It's our fight for the children, for the old, for the whole world…. We'll fight until the end, until the last breath." M

CAROLINE ORR FOR *NATIONAL OBSERVER*

Far-right extremists rebrand to evade social media bans

Through mirror sites and cross-posting, white supremacists and other extremists are finding ways back into social media feeds, and continue to spread hate and disinformation ahead of Canada's federal election.

In May, a week after Facebook banned a group of prominent far-right influencers for violating its policies against "dangerous individuals and organizations," the company removed another page that was being used to circumvent the ban. Facebook took down the page after being asked about it by *National Observer*.

The now-removed Facebook page is associated with a website called Summit News, which is run by Paul Joseph Watson, editor of the controversial website Infowars. Summit News hosts all of Watson's content, much of which is cross-posted verbatim on Infowars.

Both Watson and Infowars were banned from Facebook on May 3, but Watson was circumventing the ban by repackaging his content under a different brand name and posting it on the platform. A week after his initial ban from Facebook, his content was still available on the platform, through Summit News' Facebook page.

In January 2017, Watson (left) interviewed Jason Kessler, organizer of the white supremacist rally held in Charlottesville, Virginia that August.
SCREEN CAPTURE

Why should Canadians care about this U.K.-based media personality?

- Watson is part of a global far-right media network with an epicenter right here in Canada.
- That same network is a hub for disinformation, and with elections approaching, Canada is likely to be its next target.

- He's just one example of a broader problem: as social media cracks down on extremism and disinformation, the far-right media ecosystem keeps coming up with new ways to circumvent the policies.

Why should Americans care about Watson?

- He's the editor of the U.S.-based website Infowars, one of the most influential platforms in the alternative media ecosystem and a major hub for conspiracy theories, disinformation and Islamophobic content.

- He is no longer confined to the fringes of the internet. U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly shared Watson's content on Twitter and even mentioned him by name in a recent tweet.

- He has provided a huge platform for some of the most notorious extremist voices in the U.S. including white nationalist Jason Kessler, who organized the deadly "Unite The Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017.

The removal of Watson's Summit News page comes on the heels of Facebook's decision to remove a network of far-right influencers from the platform, as part of a broader effort by social media companies, including Twitter and Facebook-owned Instagram, to crack down on extremist content, disinformation and the promotion of hate. In addition to Watson and Infowars, accounts belonging to Infowars founder Alex Jones, ex-Breitbart writer Milo Yiannopoulos and ex–Rebel Media employee Laura Loomer were among those shut down by both Facebook and Instagram.

The move represents a step in the right direction, but it also showcases the challenges that tech companies face in their struggle to purge extremist content from their platforms. Purveyors of hate speech and disinformation have proven to be masters of manipulation, and tech companies have proven unable to keep up. Time and time again, as platforms like Facebook and Twitter have unveiled new content moderation policies, bad actors have responded by coming up with new tactics to game the system and ensure that their content remains online.

Perhaps no one better exemplifies this problem than Watson, who got his start as Jones's underling at the right-wing conspiracy theory hub, Infowars, more than 15 years ago. Through a series of strategic media partnerships and collaborations, Watson ultimately amassed a following that surpassed his mentor and earned him a spot squarely in the centre of the global far-right movement.

Although Watson is based in the U.K., he is embedded in a network whose long tentacles reach all the way across the Atlantic and into every corner of Canadian life, from the media to politics and beyond. He is a familiar face on The Rebel, which regularly features his inflammatory commentary on Islam, immigrants and other hot-button issues in far-right circles. On social media, Watson can often be found criticizing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and other members of the Liberal Party, spreading disinformation about issues like terrorism and immigration, and manufacturing outrage among the public.

While he often presents his incendiary commentary as sarcasm, the consequences of his brand of Islamophobia are serious. In the span of just one year, Watson's anti-Muslim content was presented as evidence in at least two murder trials involving terror attacks targeting Muslims, including the January 2017 Quebec City mosque attack.

WHO IS PAUL JOSEPH WATSON?

With nearly a million Twitter followers, 1.6 million YouTube subscribers and more than 380 million views per month on his YouTube page, Watson has established himself as one of the most prominent voices of the so-called New Right.

Though he started as a fringe figure, his content is now regularly promoted by mainstream right-wing pundits and politicians all the way up to U.S. President Donald Trump, who has retweeted him on numerous occasions. The day after Watson's Facebook ban was announced, Trump even named him in a tweet decrying his removal from the platform. The president's son, Donald Trump Jr., has also retweeted Watson dozens of times.

Watson's earlier commentary at Infowars focused primarily on outlandish conspiracy theories about chemtrails, the Illuminati and the New World Order. This is par for the course for the website, which is best known for spreading conspiracy theories about the school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, as well as promoting other bizarre conspiracy theories like "Pizzagate" (look it up — ed.).

In recent years, Watson's content has become much darker as he has embedded himself within a network of individuals and entities that spans multiple continents and connects the mainstream conservative movement to violent white supremacists and bona fide hate groups. He also regularly dives into international politics, displaying a particular distaste for liberal democracy.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Canada is one of his favorite targets. Watson often takes to social media to attack Trudeau, referring to him as a "total imbecile" and a "complete idiot," using gendered slurs to mock his masculinity, condemning his stance on immigration and denouncing him as weak in the aftermath of terror attacks.

Watson is perhaps best known for his anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rhetoric, as well as his exploitation of tragedies to propagate outrage, fear and Islamophobia. For example, after the recent fire at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France, Watson quickly took to social media to suggest that the inferno was deliberate and that people with Arabic-sounding names were celebrating the fire. He has described Muslim culture as "horrific" and said it promotes rape and the destruction of Western civilization.

In his articles and videos, Watson has blamed refugees from Syria and Afghanistan for bringing a "parasitic disease" to Europe, downplayed the threat of white supremacist terrorism while fearmongering about "Muslim extremists" and "Islamists," and propagated myths about refugees raping European women.

In one video, titled "The Left & Islam: Unholy Alliance," Watson argued that liberals and Muslims share a common

goal of "destroying Western civilization"—a statement that aligns with the "white genocide" conspiracy theory cited by the New Zealand mosque shooter. Watson's other YouTube videos feature headlines such as, "Why Are Feminists Fat & Ugly?", "Islam is NOT a Religion of Peace," "The Islamic State of Sweden," and "We Need Islam Control, Not Gun Control."

