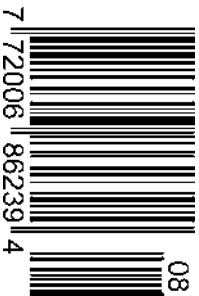


MONITOR

work in transition

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR
POLICY ALTERNATIVES
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Please send feedback to monitor@policyalternatives.ca.

Editor: Stuart Trew
Senior Designer: Tim Scarth
Layout: Susan Purtell
Editorial Board: Peter Bleyer, Alyssa O'Dell, Seth Klein, Kate McInturff, Erika Shaker, Emily Turk

CCPA National Office:
141 Laurier Avenue W, Suite 1000
Ottawa, ON K1P 5J2
Tel: 613-563-1341
Fax: 613-233-1458
ccpa@policyalternatives.ca
www.policyalternatives.ca

CCPA BC Office:
520-700 West Pender Street
Vancouver, BC V6C 1G8
Tel: 604-801-5121
Fax: 604-801-5122
ccpabc@policyalternatives.ca

CCPA Manitoba Office:
Unit 205-765 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB R2W 3N5
Tel: 204-927-3200
Fax: 204-927-3201
ccpamb@policyalternatives.ca

CCPA Nova Scotia Office:
P.O. Box 8355
Halifax, NS B3K 5M1
Tel: 902-240-0926
ccpans@policyalternatives.ca

CCPA Ontario Office:
720 Bathurst Street, Room 307
Toronto, ON M5S 2R4
Tel: 416-598-5985
ccpaon@policyalternatives.ca

CCPA Saskatchewan Office:
2nd Floor, 2138 McIntyre Street
Regina, SK S4P 2R7
Tel: 306-924-3372
Fax: 306-586-5177
ccpasask@sasktel.net



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Contributors

Martin Adelaar is a retired energy management consultant and advocate and a member of the Ottawa Renewable Energy Co-operative.

Frank Bayerl is a retired translator and regular volunteer at the CCPA's national office in Ottawa.

Simon Enoch is Director of the CCPA-Saskatchewan.

Gerard Di Trolio writes about labour and politics. His articles have appeared in RankandFile.ca, where he is an editor, *Jacobin*, *In These Times*, *Alternet* and elsewhere.

Ellen Gould is a researcher on international trade and a research associate with the CCPA-BC.

Amy Hall is a freelance journalist covering social and environmental justice stories from the local to the global. She previously worked at New Internationalist and has written for publications including the *Guardian*, *Ecologist* and *Red Pepper*.

Elaine Hughes is an environmental activist in several non-profit groups including the Council of Canadians, where she chairs the Quill Plains (Wynward), Saskatchewan chapter.

Nadia Ibrahim is a researcher in the areas of international trade, environment and climate policy. She is also Co-ordinator of the Trade Justice Network.

Asad Ismi covers international affairs for the *Monitor*, with a focus on Western imperialism and resistance to it in the Global South.

Amy Janzwood is a PhD candidate in political science and environmental studies at the University of Toronto and a research associate at the Munk School's Environmental Governance Lab.

Fiona Jeffries is a scholar and activist working in the autonomist tradition. An organizer with the Ottawa Sanctuary City Network, her work broadly focuses on how people struggle against the differential vulnerabilities produced by capitalist society.

Cynthia Khoo is a public interest lawyer who focuses on internet policy and digital rights. Her column, *Below the Fold*, appears regularly in the *Monitor*.

Marc Lee is a senior economist with the British Columbia office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Laura Macdonald is a professor in the department of political science and the Institute of Political Economy at Carleton University, and co-investigator on the SSHRC-funded research program Austerity and its Alternatives.

Shoshana Magnet is Associate Professor of Feminist and Gender Studies and Criminology in the University of Ottawa's faculty of social sciences.

Paula Mallea is a CCPA research associate who practised criminal law for 15 years in Ontario and Manitoba. Her latest book, *Beyond Incarceration: Safety and True Criminal Justice*, was released in November by Dundurn Press.

Howard Mann is an associate and senior international law advisor with the International Institute for Sustainable Development.

Murray MacAdam is a veteran social activist and freelance writer living in Peterborough, Ontario.

Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood is an international trade and climate policy researcher with the CCPA.

Barbara Perry is a professor in the faculty of social science and humanities at the University of Ontario Institute

of Technology (UOIT), and one of the world's foremost authorities and renowned authors on hate crime. She is Director of the newly formed Centre on Hate, Bias and Extremism at UOIT.

Roger Peters is a retired environmental researcher, consultant, writer and advocate, and a founding member of the Ottawa Renewable Energy Co-operative.

Peter G. Prontzos is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Langara College in Vancouver, and a CCPA-BC research associate.

Katie Raso is Digital Communications Officer with the CCPA. She has worked with a variety of progressive organizations including Canadian Doctors for Medicare and Media Democracy Days in Vancouver.

Mark Rowlinson is Assistant to the Canadian National Director at the United Steelworkers.

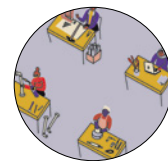
Jim Stanford is a former economist with Unifor, a long-time research associate with the CCPA, and currently Director of the Centre for Future Work in Sydney Australia.

Geoff Stiles is a retired energy consultant, blogger and researcher, with a special interest in Canadian carbon mitigation policy and the role of renewable energy in developing countries.

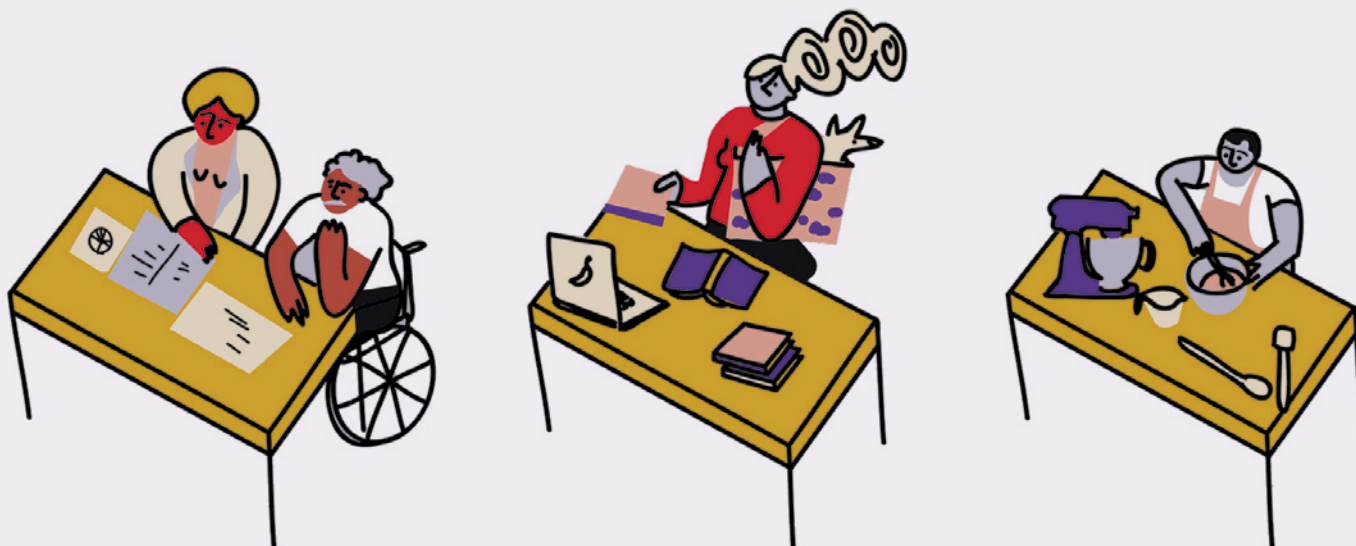
Hannah Wylie is a PhD candidate in political science at the University of Ottawa who studies theories and practices of political reconciliation in Canada.



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



Alisha Davidson is a Toronto-based illustrator, feminist, dog lover and regular *Monitor* contributor. Her clients have included *GUTS* magazine, Vichy Canada, e-how.com, Canthus Publications and *THIS* magazine.



work in transition

Climate change, technological disruption, inequality and shifting labour relations challenge us to think of better ways to organize society, the economy and ourselves. Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood, Simon Enoch, Cynthia Khoo, Katie Raso and Fiona Jeffries consider where we are, and where we need to be, on the just transition to a more sustainable, more worker-friendly future.

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STUART TREW

In between days

HERE AT THE CCPA, where our core mandate is social justice via smart policy, we're pretty much constantly thinking about what needs to change in our lives, our economy and our ways of governing to make society more equitable, and life more fulfilling, for the greatest number of people. Broadly speaking, you could say our mandate is *transition*, the theme of this summer edition of the *Monitor*.

Some of our ideas for what a fair, or just, transition to a better future would look like don't change that much as governments—provincial or national—come and go or markets rise and fall. Until a time comes when there is no more need of money, for example, the wealth produced collectively by society should be more fairly redistributed. We can do this by taxing relatively higher incomes to pay for income support and retraining programs for the less well-off or job-displaced, and by subsidizing affordable, preferably free public services that benefit everyone regardless of income. Redistribution is a long-standing M.O. of the left, tried and tested in the liberal welfare state, but in need of a new operating system for an era of automation and rising precarity.

Cynthia Khoo talks about just how widespread this idea is, even among the tech crowd, in her feature article on the challenge presented by artificial intelligence (AI), and what a digital just transition would look like (page 22). We obviously can't sit back and hope the robot revolution creates as many good new jobs as it promises to destroy, she writes. But then stressing about the new "brain drain" of STEM graduates to the United States won't help either. Rather, says Khoo, we should be future-proofing society by "attacking inequality first, with political and economic tools already at

hand," since this would "make dealing with a potentially AI-overrun future much less daunting."

Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood lists some of the proactive and reactive policies that will be essential to a just transition in Canada's important fossil fuel sectors (page 16). "Sooner or later, we will move on from coal, oil and natural gas," he writes, pointing out the geological and economic barriers to our dependence on carbon for energy. "For fossil fuel communities across the country, it is more important than ever to plan for a future without those energy staples. If they don't, the next best might be their last." Martin Adelaar, Roger Peters and Geoff Stiles write about the need for the transition to renewables to be led by workers and co-operatives, and its capacity to democratize our energy systems—and perhaps other public bodies—in the process (page 42).

Speaking of worker-led change, Fiona Jeffries speaks to a key organizer in Ontario's \$15 and Fairness campaign about how grassroots organizing for better worker protections convinced a tentative labour movement and initially disinterested government to overhaul the province's legislation and boost the minimum wage (page 28). If governments simply listened to the best ideas and implemented policy appropriately, we wouldn't be in the situation we're in today. Jeffries, and the \$15 and Fairness successes to date, remind us that politics is a power struggle in which ideas fuel but are insufficient to the task of progressive change.

Other social justice priorities, other transitions, are complicated by bigger-picture changes over which provincial and even national governments have very little control. The G7 summit in Quebec this June offered a close-up view of the disruption to the global political-economic order that is today

usually blamed on one or all of Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping. These leaders can see the cracks in the neoliberal world order but are not interested in patching them. Rather, they are trying to create a new order in their own interests (to the great frustration of lesser powers). "Into this ferment, progressives must inject an ambitious, honest and pragmatic vision of how to manage international trade, capital and human flows in ways that protect and enhance living standards, equality and the environment," writes Jim Stanford in our special feature on Canada's "progressive trade agenda" (starting on page 32).

History may sometimes slow down enough to create an illusion of permanence in human interactions, in one country or globally, but we are clearly not living in one of those periods. The crisis to which world leaders are fumblingly responding is producing nostalgia for equally illusory "good old days," and right-wing populist governments that would turn back the clock—on gender and racial equality, environmental protections, etc.—to relive them. Thankfully, Canada is not there yet, though the election in Ontario of a new Progressive Conservative government may be a sign we're not far off either (see Trish Hennessy and me on page 10). "We have taken back Ontario," said premier-designate Doug Ford in his acceptance speech, using, whether wittingly or not, the coded language of far-right groups for whom "we" usually means white Canadians (see Barbary Perry on page 8).

But nor has the federal government, or most provinces for that matter, responded with enough urgency or creativity to the confluent shifts in economic, social and climatic conditions that are changing the world in dramatic ways. It is our job, as social justice warriors, to plot a just transition to the future that we all deserve. **M**



Power to the people

The recent article by Edgardo Sepulveda about electricity in Ontario (“Power to the people,” May/June 2018) begs the question: Why did governments, both Conservative and Liberal, feel the need to reduce the influence of publicly owned power in the province? The answer is simple. By 2003, publicly owned power brought Ontario almost \$40 billion in nuclear debts, dirty coal for 25% of supply, a major infrastructure deficit and an almost impossible nuclear waste storage problem. In short, public power failed the people, with its focus on centralized plants and an overreliance on centralized nuclear and coal. Publicly owned utilities in the rest of the country would be well advised to learn the lesson, and act accordingly. Public power that doesn’t serve the public will not and should not stand.

Glen Estill, Lion’s Head, Ont.