In at least two instances, Watson's social media content has been presented as evidence in murder trials involving the targeted killing of Muslims. His Twitter account was among a handful of far-right accounts frequented by Alexandre Bissonnette, the man who killed six Muslims at a Quebec City mosque in January 2017. During his sentencing hearing, the prosecution presented evidence showing that Bissonnette visited Watson's Twitter account 21 times in the month before he shot up the mosque.

In the trial for Darren Osborne, the man who killed one person after plowing a van into a group of Muslim worshippers outside a London mosque in June 2017, prosecutors told the jury that the assailant had read an Infowars article written by Watson in the weeks leading up to the attack. In the article, titled "Proof: Muslims celebrated terror attack in London," Watson wrote that "Muslims living in both the Middle East and the west show alarmingly high levels of support for violent jihad" and routinely "celebrate Islamic terror attacks."

According to the U.K.-based group Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks, which tracks Islamophobic rhetoric and anti-Muslim hate crimes, Watson has established himself as one of the most influential sources of anti-Muslim content on social media. "Paul Joseph Watson has become 'the' nexus for anti-Muslim accounts that we have mapped. He has become an influencer in promoting information—much of it bizarre and untrue—which has been regurgitated by anti-Muslim and anti-migrant accounts time and time again," the group's director, Iman A'tta, told *Newsweek*.

Despite his prominent role as a hub for conspiratorial and inflammatory content targeting Muslims, refugees and other groups, Watson managed to emerge unscathed after previous social media crackdowns, including those targeting his employer, Infowars. In August 2018, Infowars and Alex Jones were hit by partial bans enacted by Apple, Facebook, Spotify and YouTube, followed a month later by Twitter. The next month, Twitter removed more accounts believed to be used by Infowars and/or Jones to circumvent the recent ban.

Watson's accounts remained active throughout it all. Even today, Twitter and YouTube still provide a platform for his content. In fact, he's using those platforms to raise support after his recent ban from Facebook and Instagram. We reached out to Watson for comment on this story, but he did not respond to our emails. He did, however, post our communication with him on Telegram Messenger, along with a note telling us to "f-ck off."

THE FAR-RIGHT MEDIA ECOSYSTEM

One of the ways Watson has achieved such a massive reach is by establishing collaborations with ideologically aligned media figures and activists to expand his audience, which in turn boosts his rankings on websites like Google and YouTube. These collaborations are part of what has been termed the "alternative influence network," a tightly connected, symbiotic media system made up of individual influencers linked together by interlocking content, guest appearances and cross-brand partnerships.

Within this network are media figures, internet celebrities, bloggers, pseudoscholars and activists who promote a range of right-wing political positions ranging from mainstream conservative ideas to explicit white nationalism. While the more mainstream members of the network may not personally espouse white nationalist beliefs, they frequently host those who do. This is one of the primary mechanisms through which extremism creeps into the mainstream and reaches entirely new audiences, creating the potential for radicalization.

Over the past several years, Watson has collaborated with many of today's most notorious far-right activists and media figures, including overt white nationalists. In January 2017, Watson interviewed Jason Kessler, the organizer of the August 2017 white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia that resulted in the murder of anti-racist protester Heather Heyer. The interview focused on what Watson and Kessler described as "anti-white racism."

That topic came up again when then–Rebel Media employee Lauren Southern appeared on an Infowars program with Watson to discuss the supposed persecution of whites and promote her book, *How Baby Boomers, Immigrants, and Islams Screwed My Generation*.

Watson has also collaborated with far-right activist and former Rebel Media employee Tommy Robinson to produce videos such as "The Truth About the Koran," which portrayed Muslims as a threat to Christians and, more broadly, to European culture. Robinson, who is classified as an "Islamophobic extremist" by the U.K.-based anti-extremism group Hope Not Hate, was banned from Facebook in February for repeatedly violating the platform's policies on hate speech.

Watson has an extensive, mutually beneficial relationship with Rebel Media. Watson regularly welcomes Rebel employees onto his YouTube shows, and The Rebel frequently posts his YouTube videos on its website, featuring videos on topics such as "The Collapse of Western Civilization" and

HOW TO REPORT A FACEBOOK PAGE

1. Go to the Page you want to report.
2. Click below the Page's cover photo.
3. Select "Give feedback or report this Page."
4. To give feedback, choose the option that best describes how the Page violates Facebook's policies.
5. Submit your report.

"The Truth About the Sri Lanka Attacks." In April, The Rebel featured Watson's commentary on the fire at Notre Dame Cathedral, which he suggested may have been an act of arson.

Watson has also appeared on The Rebel's own YouTube channel alongside the site's founder, Ezra Levant, as well as Rebel contributor Gavin McInnes and former Rebel contributor Faith Goldy. Facebook designated McInnes as a hate figure and removed his account in October. Last month, Facebook banned Goldy for violating its policies on dangerous individuals and organizations.

In addition to his partnerships with other far-right media personalities and platforms, Watson has also made an effort to boost his influence online by establishing a new website, Summit News, where he cross-posts his Infowars content. Watson announced his plans for the new site during an appearance on the Infowars program "The Alex Jones Show" in early March, saying that he would assume the role of "head honcho," but that the project would still involve "working together" with Infowars. "We're still going to be affiliated," he said.

But Summit News is more than just an "affiliate" of Infowars. The site hosts all of Watson's content, the vast majority of which is cross-posted (verbatim) on Infowars.

Take, for instance, an article titled "The Truth About the New Zealand Mosque Attack," penned by Watson just days after a gunman killed 50 worshippers at a pair of mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, in March. In the article, Watson accused the media of "selective outrage" for failing to cover what he described as a mass slaughter of Christians in Nigeria—a claim that was debunked by the fact-checking website Snopes. Nevertheless, Watson published the content on both Summit News and Infowars, using the exact same headline, graphics and text.

Nearly all of the content on Summit News is cross-posted on Infowars, including articles blaming refugees for bringing diseases to Europe (Summit News; Infowars), mocking concerns about Muslims being targeted by violence after the church attacks in Sri Lanka (Summit News; Infowars), and suggesting that refugees in Europe are rape apologists (Summit News; Infowars).

Watson said the goal of the new project is to "generate the next generation of YouTubers, of young political commentators," indicating that he hopes to use the website to reach a new, young audience. He also appears to be using the new brand name to evade the social media bans imposed on Infowars and, now, on his own content.

SOCIAL MEDIA'S HALL OF MIRRORS

Like nearly all mainstream and fringe websites, Summit News used Facebook to reach a wider audience by posting links to content from the site and to Watson's YouTube videos. The existence of Summit News' Facebook page highlights the challenge of actually enforcing effective content moderation policies. Even though Facebook banned Watson and Infowars, the Facebook page for Watson's Summit News was still active for a week after the ban, featuring links to articles that are cross-posted on Infowars.

The page also included direct links to Infowars content, including an April 17 post suggesting that the Notre Dame fire may have been arson, and an April 22 post claiming that Christian churches have become the "#1 target of leftists, Muslims, and occultists." All of this content would be banned if it was posted by Infowars or by Watson himself, but it slipped under the radar because it was posted under a different brand name.

Facebook removed Summit News' page after we contacted the company to inquire about it and clarify the scope of the recent ban on Watson and Infowars. A company spokesperson reiterated that the platform had banned Watson for violating Facebook's policies against "dangerous individuals and organizations," and said this page was being removed because it was set up to represent Watson.

The spokesperson also said Facebook would continue to remove pages, groups and accounts set up to represent Watson or any of the other banned individuals. Additionally, the company said it will remove any Facebook events if it knows a banned individual is participating in it. For purposes of transparency, I've include my correspondence with Facebook inquiring about the page, and the company's response, in the attached sidebar.

Meanwhile, Watson's collaborations with sites like The Rebel ensure that his content is still available on Facebook, despite being banned from the platform himself. The Rebel's Facebook page frequently posts links to Watson's content, including recent posts featuring Watson's commentary on the New Zealand mosque attacks, the Notre Dame fire, and "the truth about the 'ISIS bride.'"

Again, this content would be banned if it was posted by Watson. But because The Rebel's page was not set up to represent Watson, it is not violating Facebook's policies by posting his content.

The fundamental challenge here is that influencers like Watson are not created in a vacuum. They're the product of an interconnected network that functions like a hall of mirrors, with each influencer assuming the role of a node "around which other networks of opinions and influencers cluster." Within this network are multiple platforms where content is cross-posted, narratives are crafted and brands are cultivated. Removing one, or even a handful, of these individuals from a platform (or two) is not the same thing as dismantling the network that keeps them afloat.

Notably, Facebook acknowledged this network dynamic in a statement explaining why it took action against certain accounts, citing their collaborations with other banned accounts:

> *First in December and again in February, Jones appeared in videos with Proud Boys founder Gavin McInnes. Facebook has designated McInnes as a hate figure.*
>
> *Yiannopoulos publicly praised McInnes and British far-right activist Tommy Robinson, who Facebook has designated as a hate figure.*
>
> *Loomer appeared with McInnes in December, and more recently declared her support for far-right activist Faith Goldy, who was banned after posting racist videos to her account.*

Author's correspondence with Facebook

My letter to Facebook:

Hi, I am just following up on an email I sent yesterday inquiring about a Facebook page associated with Infowars and its contributor Paul Joseph Watson. I am writing an article for Canada's *National Observer* about Facebook's recent decision to remove pages associated with Infowars, Alex Jones, and Paul Joseph Watson from Facebook and Instagram, and I am hoping to clarify the scope of the action taken.

One media report (link to *The Atlantic*) cited a Facebook spokesperson and reported: "Infowars is subject to the strictest ban. Facebook and Instagram will remove any content containing Infowars videos, radio segments, or articles (unless the post is explicitly condemning the content), and Facebook will also remove any groups set up to share Infowars content and events promoting any of the banned extremist figures, according to a company spokesperson."

My specific inquiry pertains to the Facebook page for "Summit News," which is run by Paul Joseph Watson. The articles and videos on Summit News are cross-posted content from Infowars (authored by Watson). The only difference between the content on Summit News and the content on Infowars is the brand name. Currently, the Facebook page for Summit News (link) is still active.

Could you please clarify the following areas:

1. Is Facebook aware of the existence of this page and its association with both Paul Joseph Watson and Infowars?

2. Given that Summit News is run by Paul Joseph Watson and the content is simply a cross-post from Infowars, does this page violate any of Facebook's policies? If so, does Facebook plan to remove the page?

3. If Facebook does not plan to remove the page, what is the rationale for that decision? Does Facebook have any policies in place to deal with pages that are set up to share content from banned individuals and/or organizations that has simply been rebranded under a different name?

Thank you very much for your time.

Facebook's response:

On background:

• We recently removed Paul Jospeh Watson from Facebook and Instagram under our policies against dangerous individuals & organizations.

• Watson will not be allowed on Facebook or Instagram and we'll remove Pages, Groups and accounts set up to represent them and Facebook events when we know the individual is participating.

• In this case we're removing this Page.

• This work is on-going and we will continue to review individuals, Pages, groups and content against our Community Standards.

This suggests that Facebook is at least aware of the broader ecosystem in which these individuals operate and took that into consideration when it banned some of the most active collaborators.

Yet by leaving pages like Summit News untouched for a week—until it was brought to the company's attention—Facebook is sending a message that it will allow banned content on its platform as long as the brand is disguised just well enough to avoid coming under scrutiny and creating more controversy for the already embattled tech giant. If recent history is any indication, that message will be heard loud and clear by bad actors, who will take it as permission to keep exploiting the loopholes that exist within Facebook's policies.

Facebook's current approach is little more than a band aid—a temporary fix to stop the bleeding without treating the underlying cause. Stemming the flow of disinformation and extremism online will require an approach that targets the network in which these influencers thrive. It won't be a one-step solution. Social media companies must start implementing proactive policies that get ahead of the problem, rather than waiting to take action until it becomes too big to ignore.

Perhaps most importantly, tech companies must finally step up and take responsibility for their role in facilitating extremism and, more broadly, in providing a platform for far-right actors to hijack democracy by spreading disinformation, manufacturing outrage and fear about immigrants and minority groups, and undermining trust in the independent press. Social media didn't create the deep social divisions that exist around issues like race, immigration, and religion. But it does provide a channel for far-right authoritarians to exacerbate those divisions, even within the confines of a democracy.