I found the article “Power to the people” sort of bizarre. Residences in Ontario pay more or less the same power rates as we do in Nova Scotia. A major

difference between the two provinces is that Ontario shut off its coal burning and has taken the cost hit from that on consumers’ bills. Nova Scotia still continues to get the majority of its power from burning coal alongside about 20% new wind power (built in the last decade), supplied from both private producers and Nova Scotia Power, our private monopoly utility, which also owns wind projects. For Nova Scotians, the longer we delay getting off coal the more expensive the impact will be on our power costs.

In his article, Edgardo Sepulveda misunderstands that renewable energy contracts given to the private sector are long-term fixed-rate contracts, which are called levelized rates. While those rates might seem expensive or high-priced in the first few years, by the end of the contract term, levelized rates have proven historically to be a good deal for both the consumer and the utility buying that power. Anyone who asserts that nuclear power is a good, cheap option is misrepresenting to the public the very real and not very hidden costs of rebuilds that have gone hugely over budget, and radioactive waste that has huge long-term costs and risks for storage. It never ceases to amaze me how some people in Ontario still seem to be brainwashed that nuclear power is the best option.

The distribution of electricity should be publicly owned. The generation of electricity, as we advance further into renewables with wind power and solar power and home-sized storage,

represents an incredible historic democratization of what mostly, for the last century, has been monopoly public or private corporations delivering (often dirty) power to the Canadian public with costly inefficiencies and, still to this day, over-priced and cost-overrun mega projects. Not to mention the non-adoption of load management technologies in use in Europe and Scandinavia for many years. How much simpler it would be to generate power on our rooftops. Home retrofits and solar technologies should be available at a low cost for those least able to afford it, to eliminate energy poverty and make these homes carbon neutral. The only question is whether governments care to deliver such benefits.

Neal Livingston,
CCPA–Nova Scotia research
associate, Mabou, N.S.

No Trump chump

I was surprised and saddened to read the attack on my late friend James Buchanan reported by Luke Savage in his review of books about the “radical right” in the United States (“Conservatism against democracy,” May/June 2018). His source was Nancy MacLean’s *Democracy in Chains*, which asserts that Buchanan “developed a brilliant, if diabolical, plan” to undermine American democracy, in which he was abetted by the wealthy philanthropist Charles Koch. Both Buchanan and Koch thought of themselves as “classical

liberals,” the adjective being necessary in the U.S. where “liberalism” has come to mean something very different from its origin in the ideas of Tocqueville and J. S. Mill. Like those exemplars, Buchanan and Koch believed that the state should encroach on the liberty of each individual if, and only if, his or her actions cause harm to others. Of course, there is much to be said against this doctrine. Wrong, or at any rate naïve it may be, it is preposterous to suggest that it is wicked.

Jim Buchanan was a socialist in his youth, but was converted to liberalism at the University of Chicago by Frank Knight, one of the most powerful critical thinkers of his generation. He became an eminent academic economist and among many achievements pioneered what is called Public Choice Theory, for which he won the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1986. In traditional economic theory, individuals were assumed to pursue their private interest through transactions in the market, but were assumed to act for the common good when operating in the public sector. Public Choice Theory begins with the assumption that politicians, bureaucrats and voters are like all other human beings, and usually act rationally to get what they want. As a result, economists are now able to analyze public policy and political phenomena somewhat more accurately than formerly.

It was after the Public Choice Center moved from Blacksburg to George Mason University in 1983 that I got to know Jim

WORTH REPEATING

“This pipeline will get built.”

Prime Minister Trudeau at a news conference in London, England on April 19.

“This was never going to be an easy fight—Indigenous people and our allies have to dig in for the long haul in this battle on many fronts to keep the tar sands in check: at the source and along the Kinder Morgan route, but also along the proposed Enbridge Line 3 pipeline where tribes in Minnesota are ready to stop it and all along the Keystone XL route.”

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Manitoba Regional Chief Kevin Hart on May 30, responding to the Trudeau government’s decision to purchase Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain pipeline.

“China and Russia are now undermining the international order from within the system by exploiting its benefits while simultaneously undercutting its principles and ‘rules of the road.’”

Excerpt from the 2017 U.S. National Defence Strategy.

“Depressing.”

German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s response when asked to assess the G7 meeting in Quebec in June, at which Canada and European leaders clashed with U.S. President Donald Trump about tariffs, America’s withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, and his generally disrupting “the rules of the road.”

“Being on television, being recognizable, this is unnatural. So I chose to live in this world. I was in an equally if not more dysfunctional world before that, when I was a chef. Which is healthier, which is better for trying to maintain some kind of relationship with people who don’t do what you do? Is it possible? Can you be a good person? I’ll let you know when I figure it out.”

The late Anthony Bourdain, who died from suicide in early June at the age of 61, speaking to *Maclean’s* in October 2016.

“The greater the material differences between us, the more important status and money become. They are increasingly seen as if they were a measure of a person’s inner worth. And, as research shows, the result is that the more unequal the society, the more people feel anxiety about status and how they are seen and judged. These effects are seen across all income groups—from the poorest to the richest tenth of the population.”

Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, authors of *The Inner Level: How More Equal Societies Reduce Stress, Restore Sanity and Improve Everyone’s Wellbeing*, writing in the *Guardian* (U.K.).

through my Australian friend and colleague Geoffrey Brennan, who collaborated with Buchanan in two important books. Though he was not always easy to get on with, and though we had one violent confrontation at a conference in 1985, he was scrupulously fair-minded and never resented disagreement. I was particularly touched when he wrote to me in 2002 to congratulate me on an article I had published in *Southern Economic Journal*. No one else has ever done that.

It is outrageous to assert, as Nancy Maclean appears to have done, that the Public Choice Center and its founder were at the bottom of a sinister conspiracy: what an even less well-informed author called “a hidden program for suppressing democracy on behalf of the very rich.” Of course, Jim had controversial political opinions, and of course many at the centre share at least some of those views. He was properly skeptical about the ability of “democracy” as commonly understood to do much to promote human happiness. But I am morally certain that never in his life did he favour or support racial segregation, nor lift a finger to help the very rich. And I can reassure the nervous that the Public Choice Center is pretty much like most other research centers in most other universities.

A. M. C. Waterman,
St. John’s College,
Winnipeg, Man.

Inequality and class

The article “Real income security in Ontario” (May/June 2018) argues, “Making sure everyone has enough

to pay for the costs of living and participate fully in their communities has to be the bottom line.” This misses the point that it is inequality per se, not just income security, that must be fixed. The definitive research was published in *The Spirit Level* by Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson. They correlated inequality with many social ills and demonstrated that a better level of equality would be good for the whole of society, not just the lower classes. I call it the false consciousness of the wealthy classes, but don’t look to the wealthy to fix it. The failure to deal directly with inequality instead of concentrating on low incomes is prevalent among left-leaning organizations, perhaps due to the extreme opposition by so-called think-tanks and neoliberal politicians. The *Monitor* should not fall into the trap of failing to attack the super-wealthy through tax policy and other means.

Don Kerr, Collingwood, Ont.

Corrections

Apparently we have big eyes when it comes to money. The *Note from the Editor* in the May/June 2018 issue mistakenly claimed the CEO of Hydro One in Ontario made \$6 billion a year when he actually makes \$6 million. And in the same issue’s *Good News Page* it should have read that the federal government has directed \$4.3 million (not billion) into two Kingston, Ontario prison farms. A thousand thousand (thousand?) pardons for the typos.

Send thoughts, feedback, corrections, poems, praise or complaints to monitor@policyalternatives.ca.

Up Front

PETER G. PRONTZOS

Saying “No” to the Doomsday Machine

The decision by the Trump regime to unilaterally abandon the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the Obama administration’s inspired nuclear accord with Iran (along with China, France, Germany, Russia and the United Kingdom), is not only ignorant and illegal, but it could all too easily destabilize the Middle East, leading to even more bloodshed. In the worst-case scenario, there is even a chance that cancelling the deal could set the stage for a nuclear conflict, launched perhaps by the United States and Israel against Iran. Paranoia? I hope so.

Even before the latest escalation by Washington, the world was closer to nuclear apocalypse than at any time since the Cold War. This is the frightening conclusion of former U.S. Defense Department analyst Daniel Ellsberg, best known for releasing the Pentagon Papers in 1971. By telling the world how the U.S. government lied about its reasons for attacking Vietnam, he helped to end that war.

However, as he explains in his 2017 book, *The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner* (Bloomsbury), Ellsberg copied other secret documents that were perhaps even more significant. The whistleblower recounts how the nuclear war-fighting plans of the U.S. and the Soviet Union

(and now Russia) deliberately target cities, which would create global casualties in the billions. Any survivors would envy the dead, writes Ellsberg, as they would also have to cope with the effects of the smoke from fires that would form “a blanket blocking most sunlight around the earth for a decade or more.” This “nuclear winter would reduce sunlight and lower temperatures worldwide to a point that would eliminate all harvests and starve [nearly everyone] to death.”

Ellsberg also explains that it is not just Trump or Russian President Vladimir Putin who might launch a genocidal nuclear war. Lower ranking

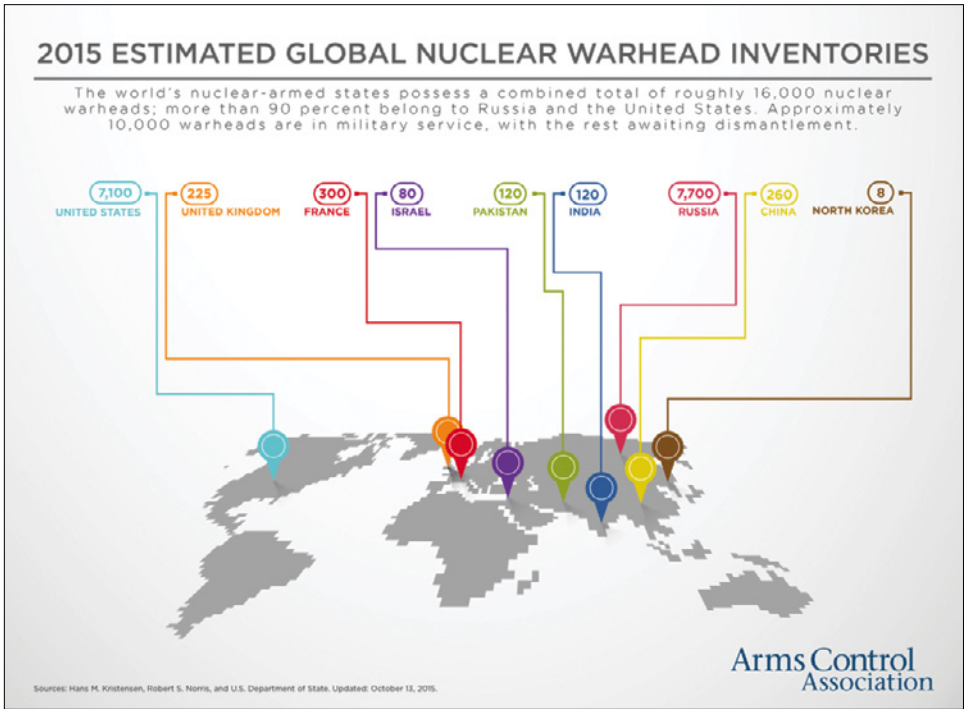
With respect to Iran, the United States is following almost the identical script that preceded its illegal invasion of Iraq in 2003.

officers could order a first strike à la General Jack D. Ripper in the film *Dr. Strangelove*, and there is also the possibility of misunderstandings and errors that could accidentally trigger a nuclear war. We have come too close to such a catastrophe many times.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, when a Soviet submarine was attacked by U.S. destroyers, two of the three ranking Soviet officers wanted to respond with a nuclear torpedo. Luckily, the third officer, Vasili Arkhipov, vetoed that option, thus saving humanity from disaster. The danger is even greater now because there are more nuclear powers and today’s bombs are many times more powerful than the one that destroyed Hiroshima.

Another factor, of course, is the power of what Cold War U.S. president Dwight D. Eisenhower rightly called “the military-industrial complex,” which profits to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars every year and is not shy to make contributions to its allies in both political parties. It is hardly surprising, then, that the nuclear arms buildup that was started by the Democrat Obama is continuing under the presidency of Republican Trump. The plan: modernize the three legs of the nuclear triad—submarines, bombers and land-based missiles—at a cost of over \$1 trillion.

Michael T. Klare, professor of peace studies, writes, “the U.S. military has... committed itself and the nation to a three-front geopolitical struggle...in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.... What appears particularly worrisome about this three-front strategy is its immense capacity for confrontation, miscalculation, escalation, and finally



Estimated nuclear arsenals in 2015
SOURCE: ARMS CONTROL ASSOCIATION

catastrophe is greater than it was in the Cold War.” Likewise, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize, says America’s military policy is “a blueprint for nuclear war.”

ICAN received the award for sponsoring a treaty to outlaw nuclear weapons that was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly when two-thirds of the world’s countries voted in favour. None of the nuclear states, including the U.S., signed on. Neither did the Trudeau government. As Peggy Mason, president of the Rideau Institute, explains, “It will be imperative, therefore, for Canada and other NATO members who do not possess nuclear weapons to ‘hold the line’ at the upcoming NATO Summit in Brussels on 11-12 July 2018.”

Mason adds that it is even more important to resist nuclear modernization because it is “an exponential increase in the killing power of the warheads and delivery vehicles that are far more accurate, have much longer ranges as well as many other dangerous new features.”