Political scientist Ronald Deibert, the director of the University of Toronto's Citizen Lab, argues that "social media [platforms] not only are compatible with authoritarianism; they may be one of the main reasons why authoritarian practices are now spreading worldwide." The stakes could not be higher, particularly with Canada's federal elections only months away. It's not an overstatement to say that the future of liberal democracy rests in part upon the shoulders of social media companies. Let's hope they're up for the job. M

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GORDON A. BAILEY

Civil disobedience in the time of Trans Mountain

Who would have thought that the twentieth century would be immediately followed by the eleventh century? — *Amos Oz,* How to Cure a Fanatic

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN a judge starts compounding a mistake? When an error in judgment becomes a snowball descending Burnaby Mountain, hurtling toward Burrard Inlet and the waters of the Salish Sea?

For the past year the people of this country, particularly Indigenous peoples, mostly from British Columbia, have had a one-man wrecking crew deciding their fate. Judge Kenneth Affleck of the Supreme Court of British Columbia has "heard," prodded, evaluated and sentenced nearly 230 people for blocking work on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, formerly owned by Texas firm Kinder Morgan and now the property of the federal government.

Judge Affleck has tried all those arrested by the Burnaby RCMP, folks who "violated" his injunction. He has tried those who have tried to "recuse" him from the chair (for bias), writing in his own defence that he not be recused. He's worked in the past for Big Tobacco when it was fighting the B.C. Ministry of Health's attempt to recoup smoking-related health costs. He has rescinded an environmental penalty, a slim $125,000 fine, handed to a Canadian mining company. His work needs some commentary and some interrogation.

After completing over 240 hours of community service, a six-month sentence till the end of November, I told my probation officer that the judge owed me an hour and a half. Later in the day I asserted that he owed me a dozen roses. Later that evening I realized he owes the people of this province and country a huge apology. He needs to do time—similar to those he has sentenced. The judge's work has been an "act of terrorism," in a democratic society.

To bow before the "rule of law" as though it were a stone wall of strength, endurance and justice, without keeping alert to what decisions are made within the context of government, industry, the media and the courts, is to fall victim, to fall down the rabbit hole as Alice did some time ago. Why did protesting and resisting move from "civil" to "criminal" disobedience? Judge Affleck moved it from "civil contempt" to "criminal contempt" at the request of Kinder Morgan.

In a time when the term "fake" has out-run "phoney," when science and the community of scientists are described—by elected people—as terrorists, as self-interested snake-oil salesmen, we must cherish the dignity of those with the courage to forage for the truth, and to stand with it. The clock ticks on. The heat of global warming is holding us to the fire. On the other side of the truth, sits Judge Affleck.

So, what has the judge gotten wrong? Take a quick glance at the more than 200 people who have been sentenced, those most recently to 14-day jail terms. Take a long, extended look at this group of citizens. These are not "foreign-funded protestors." This resistance is really led by the Indigenous peoples of Canada. Why not listen to their perspective? The government has missed the importance of the scientifically backed imperative: *leave it in the ground!*

"It's simple math: we can burn less than *565 more gigatons of carbon dioxide* and stay below *2˚C of warming*—anything more than that risks catastrophe for life on earth," writes Bill McKibben's group 350.org (emphasis in the original). "The only problem? Burning the fossil fuel that corporations now have in their reserves would result in emitting *2,795 gigatons of carbon dioxide*—five times the safe amount.

"*Fossil fuel companies are planning to burn it all—unless we rise up to stop them.*"

The citizens have out-researched the corporations, the governments, the media, the courts, and have joined hands with the Indigenous peoples of this country. Interesting how little notice has been taken of this fact! H.L. Mencken certainly understood the playfully serious nature of protesting and resistance when he said:

> *The notion that a radical is one who hates his country is naïve and usually idiotic. He is, more likely, one who likes his country more than the rest of us, and is thus more disturbed than the rest of us when he sees it debauched. He is not a bad citizen turning to crime: he is a good citizen driven to despair.*

We are now faced with a number of decisions, decisions that make a huge difference to the future of our children, grandchildren, and to the Orca whale population of the Salish Sea. It's a time to reflect and gain courage. And a time to *act*! The evidence, even in the "evidence-based" cultural swirl that surrounds our daily lives, is quite overwhelming. Ignoramuses abound! Leave them behind and stand for intelligent commitment to the planet and the future. M

GORDON A. BAILEY IS A RETIRED SOCIOLOGIST FROM CAPILANO UNIVERSITY IN NORTH VANCOUVER WHO NOW RESIDES IN VICTORIA. HE HAS WRITTEN BOOKS AND ARTICLES ON SOCIAL THEORY, IDEOLOGY, EDUCATION, AND SINCE RETIRING, A TRILOGY OF ECO-DETECTIVE FICTION DEALING WITH PIPELINES AND OUR PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT'S REPRESSION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SCIENCE. HE WAS ARRESTED ON MAY 25, 2018 IN BURNABY AT THE BAYVIEW DRIVE KINDER MORGAN SITE. HE WAS GIVEN A SENTENCE OF 240 HOURS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE WHILE ON SIX MONTHS' PROBATION.

ALYSSA O'DELL

Facts versus fear

How to talk to your conservative friends about (almost) anything

In the Alberta heartland, conversations around my extended family's dinner table have taken a marked (right) turn. As a self-identified progressive, talking about my deep-seated concerns of impending climate catastrophe has felt nearly impossible, juxtaposed as it would be with their very real economic anxiety and uncertainty about the future. Is it possible to have productive conversations about things like immigration or climate change with people who hold opposing worldviews? Should we try? And if we do, what is the best way to approach it?

"The time for hard conversations has arrived, and the way to do it is definitely by including people and being respectful—but we can't pretend we're not going to have them," says Louise Comeau, director of the Environment and Sustainable Development Research Centre at the University of New Brunswick. Comeau studies environmental education and communication strategies, among other things, and notes that on the issue of climate change, the majority of Canadians are concerned, but many fewer actually talk about it.

"The best thing that we can do to move the needle on this is to continue to talk about it, is to continue to have these conversations," agrees David Coletto, CEO of polling and research firm Abacus Data and an adjunct professor with Carleton University. "I think it's understanding your audience, whether it's at a micro level at a dinner table...or at a macro level when you're communicating to the mass public.

"As trust levels in big institutions continue to decline, it does require an emotional connection in some way, to whatever source of information..., in order for [someone] to be compelled by it," Coletto adds. Comeau says that's where trust and shared values in personal relationships can have a major impact. But it's not easy and the terrain can be perilous. The most difficult, and emotional, conversations are often with family.

"We're living in times in which how we decide things, how we assess the state of the economy or how good a public policy proposal is or not, is increasingly tied to a worldview," says Coletto. But rather than falling along traditional partisan lines, he defines this divide as centred around whether a person feels the world and future are a scary place that they need protection from (fixed worldview), or whether they are optimistic about the future and willing to explore new solutions (fluid worldview).

"In the data I see, it does affect how someone interprets [a] problem and therefore the solution, and so they're operating almost on different planes," Coletto adds. "Perception is everything. If I believe the world is a certain way, if I believe it's caused by certain phenomena, if I believe you don't care about me—whether or not you do is not important—you're never going to get me to listen to you."

But views that appear to be hardened may be easier to change than we think. A March 2018 study in the *European Journal of Social Psychology*, by researchers from Yale University, found evidence that nurturing feelings of physical safety increased conservatives' progressive attitudes on a range of social (but not economic) subjects.

In the U.S.-based study, conservative participants who were asked to imagine having a superpower that made them invulnerable to physical harm presented as more socially liberal and less resistant to social change than conservative participants who had simply been asked to imagine they had the power to fly. This reinforces the idea that socially conservative attitudes are driven in part by needs for safety and security. In another study by members of the same research team, participants who used hand sanitizer after being warned about a dangerous flu virus reported feeling socially safer about the subject of immigration compared to those without sanitizer.

VIEWS THAT APPEAR TO BE HARDENED MAY BE EASIER TO CHANGE THAN WE THINK.

I would never recommend surreptitiously applying Purell to your conservative friends or family, but these studies do illustrate why

understanding where someone comes from is helpful in being able to respond in a way that is mindful of those feelings or fears. So, how do we begin?

"It's important to start the conversation with questions and not telling," says Comeau. "What do people care about? What are they interested in doing? You kind of crab walk your way into the conversation from the place that matters to them.... You do it through more a process of being curious, and it takes practice."

In a conversation around climate change, for example, you might start with how it will make our lives less secure. "Really speak to the insecurities that they have as a reason to care about this issue," suggests Coletto. Empathy, and getting people to recognize that you understand their experience, is crucial, he says. As hard as it can be to appreciate the perspectives of someone that may have very different opinions, understanding their starting point is essential to the work of building consensus.

Research from the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences in Germany has discovered that our feelings can indeed distort our capacity for empathy, particularly if those feelings are completely different from those of the person we're talking to. Fundamentally, using our own feelings as a reference for empathy only works if we are in a neutral state or the same state as our counterpart, otherwise the brain must counteract and correct. Practising putting yourself in someone else's shoes is crucial.

When speaking or debating with someone that holds different views, "the thrill of the chase and the conviction that your opponent has to be harbouring confusion somewhere... gives you an easy target to attack," writes philosopher Daniel Dennett in *Intuition Pumps and Other Tools for Thinking*. But such easy targets typically waste time and test patience.

Instead, when speaking to someone who holds different views, Dennett suggests we follow a set of conversational rules developed by prominent social psychologist and game theorist Anatol Rapoport:

1. Attempt to re-express the person's position so clearly, vividly and faithfully that they say, "Thanks, I wish I'd thought of putting it that way."

2. List any points of agreement.

3. Mention anything you have learned from them.

4. Only now should you say so much as a word of rebuttal.

"One immediate effect of following these rules is that your targets will be a receptive audience," explains Dennett. "[Y]ou have already shown that you understand their positions as well as they do, and have demonstrated good judgement (you agree with them on some important matters and have been persuaded by something they said).

As promising as this or any other technique for bridging differences can seem, there are also reasons to be cautious, given how difficult and fractious today's political and environmental discussions can be. "We're not going to solve this problem without conflict," says Comeau. "The differences are too great, and the challenges we face are too important."

Back at my family's dinner table, I am grateful for the opportunity to ask questions and build understanding. I'm with people I trust and who share many core values. With practice, I am starting to see today's policy landscape from their viewpoint. It doesn't mean I've given up advocating for progressive solutions to society's most pressing problems, the necessary transition away from fossil fuels especially. But these conversations have changed the words and strategies I will use to get those points across.

Change is scary, and it's necessary. But that doesn't mean we can't be kind about it. M

The good news page

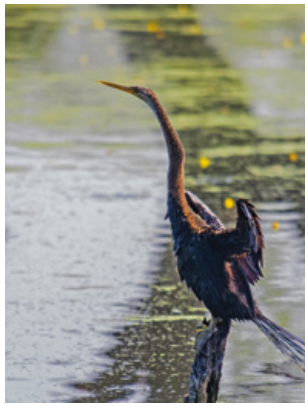
Compiled by Elaine Hughes

Power up

A nine-member, all-girls robotics team from Ghana won top prize in the senior division at this year's Robofest World Championships, held May 16-18 at Lawrence Technological University in Southfield, Michigan. Team Acrobot, part of the Ghana Robotics Academy Foundation established by NASA engineer Ashitey Trebi-Ollennu, beat teams from the U.S., Mexico, Egypt and South Korea. / Construction has begun on the world's largest archipelago of sun-seeking solar farms. The first stage, to be completed by November, will see 15 "solar islands" containing 73,500 panels installed on the Andijk reservoir in northern Holland. A second project over water in Hoofddorp, near Amsterdam, will create enough clean energy to power 10,000 homes. / Sikpe-Afidegnon is the first Togolese village to benefit entirely from a new off-grid power system that could be expanded across the West African country. / India's solar generation exceeded 10 terawatt-hours for the first time between January and March, a 16.5% increase from the previous quarter and a 57% jump from the same period last year. / The International Energy Agency announced more than two million electric cars were registered globally last year, led by China, Europe and the U.S., taking the total global fleet to 5.1 million vehicles. / New York will implement a statewide ban on single-use plastic bags in March 2020, joining a trend started by California and Hawaii. / Prime Minister Trudeau announced in June that Canada would ban "harmful single-use plastics," such as plastic bags, straws, cutlery, plates and stir sticks, by 2021. / Face 2 Face Africa / Guardian (U.K.) / Reuters / Clean Technica / PV Magazine / Forbes / pm.gc.ca