Humanity is now at its most dangerous moment in history. We

actual war.” Worse, the U.S. is developing smaller nuclear weapons that are more likely to be used against a non-nuclear country like Iran.

Part of the problem is that some people believe it is possible to win a nuclear holocaust. Actually, this delusion was answered in the TV sitcom *Happy Days*, as the Cunningham family was deciding if they should build

a bomb shelter. When his father says that nuclear weapons are needed to prevent the U.S. from finishing last in a war, Ritchie (Ron Howard) sagely replies, “In an atomic war, does anybody finish first?”

In January, *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* moved its Doomsday Clock, the “symbolic time of civilization’s destruction,” to 11:58 p.m., adding, “The danger of some sort of nuclear



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do, however, have alternatives. For starters, Ellsberg makes a convincing case for a drastic reduction in the numbers of nuclear weapons. The good news? The 70,000 nuclear weapons that were in existence 30 years ago have been reduced to *only* around 16,000.

Going further, we should also heed the advice of Henry Kissinger, Sam Nunn, William Perry and George Shultz. In a *New York Times* review of Ellsberg's new book, Graham Allison wrote: "In 2007, these four leading Cold Warriors, who served at the highest levels of government under Republican and Democratic presidents, endorsed the goal of 'a world free of nuclear weapons' and outlined an agenda to achieve that goal."

Every year, the world's nations spend around \$2 trillion on the military. Think of all the good that we could do when those resources are invested in eliminating poverty, cutting taxes, funding health care, and creating millions of jobs in renewable energy and other "green" projects.

We must also create situations that bring out the best in us. One of the important insights in *The Doomsday Machine* is that the people who planned for nuclear war were, in Ellsberg's words, "not evil.... They were normal Americans, capable and patriotic." This "banality of evil," a term coined by Hannah Arendt and explored by social psychologists like Philip Zimbardo (e.g., in his Stanford Prison Experiment), suggests good people will collaborate with evil in the wrong situations.

When will we actually have "a world free of nuclear weapons"? President Eisenhower believed that, "people want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of the way and let them have it." To do so, we must create a global peace movement that will have the vision and strength to demand that governments "get out of the way" and finally rid the world of nuclear weapons—before our luck runs out.

A new peace movement is especially vital, since, with respect to Iran, the United States is following almost the identical script that preceded its illegal invasion of Iraq in 2003: scare people with propaganda about non-existent "weapons of mass destruction"; ignore the international inspections that find no evidence for these lies; then attack in defiance of international law. The predictable result would be millions dead and driven from their homes, and the proliferation of even more heinous terrorist organizations like ISIS.

Regarding the 2015 nuclear accord, Jon Swaine of the *Guardian* (U.K.) reminds us there is a "general consensus that Iran was complying with it, had dismantled its nuclear programme and was allowing international inspections." That truth appears to be irrelevant to the U.S. and Israel. It needn't be Canada's deceit as well. Prime Minister Trudeau has a chance to press the Trump administration, as Britain, France, Germany and other allies have done, when he attends the NATO summit this July. Let's hope he takes it. **M**



Index Inequality in Manitoba

\$262,000

Average market income of the top 10% of Manitoba households with children (2014).

\$4,500

Average market income of the bottom 10% of Manitobans (2014).

\$6,600

Average market income of the bottom 10% of Canadians (2014).

\$104,000

Average family market income in Canada, which is \$12,000 higher than the average family market income of \$92,000 in Manitoba (2014).

43%

Amount the average Manitoba market income increased between 1996–2014.

63%

Increase in the average market income of the highest decile in Canada between 1976–2014.

20%

Drop in average market incomes for the lowest decile in Canada in that same time span.

\$76,000

Median market income of a family in Manitoba.

60%

Drop in the share of income going to the bottom 60% of the population between 1976–2014.

0.5%

Income share of the bottom end of the income spectrum in 2011–2014. It was a meagre 1% in the period 1976–1979.

\$6.2 billion

Annual cost to the Canadian health care system of "excess burden of disease attributable to health inequality," according to the Public Health Agency of Canada (2016).

110

Number of Canadians who die prematurely every day due to income inequality, according to a 2014 Upstream article by Dennis Raphael and Toba Bryant.



REUTERS/CARLO ALLEGRI

**TRISH HENNESSY
AND STUART TREW**

Ontario election post-mortem



Ontario is in uncharted territory after a bizarre and dramatic election produced a Progressive Conservative majority government, an NDP opposition and the end of official party status for the provincial Liberals.

Sure, there have been PC governments before. But there has never been a PC government quite like the one we are about to experience under Premier Doug Ford, who swept into power on a thin platform that was never fully costed. Economists estimate at least a \$10 billion fiscal hole in the party's promises. That means there will either be deep and painful cuts, a lot of unfulfilled promises, or both.

Progressives who hoped Ontario was on the brink of a major expansion of social programs—universal dental care, pharmacare, child care, affordable housing—will now be tasked with turning that hope into resolve. We will need it to protect the most vulnerable in this province from the kind of massive public service cuts that did harm to real people and entire communities under the previous PC government led by Mike Harris. Liberal governments since 2003 eventually undid some of that damage from those years, but there remains much more to redress.

Democracy isn't just about casting a vote at election time. It happens in between elections, too. There is a role

for progressives to play through social justice, environment and labour movements. In the next four years, that role will be to hold the line.

All parties contending in the June election promised to cut emergency room crowding in hospitals. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives will track any movement on this front and make the case for investments in nurses, new beds, and improvements to home care and long-term care for seniors. All parties also promised investments in mental health. We'll be there with our allies making sure that happens.

And let's not give up on a \$15 minimum wage, on \$12 a-day-child care, on universal pharmacare and dental care. Let us resist having our vision for Ontario's future hemmed in by the government in power and continue to push for a progressive, equitable future.

Opposition parties will undoubtedly be taking stock of what happened and what it means for their future. The Liberals, in search of a new leader, may

gravitate back to the right in response to Ford's win. But let there be a lesson in the politics of privatization: Kathleen Wynne was a fairly popular premier until her government decided to hand majority shares of Hydro One over to the private sector. There's a lesson here, too, for any government that wishes to be activist, to move the needle on progressive social policy: don't wait until the year before an election to lead the way. Don't act like you'll have more than one mandate to make a difference. Be bold.

The NDP, who won 40 seats in the 124-seat legislature, would be wise to consider how much their proposals to protect workers and to expand social programs resonated with the general public. The plurality of voters chose parties that wanted to expand the public sector.

Which brings us to strategic voting and our first-past-the-post system. As in most recent Canadian elections, the new government secured a majority with only 40% of the popular vote. B.C. campaigners for electoral reform are using the result to bolster their claim that proportional representation will make provincial elections more democratic. In Ontario, where an Ipsos poll suggested 42% of people who went to the polls on June 7 voted strategically, proportional representation would liberate people to vote according to their values, not the candidates they don't want to see in office.

Ontario's next chance for electoral reform may be years away. Before then, the left and progressive voices will need to prepare to push back against the inevitable austerity agenda of service and tax cuts, while strategically pursuing coalitions for longer-term, profound and progressive structural changes to address income inequality, climate change, job precarity, electoral reform, the fiscal health of the public sector, and fundamental human rights.

Along the way, you can count on the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives to hold this new PC (and any) government to account, to make the case for strategic investments in public services, to track any cuts, offer alternative solutions and speak truth to power. That's what we do and it is what we will continue to do. **M**

BARBARA PERRY

Moving to the right



The white nationalist rallies that have peppered the country, beginning in the early part of 2017, are tangible indicators that there is a viable and increasingly active right-wing extremist (RWE) movement in Canada.

In 2015, Ryan Scrivens and I published the first contemporary—and comprehensive—assessment of Canadian RWE activity. We estimated, conservatively, that just over 100 groups were operating across the country. However, in the lead-up and aftermath of Trump's upset presidential victory in the U.S., the RWE movement appears to have shifted quantitatively and qualitatively. Many groups are larger, bolder in their online and offline activism, and there are more of them (up to 25% more). There is also evidence that, with the emergence of the alt-right, the audience and membership associated with the contemporary RWE movement in Canada is broadening.

When we think of the extreme right, we typically envisage the tattooed, snarling, angry young white male. There is a great deal of truth to that image. Members of La Meute, Atalante, and Blood and Honour do not make any effort to soften their malevolent image. Selfies and other photos posted to RWE websites often feature images that reflect "tough guy" postures. Yet these are the storm troops, the front lines. Behind the lines stand others who seek

to further RWE causes through slightly more subtle means, in a way that makes it more palatable, more acceptable to a public sensitized by a generation of discourse of equality, multiculturalism and diversity. In a word, hate is increasingly "mainstream," and thus increasingly legitimate.

The alt-right, which styles itself as the "intelligentsia" of the right, can take a lot of credit for this mainstreaming of hate. In truth, there is little to distinguish them from the traditional far-right. The messaging is the same—the West is losing its distinct Euro-culture thanks to a misguided emphasis on multiculturalism and open immigration—while the framing may vary, to make it more palatable, as noted. Rather than use the coarse language of race and racism, the alt-right speaks of culture loss, or preservation of "Canadian values." It's much harder to find fault with this coded language in isolation. It is the cumulative effect of their strident critiques of the Liberal Party (Trudeau in particular), of diversity policy, of globalization, as examples, that reveals the exclusionary core of their ideology.

Like contemporary right-wing populists, such as Donald Trump and Doug Ford, the alt-right has a certain appeal for that portion of the population that eschews both the principles and practices of multiculturalism, which they feel threaten the state of their lives or of the nation (and usually both). Public opinion polling over the past couple of decades reveals antipathy if not downright hostility among these people toward some of the same issues targeted by the alt-right and the far-right. The message of hate disseminated by RWE groups speaks to existing popular concerns: this is at the heart of the legitimacy of their rhetoric.

For example, a *Maclean's* poll released in 2013, during the course of my project with Ryan, found that 54% of Canadians held an unfavourable view of Islam, up sharply from 46% in 2009. To put this

Many right-wing extremist groups are larger, bolder in their online and offline activism, and there are more of them.

in perspective, 39% held an unfavourable opinion of Sikhism, while all other religions were regarded unfavourably by less than 30% of Canadians. The sentiment reached its highest rating in Quebec, a province with extensive skinhead activity in particular among other RWE groups. A 2015 EKOS poll revealed that opposition to immigration had doubled since 2005, to 46%. In the same poll, 41% of respondents indicated they felt there were “too many” visible minorities immigrating to Canada.

How are these concerns leveraged to draw people into the RWE movement? There is a continuing reliance on street-level and face-to-face recruitment. Recent months have seen a resurgence of old-fashioned strategies of pamphleting, whereby flyers are distributed locally on utility poles and windshields, even in mailboxes.

On November 14, 2016, for example, Toronto residents woke up to find racist posters scattered across city neighborhoods. The hateful propaganda, titled “Hey, white person,” encouraged readers to join the alt-right movement and subscribe to a list of “pro-European” websites. That same morning, residents in a predominantly Chinese community in Richmond, British Columbia, were shocked to find racist pamphlets in their mailboxes. The flyers stated: “STEP ASIDE, WHITEY! THE CHINESE ARE TAKING OVER.” While crude and typically not very creative, such pamphlets have the capacity to draw particularly disaffected people to related websites where the messaging is more expansive.

Alek Minassian, Alexandre Bissonnette and Justin Bourque were all inspired to commit acts of terror by right-wing extremism.



Many individuals are lured in by people they know personally. Group members are often friends or associates, sometimes even relatives of potential recruits, prior to joining. They are thus encouraged by people they know and presumably trust. Others may be new “acquaintances,” people met in bars and clubs with whom adherents and promoters strike up conversations. They strive to find mutual points of interest and, often, grievance. Just lost your job, you say? Women aren’t interested in you? Here are some explanations for your woes!

So begins the process of pulling people into the movement. The next step may simply be another beer and more conversation. This may be followed by an invitation to visit a particular website, and later, the closed forum associated with a group. Or the potential recruit might be introduced to white power music, seductive in its beat and messaging. In any event, the process is generally gradual and seemingly sporadic.

There can be no doubt that the internet has facilitated recruitment to the RWE movement. It is an add-on to personal recruitment as well as a standalone tool for “self-radicalization” of lone actors. Whether directed there by recruiters or pamphlets, or discovered independently by seekers, the various websites, social media platforms and discussion forums have the potential to engage the imagination of would-be right-wing extremists.

There is something for everyone. Video games will appeal to youth, as do the frenetic white power music and related music videos. Dating sites will appeal to others. International forums allow connections with like-minded peers elsewhere across the globe. Indeed, sociability is particularly important in so much as users of these



online websites, chat groups and social media platforms find themselves able to freely communicate racist or sexist or other sorts of views that might be unpalatable in other contexts. At the core of all of these mechanisms, however, is consistent messaging about the inherent superiority of those of white European heritage relative to all other identity groups.

The current vibrancy of the RWE movement in Canada is cause for concern. Even CSIS (the Canadian Security Intelligence Service) was finally forced to acknowledge that right-wing extremism represents a “growing threat,” something they had heretofore ignored.