Extra life

The University of Richmond in Virginia welcomed a second herd of goats from a nearby farm to eat away several invasive plant species on campus, such as kudzu, poison ivy and English ivy. Last year's herd of 100 kids received an A+ for their speed and accuracy, which can be monitored on a Goat Cam on the university's website. / A primary school in Crêts en Belledonne, in the French Alps, told this year that one of its 11 classes would be closed due to a drop in enrolment, has saved the class by registering several local sheep as students. / India's former "Tiger State" of Madhya Pradesh, where 97 tigers have died since 2016 (many killed by poachers), has recorded at least 11 cubs in 2019, the first seen in several years. / A white stork pair could be the first to breed in the wild in the U.K. for centuries; their three eggs were due to hatch in June. Successful reintroduction programs have returned the birds to France, Poland, Holland and other European countries, but not yet Britain. / A study found that the variety of vegetation and pastureland on Finnish organic farms benefiting from environmental subsidies has led to increased bird numbers, in particular insectivores such as swallows and starlings. / Amsterdam city council would like to go 100% vegetarian in its catering, following the example of the Dutch government's ministry of education, culture and science last year. Both meat and fish will be taken off officially catered menus, though under the plan guests will be able to request non-veg options in advance of catered events. / France has concluded the widely used fungicide epoxiconazole must be banned as an endocrine disruptor; 76 products containing the compound will be pulled from the market. / ABC News / Agence France Press / Guardian (U.K.) / Phys.org / Dutch News / Reuters



CREDIT: SRIKAANTH SEKAR

Water level

The U.K. passed legislation adding 12,000 square kilometres to a network of 355 protected marine areas known as the "Blue Belt," which now covers 30% of the country's ocean territory. / Programs to rebuild wetlands are gaining momentum globally. In Europe, a seven-year project aims to restore wetlands and connect former floodplains along the Danube River. In China, nearly 9,000 acres of wetlands north of Shanghai are being restored. In Australia, the government of New South Wales has launched a major project to restore 210,000 acres of wetlands in the Murrumbidgee Valley. In England, an initiative on Wallasea Island would repair more than 1,600 acres of wetlands by recreating an ancient landscape of mudflats and salt marsh, lagoons and pasture. / Cambodia's Stung Sen wetlands within the freshwater swamps of the Tonle Sap Great Lake, a region characterized by old-growth forest that undergoes seasonal flooding, have been given Ramsar Site protection by the government, which will help conserve globally near-threatened species such as spot-billed pelican and oriental darter (pictured). / Good News Network / Yale Environment 360 / SurfBirds.com

Thank you for leaving a legacy

When I started at the CCPA, I was in my twenties. Now, two decades later, and with two children of my own, the kind of world I want them to grow up in is something that's on my mind every day.

Part of what keeps me feeling optimistic is knowing that CCPA supporters care as deeply about that future as I do. So many of you are incredibly committed to the well-being of this organization, and to our shared struggle for a brighter world for our kids and grandchildren.

Some of you have even let us know that you would like to leave the CCPA a gift in your will, to ensure that our work will continue well into the future. This level of commitment is amazing. I'd like to say a special thank you to those of you who have maximized your lifetime commitment to the CCPA by already taking this step, and to those of you who plan to do so in the future.

The CCPA will turn 40 years old next year. Thanks to your donations, we have been able to churn out world-class research since 1980—to fight the neoliberal tide and show there are clear policy alternatives to the problems we collectively face: climate change, inequality, poverty, a lack of affordable housing and rising right-wing extremism.

With your future support through a gift in your will, we can continue to demonstrate that fully funded social programs, a green and sustainable economy, pharmacare and a more fair and progressive tax system are achievable and affordable. Thanks to your future commitment, we will continue to provide progressive policy options to broaden the debate about what is possible and what kind of world we should be leaving for future generations.

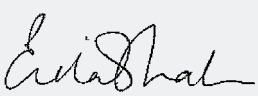
As someone who has spent almost half of their life helping to build this organization—and who feels deeply that the work the CCPA does will make the world our children and grandchildren inherit more fair, more sustainable and more just—your commitment and dedication to these same causes means more to me every year.

If you have included the CCPA in your will and haven't yet let us know, we would love to have the chance to acknowledge your thoughtfulness—and tell you how much we value the trust you have put in us by thinking so far ahead with this very special gift.

Please contact my colleague Katie Loftus at 613-563-1341 ext. 318 (toll free: 1-844-563-1341 ext. 318) or katie@policyalternatives.ca to let her know if you have arranged a gift to the CCPA in your will or if you would like to learn more about how to do that.

Thank you again for making us the beneficiary of your optimism. And thank you for believing that together we can do better not only for each other, but also for our children.

With gratitude,



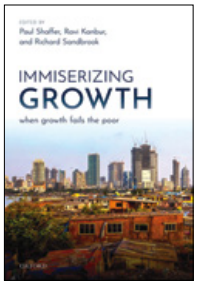
Erika Shaker
Director of Education and Outreach

CCPA
CANADIAN CENTRE for POLICY ALTERNATIVES
CENTRE CANADIEN de POLITIQUES ALTERNATIVES

The CCPA is incredibly grateful to those supporters who have switched to monthly giving or are considering it in the future. We would appreciate the chance to provide information about the benefits of monthly giving—please contact Katie Loftus, Monthly and Legacy Giving, at 1-613-563-1341 ext. 318 (toll free: 1-844-563-1341 ext. 318) or katie@policyalternatives.ca.

A CCPA summer book list

What our economists, researchers and staff are reading over the down months



RICARDO TRANJAN

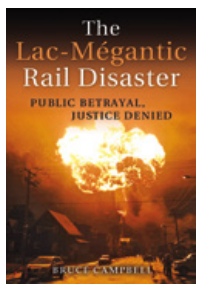
SENIOR RESEARCHER, CCPA-ONTARIO

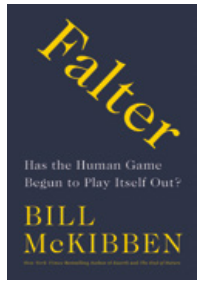
I'm reading *Immiserizing Growth: When Growth Fails the Poor* (Oxford University Press, April 2019), edited by Paul Shaffer, Ravi Kanbur and Richard Sandbrook. Growth is immiserizing when, as the title suggests, it does not benefit, or even harms, the poor through either failed inclusion or active exclusion. According to the editors, the concept can be traced back to classical political economy and featured prominently in international development debates in the 1970s. Despite all the empirical evidence showing that a sizeable share of economic growth has no or negative impact on low-income groups, political processes and causal mechanisms behind immiserizing growth haven't been systematically examined. This is what the book offers. As right-wing populists, promising to push aside vulnerable populations, replace liberal governments, who failed to include the working class, a deep dive into how growth serves some at the detriment of others seems ever so relevant.

ERIKA SHAKER

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

This summer I'll be reading the most recent book by former CCPA executive director Bruce Campbell, *The Lac-Megantic Rail Disaster: Public Betrayal, Justice Denied* (Lorimer, October 2018). It's a compelling account of the forces that resulted in devastating loss of life, and tremendous long-term damage to the community, when a train carrying volatile crude oil ran off the rails and exploded in July 2013. Those forces include the demands of a booming U.S. oil industry, corporate greed, and a shift away from publicly controlled and accountable safety regulations to policy largely written by the rail industry itself. Throughout his tenure at CCPA, Bruce maintained a deep commitment to the quality and precision of his research and the clarity of his writing, but he also strove to honour the experiences of the people and communities impacted by high level decisions made in the boardroom. His book is a prime example of this ongoing commitment to good research that, in exposing injustice, makes a difference, "to prevent history from repeating itself."





HADRIAN MERTINS-KIRKWOOD

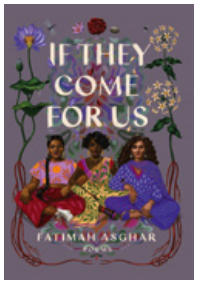
SENIOR RESEARCHER

When it comes to understanding and tackling the existential threat posed by climate change, we sometimes need a hopeful message that gently coaxes us to action. And sometimes we need a firm kick in the pants. The latest book from iconic climate change activist Bill McKibben promises the latter. In *Falter* (Henry Holt and Co., April 2019), McKibben asks whether the "human game has begun to play itself out," detailing the systems of greed and oppression that make climate change such a bewildering collective action problem. It will be an emotionally challenging read, I'm sure. And yet, through his decades of advocacy, McKibben has always found a ray of hope in the bleakest of situations. What path forward does he see for us now?

KATIE RASO

DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

I recently adopted a puppy who has decided that living her best life means being out in the yard for as many hours as possible. The unexpected benefit is that I'm getting a lot of reading done while she chews sticks and digs holes in the sunshine. I've just finished reading Lindy West's *Shrill* (Hachette Books, May 2016), a critical read for me as one of the people who moderates the comments on our social media channels. Up next, I am reading *If They Come For Us* (One World, August 2018), the debut poetry collection from Fatimah Asghar. Asghar's work explores style and form as she navigates the many aspects of her identity and lived experience as a Muslim, an immigrant, a person confronted by change, violence and loss. Her work grapples with complex geopolitical issues, including colonialism and war, from the view of a child whose world is shaped by these forces. Asghar's writing is profound and multilayered and I cannot wait to explore her full-length work.



CHRISTINE SAULNIER

DIRECTOR, CCPA–NOVA SCOTIA (ON LEAVE)

It is super easy to be a Nova Scotia–booster for my summer reading recommendations this year. For adult non-fiction, it is a treasure trove. One of our research associates, Lars Osberg, has a new book called *The Age of Increasing Inequality: The Astonishing Rise of Canada's 1%* (Lorimer, September 2018). And another RA, Kate Ervine, has just published *Carbon* (Polity Press, October 2018), a must-read political-economic analysis of the element, one that clearly explains what we are really up against and how to effectively harness the power needed to tackle the climate crisis.

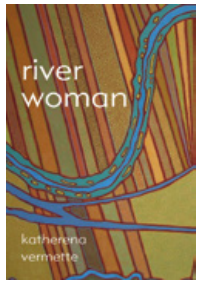
If you want to understand environmental racism in real life, I highly recommend Ingrid Waldron's *There's Something in the Water* (Fernwood, April 2018). To understand why there are so few public washrooms in your community, seek out Journalist Lezlie Lowe's *No Place To Go: How Public Toilets Fail our Private Needs* (Coach House Books, September 2018), which explores an issue that goes to the heart of who we are as a society, while shining a light on design, and equity, in our communities.

I have two wonderful children's book recommendations this year. The first, for all ages, is by Lynn Jones, a leading voice on reparations for the Atlantic slave trade, called *R is for Reparations* (Alphabet Books, February 2019). The second, for children aged 4–7, is Shauntay Grant's beautiful tribute, *Africville* (House of Anansi Press, September 2018), which is stunningly illustrated by Eva Campbell. Finally, find out more about Viola Desmond (now on the $10 bill) in a recent book co-written by her sister, Wanda Robson, and Graham Reynolds, called *Viola Desmond: Her Life and Times* (Roseway/Fernwood, October 2018).

MOLLY MCCRACKEN

DIRECTOR, CCPA-MANITOBA

As a mother of a busy and adorable toddler, I find myself attracted these days to poetry, as it allows me to slip easily into an evocative world. I'm reading Governor General's Award–winner Katherena Vermette's second book of poetry, *river woman* (House of Anansi Press, September 2018), which speaks of love and decolonization: "broken by everything that has been / thrown into her / but / somehow her spirit / rages on / somehow a song / like her / never fades." And on the incredible 100th anniversary of the Winnipeg General Strike I'm midway through *Magnificent Fight* by Dennis Lewycky (Fernwood, April 2019). This new telling of workers' struggles for a living wage and collective bargaining rights is rich in details on the battle for justice—and just how much further we have left to go.



STUART TREW

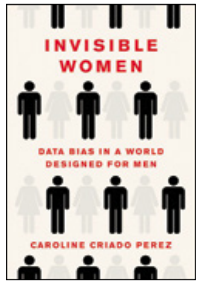
SENIOR EDITOR, *THE MONITOR*

I'm reading artist Jenny Odell's *How to do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy* (Melville House, April 2019). Clearly it's working, or I might have written a longer review.... Actually, the book's title is purposely misleading. The nothing Odell would like us to do more of is teeming with radical potential. We meet the author sitting in the Rose Garden in Oakland, California, watching people and hearing birds (i.e., she's not on her phone). From there Odell introduces us to antique Greek cynics and their Chinese and Indian forebears, who, unlike the "back to the land" generation, challenged society's hypocrisies without running away from them. Resistance is apparently not futile, and possibly even fertile in our transforming technosphere. I'm also slowly getting through *The Econocracy: The Perils of Leaving Economics to the Experts* (Manchester University Press, December 2016), a book I asked the Ottawa Public Library to buy two years ago, then forgot about, then realized they had bought almost immediately. If you liked Jim Stanford's *Economics for Everyone* (Fernwood, June 2008), this short lesson on the failures of orthodox economists to predict and do much about the 2008 crisis, penned by four aspiring young economics graduates, is a very nice follow-up.