Far-right ideologies have inspired 19 murders in the past four years. In 2014, Justin Bourque killed three RCMP officers in Moncton. In 2017, Alexandre Bissonnette murdered six Muslim men in Quebec City. And in 2018, Alek Minassian killed 10 pedestrians on a Toronto sidewalk. All of these acts were inspired by some strain of RWE, whether anti-statism, Islamophobia or misogyny. These acts of terror alone should inspire recognition of and action against the far-right.

We have seen some encouraging grassroots activism in the form of anti-racist rallies countering the racist rallies. And we have seen some symbolic gestures at the federal level, in the form of Motion 103 condemning Islamophobia and other forms of systemic racism. Yet we have seen far too little in the way of concentrated state-sponsored counterterrorism efforts directed toward the far-right. If the hatred and violence is to be eradicated, it will require a much more systematic strategy of engagement and containment. There is work to be done. **M**





New from the CCPA

Powering Canada today and tomorrow

On May 1, the CCPA, the Parkland Institute and the Corporate Mapping Project jointly released **Canada's Energy Outlook**, an extensive analysis of the country's energy system that assesses our future options for maintaining energy security and meeting Canada's climate commitments. Author **David Hughes**, an Earth scientist with 32 years of experience at the Geological Survey of Canada, says we've "had a good run" with fossil fuels, but with oil and gas sector jobs flatlining, and the need to lower emissions, we "will require both non-renewable and renewable energy resources in the future and need to be realistic about what we can expect from various energy options, as well as means to reduce consumption."

In a May 31 *Maclean's* column, Hughes challenged the federal government's case for purchasing the Trans Mountain pipeline from U.S. owner Kinder Morgan, since the alleged price differential between oil headed to the U.S. and what that oil would earn in "tidewater" on the West Coast would not notably decrease with

the expansion of the line. CCPA Researcher **Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood** likewise attacked the business case for Trans Mountain in a May 29 *BehindtheNumbers.ca* blog post. The government's economic rationale for purchasing the pipeline "is based on a series of risky assumptions that may very well backfire," he wrote.

"If the federal government is wrong on any of these fronts, then Canadian taxpayers are stuck with a giant financial liability," said Mertins-Kirkwood.

The CCPA-Saskatchewan also looked at the oil industry in a report out May 28 on the province's fossil fuel philanthropy. **A Prairie Patchwork** by **Simon Enoch**, director of the CCPA-SK, and **Emily Eaton**, associate professor at the University of Regina, highlights the uneven costs and benefits of the oil boom for oil-producing communities. Urban municipalities in particular are often incapable of capturing enough of the oil revenues to cover the costs associated with a booming oil patch. Instead, many Saskatchewan municipalities have had to rely on oil industry philanthropy for the provision of essential infrastructure and public services that most of us would consider to be a government responsibility. The CCPA report recommends that Saskatchewan should adopt a resource revenue-sharing plan akin to B.C.'s Fair Share Agreement that could help communities absorb the shocks of the commodity cycle, maintain local services and continue to co-ordinate, purchase and invest in the programs, equipment and personnel they need.

Housing as a human right

CCPA-BC Economist **Marc Lee** has submitted a "view from Metro Vancouver" to the federal government's **National Housing Strategy consultations**. At its core, inadequate affordable housing stock is "a problem of financialization," writes Lee, meaning "the treatment by many actors of housing primarily as an investment, rather than a place to live." Instead, it should be framed as a human rights issue. To that end, Lee encourages the government to enhance the Canada Housing Benefit—proposed to deliver \$2,500 a year when it is rolled out in 2020—by guaranteeing that qualifying renters (below a certain income threshold) do not pay more than 28% of their gross income on rent, as under Manitoba's successful Rent Assist program.

As CCPA-MB director **Molly McCracken** explains in a *BehindtheNumbers.ca* blog post in June: "Rent Assist is indexed to 75% of [Median Market Rent] and increased to match MMR annually. The amount a recipient receives is set based on their income, family size and residence. Tenants pay a base amount and then Rent Assist tops them up to 75% of MMR." In this way, rental assistance goes directly to renters and not to landlords and developers. Both Lee and McCracken contend that a rights-based approach to housing will require forward-looking fiscal vision from the federal government, as well as enhanced housing supports for those most in need.

CCPA launches Talking Points

The March/April issue of the *Monitor*, featuring a cover story on marijuana legalization, sparked an idea here at CCPA for a new series of public events we're calling **Talking Points**. These will be moderated panel discussions on current issues that will be recorded, turned into podcasts and shared with CCPA supporters and the general public. The first edition of *Talking Points* took place in Ottawa on June 21, and featured a lively dialogue on who is winning and who is left out of Canada's budding Cannabis Capitalism. Panelists included lawyers **Trina Fraser** and **Yavar Hameed**, marijuana activist and spoken word artist **John Akpata**, and the CCPA Media and Public Relations Officer **Alyssa O'Dell**. The event was moderated by *Monitor* Editor **Stuart Trew** and will be available for download as a podcast shortly.

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

GET TO KNOW THE YELLOWHEAD INSTITUTE

Shiri Pasternak (pictured, right) is Research Director at the Yellowhead Institute, a new First Nations–led think-tank based at Ryerson University in Toronto and directed by Gchi'mnissing Anishinaabe writer and educator Hayden King (pictured, left). Pasternak, who teaches criminology at Ryerson, is the author of the award-winning book *Grounded Authority: The Algonquins of Barriere Lake Against the State* (University of Minnesota Press), and a principal investigator, with other scholars and community partners, in a SSHRC Partnership Development Grant called "Reconciling Sovereignities: New Techniques for 'Authorizing' Extraction on Indigenous Territories."

Monitor: What is the mission of the Yellowhead Institute?

Shiri Pasternak: Yellowhead aims to shape public debate in Canada on topics related to Indigenous governance by generating critical research on colonization and by publishing perspectives that reflect First Nations' visions of self-determination. Yellowhead also strives to foster dialogue on Indigenous governance across fields of study, between the university and the wider community, and among Indigenous peoples and Canadians. First Nation–focused and rooted in community networks, the Yellowhead Institute is positioning itself to articulate alternatives to current ways of understanding and engaging with Aboriginal policy.

M: Is the goal to influence government policy, public opinion, all of the above?

SP: The Yellowhead Institute has five core objectives: 1. To support governance work at First Nations and urban communities; 2. To hold federal and provincial governments accountable and to Influence policy; 3. To provide public education

on First Nation governance and Aboriginal policy; 4. To support Indigenous students and researchers; and 5. To build solidarity with Canadian students and researchers.

M: Who was Chief William Yellowhead?

SP: Chief Yellowhead (Misko Aki) governed an area that stretched from east Toronto to Muskoka as an Anishinaabeg Ojima, from 1815 to 1860. Unlike many of the colonists that other think-tanks and institutions take their names from in Canada, Yellowhead was a respected leader who made difficult choices to protect his peoples' land and assert their jurisdiction in a time of great change. He was a British Loyalist during the War of 1812, but was soon after the subject of aggressive British assimilation policies. These included being at the first reserve experiment in Canada and subjected to numerous fraudulent land surrenders. In spite of this, he defended Anishinaabe jurisdiction, was also a champion of inter-national Indigenous diplomacy and he is remembered for his political acumen.

M: Your first report rates the Trudeau government's recent Indigenous policy reforms. How do they do?

SP: Unfortunately, not well. We look at everything that has been drafted and proposed over the last couple of years—including draft legislation, land claim reform and new fiscal policies—and conclude that all the old policies are being recycled and rebranded as new. What has changed is the acceleration of these policies. Much of the new funding announced in the budget is dedicated to capacity-building that will carve a deeper path for First Nations toward these forms of self-government. The promise of meaningful recognition in "self-government" agreements is undermined by their actual form, which is still reserve-based, heavily



CLIFTON LI, RYERSON TODAY

administrative and service-oriented. Rather than deal with territorial authority of treaty and title nations, policy reforms are tending toward sectoral, incremental approaches that do not fully recognize Indigenous peoples' rights and responsibilities to authorize consent for development on their lands.

M: What's next for the institute?

SP: Over the summer, we will be releasing more analysis, from different First Nations perspectives, on the government's rights framework, proposed legislation, internal reorganization within Indigenous Affairs, and other urgent matters. We will release policy briefs on a regular basis on a variety of topical and pressing issues affecting communities on the ground, and are continuing to design long-term research projects and collaborations. At an event this fall, we will announce the inaugural jury for the Art Manuel Award to be granted to an individual or group that is engaged in impactful Indigenous governance research or practices.

The Yellowhead Institute will launch officially during Social Justice Week (October 23-27) at Ryerson University. Visit www.yellowheadinstitute.org to check them out!

ROBIN SHABAN

The heart of labour's pension contradictions

RECENTLY FINISHED DAVID Webber's new book, *The Rise of the Working-Class Shareholder: Labour's Last Best Weapon* (Harvard University Press), about the potential of shareholder activism for exerting workers' power in the United States. He argues that unions can use the financial power they possess in the form of massive pension funds to influence corporate boards and the political system, and reform the corporate landscape for the benefit of union members and society at large.

Webber, a law professor at Boston University, gives a play-by-play account of how labour's shareholder activists engage in the fight and showcases the individuals who were instrumental in key campaigns. His optimism is captivating—Webber eschews “doom and gloom” to lay out the challenges to unions in a pragmatic, straightforward way—but the book is too dismissive of skepticism about the strategy from progressive voices.

The unavoidable reality is that pension funds almost always invest in enterprises that undermine the interests of workers. From a union perspective, leveraging financial power gained from investing in this way is therefore contradictory, even morally questionable. In fact, this point is the focus of another new book released this May, aptly titled *The Contradictions of Pension Fund Capitalism* (Cornell University Press).

At a book launch for this collection on pension funds, I asked co-editors Kevin Skerrett and Chris Roberts, both long-time Canadian union activists, what they thought of Webber's call for labour to more fully engage in shareholder activism. They shared two main criticisms that stuck with me. Firstly, they argued that Webber's anecdotes are not representative of how union pension funds operate, and that there are very high barriers to undertaking socially minded shareholder activism. Their second issue was that shareholder activism “nibbles at the edges” of the deep, persistent problems of financial markets and capitalism.

In order to protect workers and provide a dignified retirement for all Canadians, Skerrett and Roberts assert that fundamental pension reform is needed. Their vision is to remove pensions from financial markets and replace the private pension system with an expanded Canada Pension Plan. They argue that Canadians should have universal access to a pension without contributing to a fundamentally problematic financial system.

Webber's response to some progressive skeptics is that we must acknowledge that conflicts of interest are inherent to power, not finance, and that labour has proven itself susceptible to such conflicts in the past. So, as far as problems go, this is a good one to have, he says, because it would be a sign that labour has amassed real power. While Webber may have a point (if a rather fatalistic one), his argument does not really get at the heart of the concerns about shareholder activism held by critics like Skerrett and Roberts.

At the same time, I respectfully disagree with the claim that, as a means to advance social justice, inside corporate strategies are inherently problematic. I grant that the vast majority of pension funds likely do not engage in much shareholder activism, let alone the kind that might advance worker or social justice interests. However, Webber has effectively shown that it is possible, though perhaps not easy or very quick, to be a successful shareholder activist working toward noble goals.

Removing union pension funds from financial markets avoids one contradiction, but without directly attacking their roots in the exploitation of workers. Financial markets will still exist, albeit with fewer big players, and powerful participants will continue to undermine the interests of labour. Could union pension funds do more by participating in markets as a positive agent of change than if they were to pull out completely?

The reality is pension funds almost always invest in enterprises that undermine the interests of workers.

The same contradiction that plagues union pension funds shows up in other aspects of our lives, too. It is either very difficult or very expensive to get through a month without consuming some objects or services that have not been produced in part by exploited labour (not to mention exploited animals, or the environment in general). Yet, we continue to push for social justice, and sometimes win, within these confines of modern capitalism. The contradictions need not be an impenetrable barrier to progress.

Fundamentally, I think the decision to engage in shareholder activism is about striking a fair balance between our moral ideals, our goals for greater justice, and the reality of the situation we currently live in. As a strategy it has challenged the hubris of Silicon Valley CEOs by putting their jobs on the line for violating privacy and undermining democracy, and drawn the attention of Canadian mining shareholders to the human rights abuses their investments make possible in the Global South.

While shareholder activism may require navigating contradictions, it does not have to mean accepting them. **M**

ROBIN SHABAN IS AN OTTAWA-BASED ECONOMIST WHO COVERS FINANCE FOR THE *MONITOR*. REACH HER AT CONTACT@ROBIN-SHABAN.COM.

Behind the numbers

MARK ROWLINSON

Trump's tariffs

ON MAY 31, the Trump administration announced 25% tariffs on Canadian steel and 10% tariffs on Canadian aluminum, effective June 1, ending a temporary exemption Canada had secured in March when the Trump tariffs were first announced. South Korea, Brazil and Argentina were able to negotiate quota arrangements with the U.S., but not us. The consequences for Canada will be significant.

The tariffs

Canada is the largest foreign supplier of both steel and aluminum to the United States, accounting for 48% of aluminum and 17% of steel imports. In steel, the United States is the destination for 90% of Canada's exports and almost 45% of domestic Canadian production. In aluminum, 84% of Canadian primary aluminum production is exported to the United States. The North American steel and aluminum market is highly integrated; so too are the various industries (e.g., autos, aerospace) that use steel and aluminum.