KATHERINE SCOTT

SENIOR ECONOMIST

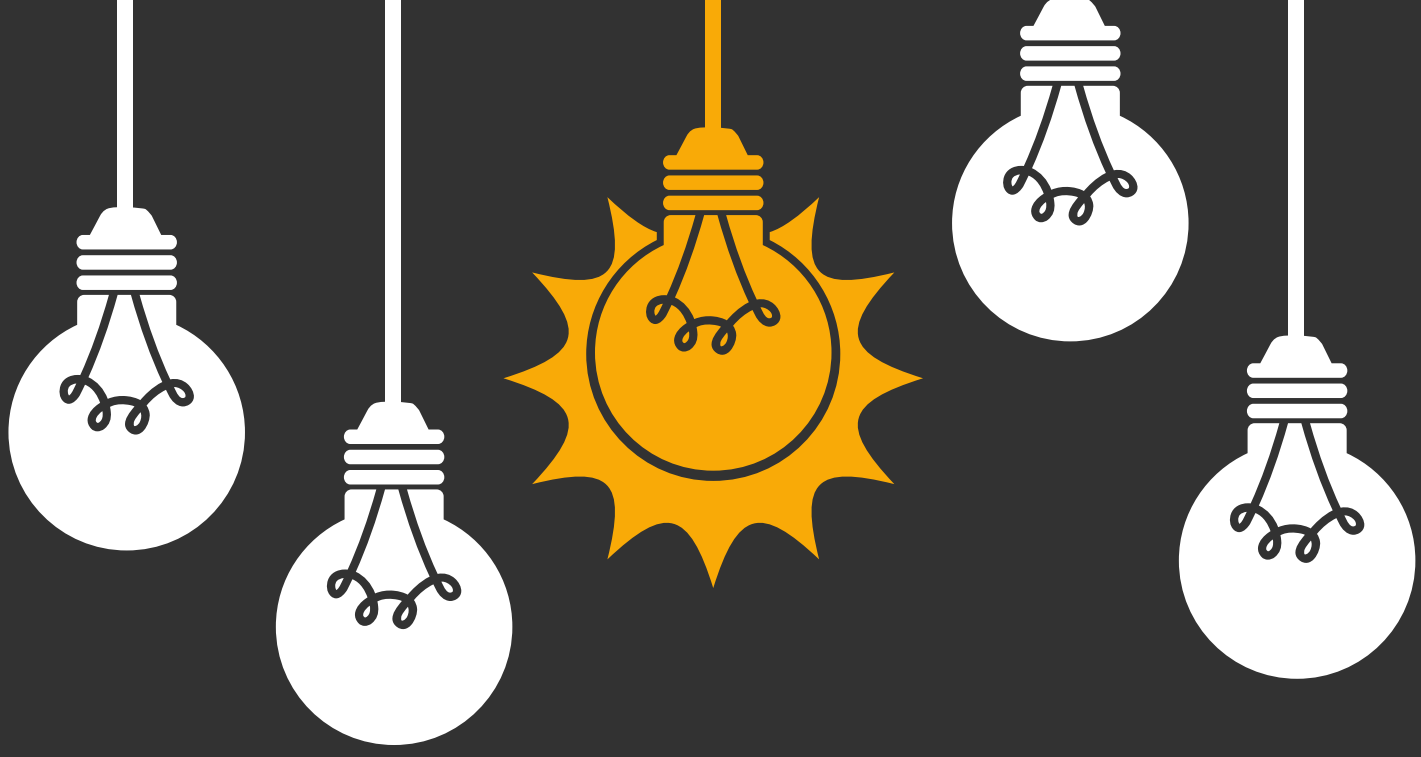
We are awash in data: economic, environmental, population, etc. At the same time, there is so much that we don't know in Canada—from the number of children receiving vaccinations, to the skills that are needed to tackle labour shortages, or the best strategies for addressing climate warming. In part, these data gaps are a product of the division of federal and provincial responsibilities that keeps important information stuck in silos. But there is also complacency about the scale of our problems that keeps us from demanding action from governments. Then there is what we don't see—because of race, disability, poverty, and of course, gender. Feminist advocate Caroline Criado-Perez's new book, *Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men* (Harry N. Abrams Press, March 2019), tells the story of what happens when we forget to account for half of humanity. Weaving together hundreds of studies from around the world, Criado-Perez demonstrates the impact of a "relentless male cultural bias" that systematically overlooks or misjudges women's needs and experiences, a situation that is both ethically wrong and injurious—indeed sometimes fatal—to women.



ARUSHANA SUNDERAESON

DEVELOPMENT AND DATABASE OFFICER

Besides going out with friends, relaxing at the beach, BBQs, etc., summer for me is time to read on my porch. This year I plan on starting with Michelle Obama's autobiography *Becoming* (Crown, November 2018). The former U.S. first lady shares stories about growing up in Chicago's South Side, her family, and life after the White House. After that, I'll pick up *Feminism for the 99%: A Manifesto* by Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya and Nancy Fraser (Verso, March 2019). The authors argue that if your feminism is not seeking radical solutions, through a class and intersectional lens, to the issues of unaffordable housing, poverty wages, inadequate health care, border policies and climate change—in other words, if it is not anticapitalist, ecosocialist and antiracist—then you're doing something wrong. The last book I am looking forward to reading is *This Team is Ruining My Life (But I Love Them)* by Steve Dangle (ECW Press, March 2019). The title pretty much expresses how I feel about being a Leafs fan (since 1994, the year I was born). And yes, like every other Leafs fan in the universe, I have a love/hate relationship with this team. Dangle, a YouTuber, podcaster and the co-host of Sportnet's Twitter show *Ice Surfing*—and probably the biggest Leafs fan ever (he also encourages his fans to vote and get involved politically!)—discusses his life journey from playing driveway ball hockey to changing the landscape of sports media. This book will help me get through hockey withdrawal until October, and hopefully this time the Leafs can win a cup. (P.S. Go Leafs Go!)



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