There is no logical rationale for these tariffs. They were imposed under section 232 of U.S. trade law, which empowers the U.S. government to raise tariffs in order to protect U.S. national security. U.S. experts and industry representatives nearly all agree that Canadian steel and aluminum imports do not constitute a threat to national security. By U.S. statute, Canada's productive capacity in steel and aluminum is assumed to be part of the U.S. industrial base for purposes of national defence.

Moreover, in steel, Canada and the United States enjoy a balanced and complimentary trade relationship. The

United States has a trade surplus with Canada in steel: in 2016, over 10 million tonnes of steel with a market value of over US\$8.8 billion was traded between Canada and the United States. Finally, the U.S. labour movement has not advocated for tariffs against Canada. My union, the United Steelworkers, passed a unanimous resolution of the executive board (comprising elected directors from all over North America) condemning the imposition of these tariffs against Canada.

The NAFTA connection

The only plausible rationale for these tariffs seems to be that Trump believes imposing them on Mexico and Canada will give him more leverage in the NAFTA negotiations. If true, this is concerning because by most accounts we are nowhere near any kind of deal, "skinny" or otherwise. That suggests we may be living with these tariffs for some time.

To his credit, Prime Minister Trudeau reacted swiftly by imposing \$16.6 billion worth of counter duties on U.S. steel and aluminum and a variety of other products aimed at specific markets in certain states—from maple syrup to toilet paper. But while Trudeau and Trump tangle over tariffs, the central problem facing North American industry and workers remains unresolved.

The real threat

The North American steel and aluminum industry has been under attack from unfair, illegal and predatory foreign competitors for nearly two decades. Chinese subsidies and overproduction have created a global steel glut and depressed prices leading to a decimation of the North American steel sector and the U.S. aluminum sector. (Editor's note: for more on China and tariffs, see Gerard Di Trolio on page 41.)

Of great concern for Canadian workers is that U.S. tariffs will amplify Canada's exposure to unfair imports originating offshore. If the world's dumped and subsidized steel and aluminum cannot find a home in the United States, it will surely find its way into the Canadian market. Canada must immediately take steps to protect Canadian steel and aluminum producers from this diversion.

The Canadian government must also act quickly and aggressively to identify trade actions and other mechanisms to protect the Canadian market. Canada's response could include actions initiated under Section 53 of the Customs Tariff Act and WTO-compatible safeguard actions to prevent a destabilizing surge of steel and aluminum imports into Canada.

Furthermore, Canada's steelworkers need support similar to what was afforded to Quebec's aluminum workers and forestry workers. Canadian steel communities are already hurting, and they need an assistance package to help steelworkers and their communities in the face of temporary layoffs as a result of these tariffs.

*Editor's note: The Trudeau government was considering, but had not yet announced, support for workers and industries affected by the Trump tariffs as the Monitor went to print. **M***



REUTERS/LEAH MILLIS

LYNNE FERNANDEZ

Indigenous workers and unions, Part I

THERE ARE MANY barriers keeping a large portion of Canada's Indigenous population from decent work, an injustice that modern unions grapple with. In order to understand this situation, any study of Indigenous people, wage labour and trade unions must account for the historical experience of colonialism and the racism that was, and remains, a part of that experience. Two recent reports released by the CCPA-Manitoba set out to do just that.

In one of those reports, published in January, Jim Silver and I recount the colonial dispossession of Indigenous lands and resources (primitive accumulation by the new settler state) as laid out in the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report. Indigenous economic and political systems were eliminated, cultural and spiritual practices constantly attacked, and many tens of thousands of Indigenous children imprisoned in residential schools in an effort to indoctrinate them to allegedly superior European ways of being.

Forced to adapt to a new socioeconomic environment in which they were systematically marginalized and demeaned, many Indigenous people, including children, turned to wage labour. Some did so because they were left with no alternatives; others if it suited their circumstances and their determination to survive as Indigenous peoples. In still other cases, Indigenous people were forced by the state to engage in wage labour.

Whatever their reasons, Indigenous people have participated in the labour market to a much greater extent than is generally recognized. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Indigenous workers were essential to the emergence of this country's capitalist industrialization.

According to John Lutz, in a 1992 article in the *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, thousands of Indigenous labourers once worked in the coastal canneries of British Columbia earning wages lower than their non-Indigenous colleagues—an income that was only partially compensated for by fishing and other primary economic activities outside the market. But Indigenous workers were gradually replaced by Chinese workers, who could be paid equally low wages but who did not have access to non-capitalist means of subsistence.

Indigenous people were often active in unions and in strike actions. In his 1996 book, Rolf Knight describes Indigenous fishermen supporting strikes on the Fraser River in 1893, and addressing rallies "in support of the striking fishermen." Indigenous longshoremen played a key role in 1906 in the formation of a local of the Industrial Workers of the World.

There is a history of Indigenous wage workers across all of Canada—in the sugar beet fields of Alberta; the mining, logging and pulp-mill sectors of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec; and in Atlantic Canada, where the Mi'macq worked in many sectors. There is also a history of unions discriminating against these workers.

In 2016, I interviewed Leslie Spillett, an Indigenous leader in Winnipeg and former trade union leader, who confirmed that even today some Indigenous people see unions as just another colonial institution, engaged in practices at odds with and likely to undermine Indigenous cultures, at the same time as they work to exclude them from paid employment. My report with Jim (find it at www.policy-alternatives.ca/publications) provides several examples of unions discriminating against Indigenous workers. We

Indigenous workers were essential to the emergence of capitalist industrialization in many parts of Canada in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

also describe instances of solidarity.

In 1962, 80 Indigenous workers from Norway House and Split Lake picketed the Inco mine in Thompson, Manitoba, demanding the chance to work for wages (Inco refused to hire Indigenous workers). In a telegram to the *Winnipeg Free Press*, the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers wrote: "Indians all the way from Nelson House are parading at the International Nickel Company's gates demanding their right to work. Many of these people were the first here, clearing the land where the company now stands. Now that the dirty work is finished they feel they have been cast aside. They want the same rights and privileges as their white brothers."

Archaic language aside, the above example exemplifies what the labour movement could and should be doing to reach out to Indigenous workers. In my next Work Life column (in the September/October *Monitor*), I will describe how some of today's unions are working hard to include Indigenous workers, and how unions could be playing a key role in meeting some of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. **M**

LYNNE FERNANDEZ HOLDS THE ERROL BLACK CHAIR IN LABOUR ISSUES AT CCPA-MANITOBA. FOLLOW HER ON TWITTER @LYNNEFERNANDEZ.



HADRIAN MERTINS-KIRKWOOD

CANADA'S JUST TRANSITION

With a little forward planning we can kick our addiction to fossil fuels, empower energy workers and set a positive example for the world.

THE CENTREPIECE OF the former flag of Fort St. John, British Columbia is a black gas rig on a stark white cross. Evergreen trees stand to one side with a red mining building on the other. The city, about a half-hour drive to the northern Alberta border, was founded by European settlers in the late 18th century to facilitate the fur trade with the Dunne-za (Dane-Zaa) and other Indigenous peoples, but it was the discovery of a massive natural gas field in 1951 that produced the region's defining industrial boom.

Dozens of oil and gas companies rushed into Fort St. John in the following decades to survey land and drill wells, attracting an influx of settlers and investment. Development was helped along by the Crown's expropriation of Indigenous peoples' mineral rights in the region—a purported “error” the courts only partially remedied 65 years later. Forestry, mining and other industries prospered during that time, but fossil fuel extraction was always the primary money maker. As its flag made clear, Fort St. John was emphatically a gas town.

Today, the flag of “The Energetic City” is more modern and restrained, but the fossil fuel sector remains as central as ever. Of the 17,000 working people in Fort St. John, more than 10% are directly employed in the oil and gas industries. Thousands more work in construction and other sectors supporting fossil fuel extraction. The town is home to B.C.'s Oil and Gas Commission and its mayor, Lori Ackerman, is one of B.C.'s most outspoken proponents of resource extraction.

For much of the 20th century, towns like Fort St. John were inextricably linked to Canada's national project. The extraction, processing, transportation and consumption of coal, oil and natural gas was widely understood to be both productive and patriotic. Though resource towns routinely experienced booms and busts, the world's unassailable

need for fossil fuels ensured most coal, oil and gas towns ended up back on their feet.

That context has changed as governments in Canada and beyond commit to the fight against climate change. It is now clear to most people that, sooner or later, we will move on from coal, oil and natural gas. For fossil fuel communities across the country, it is more important than ever to plan for a future without those energy staples. If they don't, the next bust might be their last.

Stumbling into action on climate change

The environmental harm caused by burning fossil fuels is not breaking news. Climate scientists have been talking seriously about the causes and risks of anthropogenic (human-caused) climate change for at least 50 years. Indeed, oil giant ExxonMobil was excoriated last year when it came to light that the company's own scientists identified a clear link between fossil fuel emissions and climate change in the 1970s and '80s even as Exxon engaged in a public campaign of climate denialism.

Climate change is not news to governments around the world either. Advocacy from the scientific and environmental communities sparked the formation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 1988. A few years later, in 1992, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was created at the Rio Earth Summit and subsequently ratified by 197 countries.

Yet the political attention that climate change is getting today is refreshingly urgent compared to even a decade ago. Perhaps governments have been spurred to action by its increasingly obvious symptoms: rising global temperatures, ocean acidification, surging sea levels and more frequent extreme weather events are all unfolding today as climate scientists predicted.

Or perhaps governments see the writing on the wall as the private sector divests from fossil fuels and global markets shift toward alternative energy sources. The cost of renewable energy has fallen so fast in the past few years that wind, solar and geothermal power are now cost competitive with fossil fuels, which is driving massive new demand for transition.

Whatever the reason, climate action has become a top political priority globally. Governments have set out greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets and reaching those targets is now a central objective of much government policy. To date, those policies have focused mainly on growing the clean energy economy. However, since human-caused climate change is primarily a result of GHG emissions from the combustion of fossil fuels, fostering the growth of alternative, renewable energy sources such as wind, solar and geothermal power is only half the equation. To actually reduce emissions, governments must also deliberately phase out the production and consumption of fossil fuels.

Ontario's phase-out of coal-fired electricity generation was the largest emissions reduction initiative in North American history. Unless and until oil and gas are similarly phased out across the country, Canada cannot meet its long-term emission reduction targets. The need for supply-side restrictions holds even if coal, oil and gas remain profitable and productive.

Yet, despite federal and provincial commitments to fighting climate change, the current pace of Canada's clean energy transition is slow and ultimately insufficient to achieve meaningful change. And some egregious government policies, such as tax subsidies for oil and gas producers and the stubborn promotion of new oil pipelines, are fundamentally at odds with our governments' stated environmental objectives.

Nevertheless, if and when Canada's provincial and federal leaders truly commit to a clean energy transition, oil and gas will face significant and potentially terminal headwinds. Emissions caps on the extractive sector and carbon pricing for the broader economy are two policies already in place where the level of ambition could soon be ratcheted up to drive much deeper changes to the energy system.

Though tempting in the short term, foot-dragging by Canadian governments—or flat-out obstructionism, as in Saskatchewan's legal challenge to the federal carbon tax—will only delay the inevitable as the rest of the world takes action. Carbon pricing, for example, will soon be in place in 42 countries, including the economic powerhouses of China and the EU.

The geography of vulnerability

The roughly 2,000 oil and gas workers in Fort St. John aren't the only ones put at risk by new climate policies at home and abroad. There are more than 200,000 fossil fuel workers in Canada—and half a million jobs indirectly linked to the sector—spread out across dozens of resource-dependent regions.

As you'd expect, Alberta is the nexus of Canadian coal, oil and gas employment. Overall, 6% of jobs in the province are directly tied to the fossil fuel sector. Calgary is home to about 60,000 fossil fuel workers, followed by Edmonton with its 30,000.

But major cities like Calgary and Edmonton are also economically diversified. The greatest vulnerabilities lie in places like Fort McMurray, in the heart of the oil sands, where one in every three workers is directly employed in oil and gas. Once indirect and induced jobs are included, practically the entire workforce of Fort McMurray is dependent on the oil industry.

Of the 20 regions most dependent on coal, oil and gas production in this country, Wood Buffalo, which includes Fort McMurray, is far and away the leader. In fact, 14 of the top 20 such regions are located in Alberta. Outside that province, only Estevan and Weyburn, both in Saskatchewan, and Fort St. John, B.C., crack the top 10.

Yet fossil fuel dependence is not exclusively a western problem. There are pockets across the country where the share of fossil fuel jobs is relatively high. Sarnia, Ontario is home to a handful of oil refineries that drive the local economy. Several towns on Canada's East Coast are similarly tied to refining or fossil fuel-based electricity generation.

Many coal towns are already reeling from government policies to phase out the carbon-intensive resource as a power source. If and when the provincial and federal governments get serious about transitioning away from oil and gas, the remainder of these fossil fuel-dependent regions will be hit hard.

Toward a planned transition

There is little doubt some jobs will be lost as the fossil fuel economy is gradually replaced. To ensure a dramatic decline in fossil fuel production doesn't unfairly punish the workers and communities whose livelihoods depend on it, environmental and labour activists are increasingly calling for a *just transition*—a social justice framework for ensuring vulnerable workers and communities aren't left behind as the world shifts toward a lower-carbon economy.

The "just transition" concept has caught on around the world and is now recognized by the United Nations. In

The transition to a lower-carbon economy will ultimately create more—and better—jobs than it destroys, but those opportunities will not be widely shared in the absence of deliberate planning.

South Africa the conversation centres on coal miners. In the Philippines the priority is truck and bus drivers. But everywhere the central concern is that in addressing the climate change emergency, the interests of workers are put front and centre.

Canadian and American labour unions were the first and loudest proponents of a just transition for the North American fossil fuel sector. Among other policies, they've long called for income supports, retraining programs and pension bridging for laid-off workers. Unions have also been adamant that workers should be directly involved in any transition decisions.

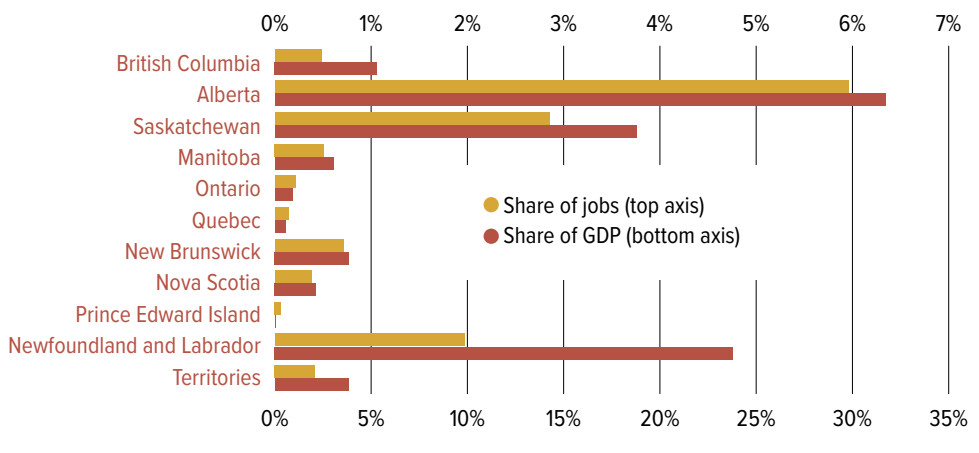
Decades of advocacy have started to bear fruit in Canada. The federal government created a Just Transition Task Force in fall 2017 that will study the national coal phase-out and release its recommendations on a just transition for coal workers by the end of this year. Though oil and gas phase-outs aren't yet on the table, Canada's coal transition will no doubt set a precedent.

At the provincial level, the government of Alberta announced a Coal Community Transition Fund to support economic development and diversification in that province's coal towns. Months later, Alberta announced a Coal Workforce Transition Program to provide financial assistance directly to workers who are forced to retire, retrain or relocate.

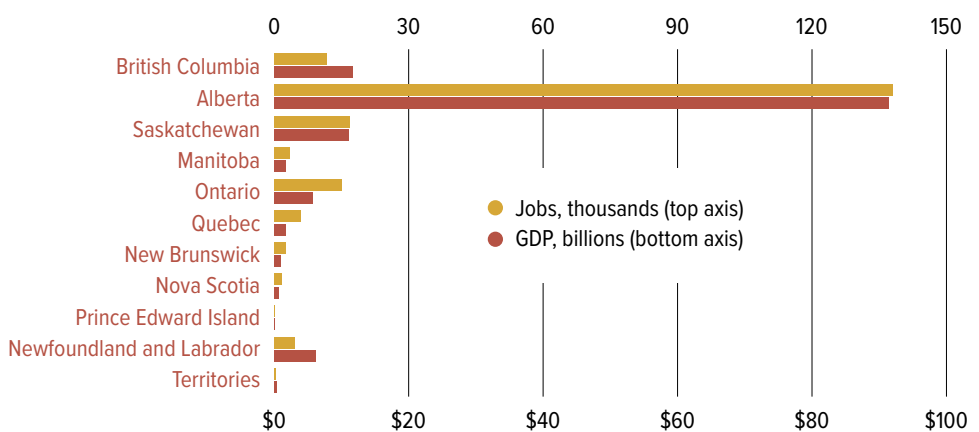
Recent research from the CCPA categorizes these policies as "reactive," which means they're designed to minimize the harm caused by climate policies to workers and communities. In contrast, "proactive" just transition policies are designed to maximize the benefits. The transition to a lower-carbon economy will ultimately create more—and better—jobs than it destroys, but those opportunities will not be widely shared in the absence of deliberate planning.

Proactive just transition policies include expanded apprenticeships in renewable energy industries and new investments in clean energy infrastructure. They also include support for emissions-intensive and trade-exposed industries to make industrial

Relative contribution of the fossil fuel industry to the economy, by province (2016)



Total contribution of the fossil fuel industry to the economy, by province (2016)



processes more climate-friendly, such as tax incentives for energy efficiency research and clean technology adoption.

Whereas reactive policies are mostly concerned with fossil fuel workers and their communities, proactive policies seek maximum inclusivity in the emerging low-carbon economy in every part of the country. The principles of a proactive just transition are as necessary in hydro-powered Quebec as they are in oil-fuelled Saskatchewan.

Ultimately, if the broad goal of a just transition is to ensure an equitable, productive outcome for all workers, then a mix of reactive and proactive elements is necessary. Canada can't only play defence as the world moves off fossil fuels. We must also push a lower-carbon offence by investing in the clean economy and creating

new opportunities for workers and communities in the process.

Ensuring equity in a just transition

Frequently lost in this conversation are the workers outside the fossil fuel sector who are nevertheless affected by the clean energy transition. Ironically, these workers are often more dependent on the fossil fuel industry than coal, oil and natural gas workers themselves.

Across the country, fossil fuel workers receive an average total income of \$141,000 per year (\$68 per hour), which includes benefits and government transfers. In contrast, the average Canadian worker receives just \$59,900 a year, while accommodation and food service workers make \$30,300 on average. Though income alone does not determine economic security, we

can see the typical oil and gas worker is more likely to be in a better position to retrain or relocate than a worker in a different sector who lives in the same place.

Not only do fossil fuel workers generally earn relatively higher incomes, but they are also predominantly male and from privileged demographics. Women and marginalized groups, on the other hand, are often relegated to less secure jobs.

In Fort McMurray, for example, only a fifth of oil and gas workers are women and only a fifth are recent immigrants. Yet in Fort McMurray's accommodation and food services sector more than 60% of workers are women and 40% are recent immigrants. The gender pay gap in Alberta is \$31,000 per year for full-time employment. Northern Alberta is among the worst places in the country for women's economic security.

Indigenous workers are well-represented in the fossil fuel sector, but they are disproportionately relegated to lower-income and less secure jobs. Indigenous workers report being the "last hired, first fired" on many extractive projects.

Responding to these inequities in fossil fuel communities does not mean abandoning workers with greater degrees of privilege. Instead, support should be provided to all workers and families commensurate with their needs. Reactive just transition policies would identify degrees of vulnerability and respond accordingly.

Proactive transition policies must also prioritize equitable outcomes. For example, only 14% of apprentices in the skilled trades are women and only 9% are recent immigrants. If this worrisome lack of diversity persists in the emerging clean economy, reproducing social inequalities, it will be hard to call the transition a success.

The transition to a clean economy will be difficult whether it is equitable or not, but that is all the more reason to insist on a just transition for all workers in this country. Change may be inevitable, but hardship and inequality are political choices.

A greener horizon

As the largest city in the Peace River region, Fort St. John embodies many of the challenges, opportunities and contradictions we face across Canada as we consider a national just transition.

In addition to its oil and gas sector, the area is one of B.C.'s biggest agriculture and forestry centres. All of this primary economic activity feeds into a growing services sector that employs many people in health, education and tourism. The Energetic City is also at the centre of a growing alternative energy system that includes a handful of private wind farms.

At the same time, the Peace River region is the planned home of the proposed Site C dam, an unnecessary, expensive and highly divisive mega-project that exemplifies what an unjust, status quo transition to a cleaner energy system will look like.

In contrast, community-level renewable projects offer greater social, political, environmental and economic benefits (see "All power to the community" on page 42 of this issue). According to the B.C. First Nations Clean Energy Working Group, there are already four renewable energy

Booming: Fort. St. John in 1960

TOURISM FORT ST. JOHN



projects with Indigenous involvement in northeastern B.C. and another 18 under development or consideration. The region offers considerable potential for further energy democracy.

Fort St. John is exploring some smaller-scale transition initiatives of its own. In 2015, the city completed North America's northernmost "passive house" as a demonstration project in energy efficiency. The standalone building is 99% more efficient than a typical Canadian home and it produces about half the energy it needs using solar panels. The Passive House project was specifically designed as a model for northern communities that don't have consistent, year-round solar resources.

For a town so entwined with the oil and gas industry, Fort St. John's willingness to invest in a cleaner economy hints at a life after fossil fuels. The transition will not be quick or easy; the town won't give up its oil and gas industry without a fight and the Site C dam is an ill-fated step in the wrong direction, not to mention an insult to Indigenous communities who were promised reconciliation. But the emergence of new industries and energy initiatives points to new possibilities for today's fossil fuel regions.

Communities across the country will need to take similar steps, on a much grander scale, in the coming decades as Canada transitions to a lower-carbon economy. That shift entails risks and inevitable costs, but also significant economic opportunities with obvious benefits for public health and the natural environment.

The world is moving on from fossil fuels whether we like it or not, but the just transition framework offers us a pathway to change that is proactive and equitable rather than reactionary and divisive. A just transition is democratic in its worker-centred approach, economically sound in its long-term strategy, and ultimately the best way forward if we are going to meet our climate commitments while ensuring a brighter future for all. **M**

EVEN ON THE PRAIRIE, SUPPORT FOR A JUST TRANSITION GROWS

SIMON ENOCH

All this talk of Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline expansion (TMX) being in the "national interest" might strike some ears as a novel justification for an energy project. But for those of us in Saskatchewan, it appears that Justin Trudeau and Rachel Notley are merely stealing a page from a very well-worn political playbook.

There is probably no bigger booster of the oil industry than the Saskatchewan government. Former premier Brad Wall took any and every opportunity to champion the industry while publicly opposing virtually any policy—higher royalties, increased regulation, carbon pricing—that might threaten its profitability.

Wall was particularly adept at presenting the interests of the industry as akin to the interests of the province. A threat to one was a threat to the other. This conflation of interests served a distinctly political purpose: the government regularly used oil as a wedge issue to sow public doubt about the opposition NDP's loyalty to the province.

Too often, the provincial NDP succumbed to the trap, fearful of the electoral consequences of being tarred as insufficiently pro-industry. The government's success at stymieing dissent has surely contributed, even if in a small way, to Saskatchewan having the highest carbon emissions per capita in the country and the weakest oil and gas regulations in North America.

Now, Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier Notley are deploying the rhetoric of "the national interest" to frame TMX opponents as insufficiently patriotic. Despite recent polls showing support for TMX on the rise in much of Canada, in Saskatchewan public opinion is calling into question such claims that we must be united in our loyalty to the oil and gas industry.

In a new report for the CCPA-SK, *Winds of Change: Public Opinion on Energy Politics in Saskatchewan*, authors Andrea Olive, Emily Eaton and Randy Besco analyze the

results of a poll they conducted with 500 adult Saskatchewan residents on issues related to oil extraction, the environment and climate change.

Though a small majority of respondents opposed putting a price on carbon, more than four out of five people agreed that the province should transition away from fossil fuels (see chart), with 26% listing environmental damage as the most important risk from the industry in Saskatchewan. Furthermore, 64% of respondents said the government should invest more in wind power and 73% want investment in solar.

While some respondents were unsure about renewables, very few opposed government investment in wind (7%) or solar (4%). Almost 66% of respondents agreed that Canada should do more to support clean energy even if it increases electricity costs, and 58% agreed that governments should protect the environment even when increased costs or new regulations hurt industry.

These results, in a province that continually equates industry priorities with the national interest, illustrate plainly the growing public recognition that a transition away from fossil fuels is not only needed but politically feasible. Politicians that continue to conflate criticism of pro-industry regulation with disloyalty may find themselves left behind by a public that is willing to entertain a much more robust definition of what is actually in our collective interest.

WOULD YOU SUPPORT A TRANSITION AWAY FROM FOSSIL FUELS (COAL, OIL, GAS) FOR THE SASKATCHEWAN ECONOMY?

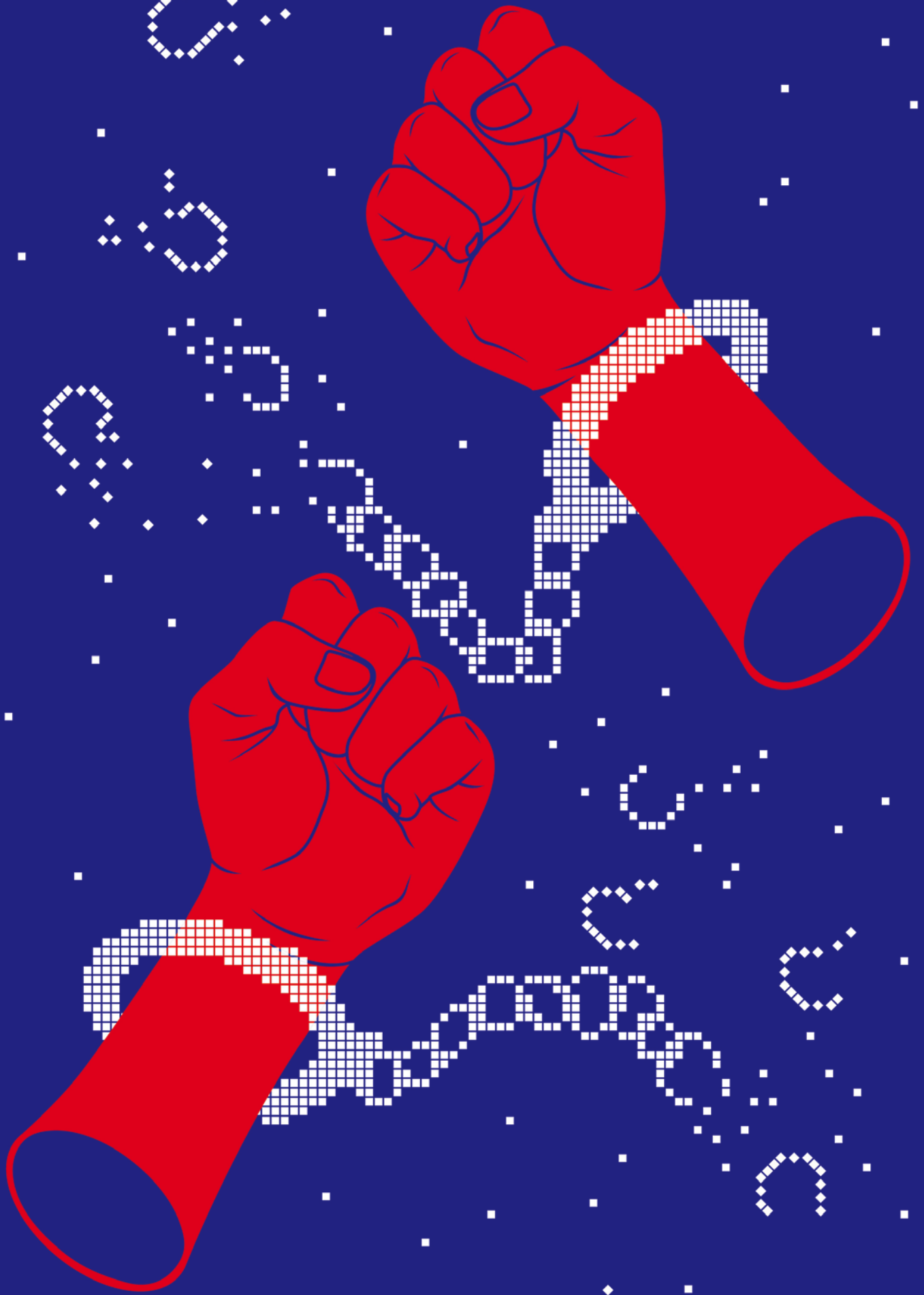
Yes, immediately **17.3%**

Yes, over 10 years **33.3%**

Yes, over 20 years **22.8%**

Yes, over 50 years **11.6%**

Not at all **15.0%**



The revolution will not be automated

Asserting a place for humans within the technosocial gestalt

ACCORDING TO A popular apocryphal tale, the United States and Soviet Union both realized during the space race that a standard pen would not work in orbit. NASA spent millions of dollars to develop an “anti-gravity” pen that would. The Soviets used a pencil.

The story is not true. However, as analogy, it helpfully illustrates a critical point at the heart of law- and policy-making aimed at preparing society for another transitional era of technology-driven labour upheaval. NASA faced a simple problem obfuscated by rapidly advancing technology, so the counterfactual space agency assumed the solution would also need to be on the cutting edge. In reality, both the problem (how to write) and solution (with a pencil) were manageable based on well-worn ways of thinking and ideas that long pre-existed, needing only to be taken up in earnest.

The point here is that if we focus too much on the new technology itself, we risk overlooking the more central questions, such as making sure our astronauts are fairly compensated and won't run out of oxygen while scribing away on humanity's behalf. We risk missing the belt for the asteroids, so to speak. Or, in today's terms, we are missing the labour rights and income inequality issues for the job-automating, artificially intelligent robots.

It will not be enough, to meet the challenge that automation presents, to sit back and hope that the industrial robot revolution eventually generates enough commercializable innovation and new jobs to accommodate displaced humans, let alone to ensure that they thrive in the future of work. Rather, we should be preparing a comprehensive package of new laws and social insurance reforms (e.g., to EI and other systems) that can guarantee maximum sociopolitical and economic equity in response to both conventional, eroding employment models and the emerging, often more precarious models that platform capitalism (popularly known as the “gig economy”) facilitates, and that automation and artificial intelligence appear set to accelerate.

To return to our analogy, AI did not cause today's yawning wealth gap, which we can lay at the feet of all-too-human capitalist structures, modes of thinking and governance. However, attacking inequality first, with political and economic tools already at hand, would make dealing with a potentially AI-overrun future much less daunting.

In 2016, Sunil Johal, policy director of the Mowat Centre, and Mowat policy associate Jordann Thirgood released a report called *Working Without a Net: Rethinking Canada's Social Policy in the New Age of Work*. The report analyzes how Canadian labour will be affected by both job automation and platform capitalism, and concludes with a slate of astutely broad-minded policy recommendations for how governments might futureproof certain sectors. Call it a just transition for the digital age. Among Johal and Thirgood's recommendations are a universal child care program paid for through progressive taxation, more investment in affordable housing, and the expansion of health care to include a universal pharmacare program.

What is striking here is how similar these digital transition policies are to the measures frequently assigned to the just transition for carbon economy workers. Those grappling with two of the most significant questions confronting our collective vision for the future have drawn the same overall conclusions: remedying socioeconomic inequality, strengthening safety nets for the vulnerable, and divesting from certain belief systems around labour and value are all integral to the decarbonization of some industries and what might in the far distance come to be seen as the re-humanization of work.

Lost in these separate conversations is how reforms such as national child care or affordable housing would create a more democratic and equitable society for all of us, as people, not only as “workers.” They are valuable and necessary reforms to a just future in their own right, independent of what else that future holds.

Indeed, were such laws and systems already a reality—better employment standards, for example, and fairer wealth distribution—AI-driven automation might not be such cause for alarm in the first place. Technological change on the scale we appear to be expecting today would arrive genuinely as a boon that all members of society could equally benefit from, as the welfare-state economist John Maynard Keynes predicted. Instead, governments must now play catch-up and fearlessly course-correct at scale.

Inquiring into the chasm between Keynes's vision and today's reality, anthropologist David Graeber asserts, in his well-known essay *On the Phenomenon of Bullshit Jobs*, “The answer clearly isn't economic.” Equally, the answer clearly isn't technological. It is, as Graeber goes on to state, “moral and political.” When it comes to ensuring a

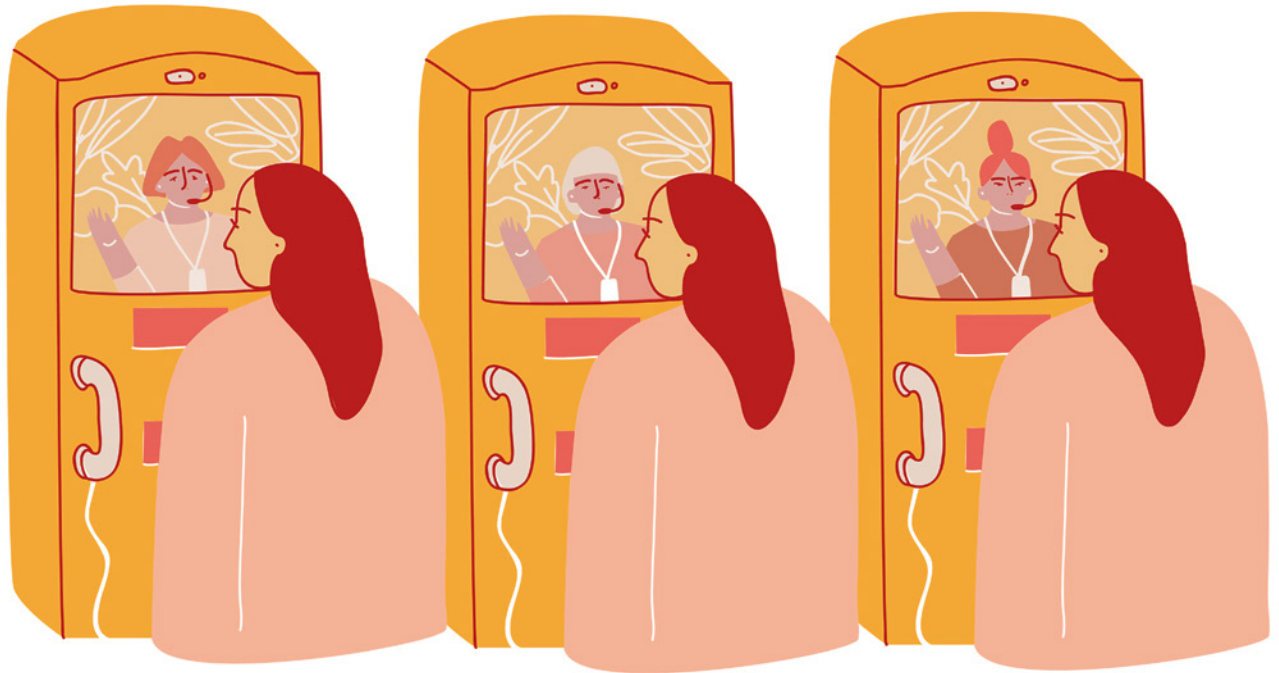


ILLUSTRATION BY ALISHA DAVIDSON

just transition to a sustainable and democratic society in which all individuals may thrive, neither carbon nor Silicon will do. Rather, those obligated to act in the public interest must exercise ironclad political will and ethical courage to ensure no one is left behind in the wake of technological innovation and progress.

All of the above is not to say that digital rights are separate from a just transition for labour in the digital age. On the contrary, many central digital rights issues play out in the context of employment relationships, such as the right to privacy online, freedom of expression, online content moderation, and algorithmic accountability. In this sense of protecting people's rights as exercised through and made meaningful on the internet, in the context of their rights as workers, digital rights are labour rights.

Three broad principles emerged from a panel I attended at the RightsCon 2018 conference in Toronto this May. The panel, titled "Robots and Rights: Exploring the Impacts of Automation on the Future of Work," raised some of the same issues as Johal (who was on the panel) and Thirgood in their report. At the heart of these principles is recognizing the reality that fundamental sociopolitical and economic inequities are deeply entrenched in Canada today and predate the emergence of artificial intelligence.

First, the growing wealth gap requires intrepid action to address meaningfully. Though average wages have stagnated, the country's top 1% of the population by income had accumulated 15% of Canada's total household wealth by 2011. A just transition involves establishing socioeconomic structures and systems that distribute wealth, profits and economic value more equitably across different income brackets.

For example, speakers on the RightsCon panel I attended pointed out that when it comes to digital innovation, tax policy favours capital at the expense of labour, by incentivizing "innovation" through tax credits and discouraging support for and investment in workers through tax liability. Additionally, the surplus profits that companies accrue, and which owners pocket through automation, flow neither back to workers themselves nor into improving society as a whole, particularly after taking into account systematic and aggressive tax avoidance practices.

It is no coincidence that recent years have seen researchers and media give more serious consideration to the idea of a universal basic income (UBI). Regardless of one's opinion of the UBI itself, that a primary response to the AI revolution might be a socioeconomic policy that dates back, in Canadian political discourse, to the 1930s—and was piloted in Manitoba in the 1970s—again demonstrates how technological advancements can be the catalyst for reform, but are likely not the lens through which the most effective solutions will materialize.

Second, all stakeholders in our shared society must learn to acknowledge and validate the many kinds of unpaid, invisible, undervalued, discounted and often gendered or racialized labour on which society relies. That, in turn, requires explicitly recognizing and fairly compensating such work on par with the kinds of jobs that Canadian society currently rewards.

One speaker on the RightsCon panel suggested the answer to automation may lie not in "more jobs," but "different jobs." This could mean replacing displaced knowledge and manual work with "empathy work," examples of which include senior care, health care, childrearing, community organizing or relationships management. These high-effort

interactions do not often count as formal “work,” even though they demand a high degree of emotional labour, time and energy to carry out, particularly if they occur in the workplace on top of one’s formal job description. They are tasks most frequently carried out by women, visible minorities and other marginalized individuals, often without recognition, acknowledgement or pay.

Johal and Thirgood recommend investments that could drive new generations of workers toward careers in empathy and caring fields, similar to the current attention paid to increasing enrolment in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Critically, placing an equal value on the caring economy as on stereotypical ideas about innovation would contribute to breaking down gender stereotypes, instilling greater respect for such work, and ensuring fair and higher pay and benefits across the workforce.

In the context of digital policy, content moderation on online platforms usually arises as a freedom of expression issue. This is also a good example of devalued labour. Content moderators spend their days clicking through the worst and most violent, abusive, graphic and traumatizing material that humanity has to offer. They work for little pay, no benefits or security (as many are contractors), less recognition and esteem compared to coder colleagues, thankless outcomes, and at the high human cost of their psychological well-being.

Automating content moderation, despite what Mark Zuckerberg tells the U.S. Congress, is unlikely in the near future due to the difficulty of training AI to assess borderline or nuanced cases correctly. Late 2017 saw Facebook and Google announcing plans to hire 10,000 more moderators each. In *Bullshit Jobs*, Graeber observed, “[I]n our society, there seems a general rule that, the more obviously one’s work benefits other people, the less one is likely to be paid for it.” This rule applies as much to those who make the internet at all bearable as to their offline counterparts who care for and maintain the infrastructure and functioning state of our physical and

relational worlds. Canada should seize the opportunity that the automation upheaval gives us to flip that formula on its head.

Third and last, the Canadian government should respond to mass automation by strengthening protection for workers’ rights across the board, to insure against increased moral hazard and exploitation on the part of AI- and automation-equipped businesses. Digital rights issues abound in this context.

For example, the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), implemented in May to great fanfare and trepidation after a two-year grace period, specifically addresses workers’ data. This matters because employment is often a battleground for privacy rights. Activities such as monitoring employees’ internet use, keylogging and ubiquitous tracking of detailed metrics regarding physical location, health, communications and work performance likely cross the line from legitimate business interests to invasion of personal privacy. They also risk infringing upon workers’ freedom of expression or freedom of association—rights particularly fundamental in a labour justice context.

The GDPR strengthens protections for EU workers in at least three notable ways. First, the regulation does not only apply to full-time employees but also to other individuals whose data enters a company’s orbit, such as job candidates and part-time workers. Second, according to an Article 29 Working Party opinion, employees mostly *cannot* consent under GDPR. This recognizes the inherent power imbalance between employers and employees, and in many cases will force employers who want to collect and use workers’ data to find other legal grounds to do so.

Third, the GDPR generally prohibits relying solely on automated decisions that result in legal or “similarly significant” consequences for an individual, such as hiring or dismissal. In her book *Weapons of Math Destruction*, about algorithmic discrimination and non-accountability, Cathy O’Neil relates that in the United States, commercial truck drivers work with installed devices logging every

element of their driving while a camera stays trained on their faces. Companies use such mandatory surveillance data to assess routes, driver performance and risk scores, among other variables, which are then fed into systems notorious for errors and that harm real people due to making decisions based on their distorted or mistaken data shadows.

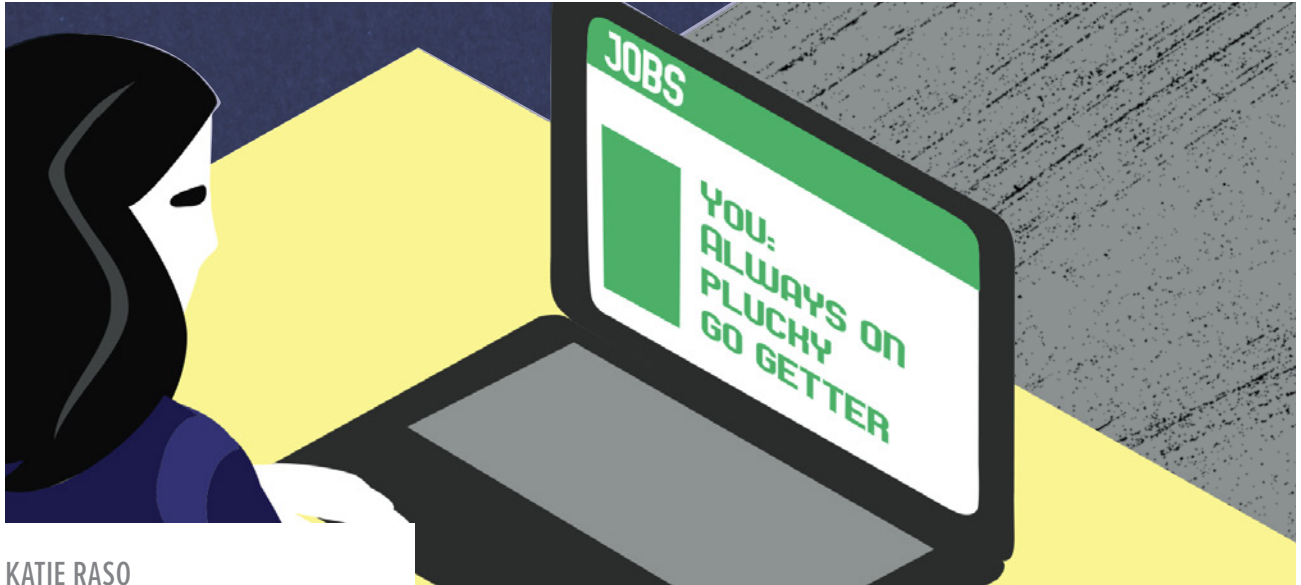
It remains to be seen how the impact of the GDPR will play out on the ground, but as far as privacy and data protection rights are concerned, Canadian lawmakers concerned with a just digital transition may want to start casting their eyes across the pond for inspiration.

Despite the severe and widespread concerns with algorithmic transparency and the opacity of AI-driven automation, their arrival has made one thing quite clear: our present-day society is not ready, and it has nothing to do with the new technologies themselves.

Increasing income inequality, undervalued and unrecognized labour, a growing wealth gap, the erosion of workers’ rights, widespread work precarity, policies systemically favouring capital at the expense of labour, and an outdated social safety net are the natural result of capitalist logic and its institutions set up to govern Canadian society. They are old problems, albeit now with a robotic twist.

If we do not address these problems directly for what they are, independent of the technology that brought them into sharper relief, we risk sorely misdirecting the future of work in Canada. But more than that, we risk squandering the current political momentum, popular interest and ethical self-awareness to bring about the free, equitable and democratic society we should already have.

A just transition does not mean transforming just enough to preserve a broken status quo. Done right, a just transition could be transcendent. And there would be nothing artificial or automated about it. **M**



KATIE RASO

ILLUSTRATION BY KATIE RASO

Disability and the job churn

For disabled workers, it's not enough to do more with less. In the new economy, you've got to do it with a 24/7 smile.

IN 2016, Finance Minister Bill Morneau told reporters that millennials needed to get used to “job churn,” a career path eked out from short-term and precarious work. Prime Minister Trudeau welcomed the idea of the churn, saying that changing jobs frequently allowed workers to have new experiences. But treating growing precarity as the welcome and inevitable evolution of Canada’s job market shifts undue burden onto workers: if you are struggling to exist in this new system, it’s not the system’s fault. It’s yours for not being resilient enough.

The “job churn” celebrates the notion of the grind, glorifies busyness and encourages abandonment of any semblance of work-life balance. Good things come to those who hustle, we are told. This new intensified employment landscape, with its increased expectations and decreased protections for workers, is simply not a possibility for many people, and it leaves disabled Canadians totally sidelined.

For the 10.1% of working-age Canadians who are disabled, struggling to find full employment is already a churn. Before getting to why that’s

the case, some housekeeping on the term *disability* is needed.

For the purposes of this article, disabled workers are those individuals who are or want to be in the labour force who also have a physical or mental disability. Physical disabilities may be visible (related to mobility, for example) or invisible (chronic illnesses). Mental disabilities include mental illness (like post-traumatic stress disorder), neurodevelopmental disorders (autism) and learning disabilities (dyslexia). Statistics Canada delineates disability into 10 categories: pain related, dexterity, developmental, mobility, flexibility, hearing, mental health, memory, learning, and seeing.

Canadians with disabilities face exceptionally high rates of unemployment. Over 400,000 disabled working-age Canadians are currently unemployed, despite being willing and able to work. While Canada’s unemployment rate is currently sitting at 5.8%, the rate for disabled Canadians is much higher. Canadians with “mild” disabilities are most likely to find employment, and their unemployment rate is 35%. For those with “severe” disabilities that rate jumps to 74%. Put another way,

for every one person with a “severe” disability who finds work, three do not.

When disabled workers do find employment it is often in sales, and they make far less money than their abled counterparts. While the median personal income in 2012 for a Canadian worker was \$31,200, for disabled workers it ranged from \$10,800 to \$24,200 depending on their disability type. “As a result,” researcher Michael Prince laments, “Canadians with disabilities have not seen the promise of equality of opportunity in the labour market fulfilled.”

In the 1970s and 1980s, the federal government introduced several anti-discrimination and employment equity measures designed to reduce barriers to employment. The Employment Equity Act, for example, requires employers to be proactive in identifying and eliminating employment barriers against persons in four designated groups: women, “visible minorities” or racialized people, people with disabilities, and Indigenous peoples. Similarly, the Canadian Human Rights Act states that employers have a duty to accommodate disabled employees and to take all steps

short of undue hardship to eliminate discrimination.

But legislation on its own has not addressed the divide between disabled workers and the rest of the workforce. Between 13.5% and 34.6% of disabled workers believe they have been refused a job in the past five years because of their disability. More broadly, a recent BMO survey found that 48% of Canadians “believe a person is more likely to be hired or promoted if they hide their disability.” Given both these findings, it is not surprising that 20.4% to 36.7% of Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) respondents reported that their employer was unaware of their disability.

More than 30 years after anti-discrimination measures were enacted, people with disabilities continue to face discrimination while looking for work and “experience additional disadvantages such as lower compensation and weaker job tenure,” according to CSD reports. Clearly, the work to eliminate discrimination and barriers facing disabled Canadians has been left unfinished.

Rather than assessing where the failures are in the policies we’ve enacted, our leaders are pressing ahead with unbridled enthusiasm into the churn, leaving disabled workers to navigate a gig economy with even fewer protections than the broken system we had before.

The gig economy refers to an employment landscape wherein temporary positions are common, if not the norm, and organizations contract with independent labourers for parcels of work (bit jobs). Though the arrival of app-driven employers like Uber, Upwork and Hyr gets much of the attention when we talk about “job churn,” temp agencies, zero-hour contracts (i.e., short-notice retail shifts) and declining union membership all contribute to today’s rise in precarious forms of work. According to Randstad Canada, freelancers, independent contractors and consultants now make up 20–30% of the Canadian workforce. More notably, 85% of the companies surveyed by Randstad intend to adopt a more “agile workforce” in the near future.

What makes the gig economy so alluring for employers is that it shifts a great deal of risk and responsibility to workers. Gig employers have lower overhead costs. Drivers for Uber, for example, provide their own cars. Workers with Hyr are classified as independent contractors and, as such, restaurants hiring them need not contribute to their CPP or EI. Upstart allows firms to completely outsource all their creative and clerical needs.

So where do disabled workers fit in? Duty to accommodate states that employers are required to address employment barriers with one exception: the Bona Fide Occupational Requirement (BFOR). An employer can argue that they do not have a duty to accommodate if an aspect of a job cannot be modified or adapted without undue hardship for the employer.

The gig economy, which has stripped away employers’ responsibilities to their employees, has created an entire labour ecosystem within the BFOR loophole. It is a labour market that survives on nimbleness and just-in-time delivery of labour’s services, a system that by design does not have room for accommodation, especially not a disabled worker’s need for an adapted schedule or access to assistive devices, for example.

While the gig economy is a subsection within Canada’s labour market, its ethos helps shape the broader employment environment wherein millennials (born between the early 1980s and early 2000s) are increasingly told that they need to settle for less.

The Poverty and Employment in Southern Ontario research project (PEPSO) reports that 52.9% of non-unionized workers aged 25–44 don’t have health benefits and 47.7% don’t have paid time off from work. Benefits are critically important for disabled workers as more than three-quarters of people with disabilities take prescription medication.

The medication issue speaks to the larger vulnerability that disabled workers now face in Canada’s changing labour landscape. Increasingly, disabled millennials looking for work are reading job postings whose details

subtly suggest the employer is only interested in hiring abled workers.

In advance of writing this article, I asked a group of disabled millennials to tell me what key words in job postings cause them to self-select out of applying for work. At the top of the list were ideal candidate descriptors like *plucky, high energy, able to go above and beyond, enthusiastic, and always on*. When it comes to duty descriptions, the workers who spoke to me said their red flags were around being expected to take on extra evening and weekend work, and to strive for perfect attendance (sometimes incentivized through bonuses).

From these conversations, a clear image begins to form of the working world that disabled millennials navigate. Yes, Mr. Morneau, it is one that is shaped by churn culture.

These postings go beyond a mentality of doing less with more. They are looking for gig-style availability from their employees: always on, always ready to jump in on a project regardless of the hour, their health at the moment, and whether overtime will be compensated. Even job postings that end with accessibility statements paint a picture of their ideal candidate as someone who might need accommodation but would never ask for it—because they are so grateful for the work and so enthusiastic about being part of the team.

This climate leaves disabled millennials with an impossible choice: apply for jobs that expect the successful candidate to be “always on” and risk declining health to meet these expectations, or try to find a workplace that isn’t operating under a maximum extraction approach to management. Increasingly, those positions are harder and harder to find.

With the federal government celebrating flexible employment there’s an obvious lack of political will to ensure that disabled Canadians are able to pursue meaningful careers. It’s not enough to shrug off this marginalization of disabled workers as the cost of innovation. Over a million Canadians are waiting for the employment equity measures of the last century to take hold and for a guarantee that the coming churn won’t leave them in tatters. **M**



FIONA JEFFRIES

Getting to \$15 and Fairness

How large numbers of society's most vulnerable organized and won a historic victory

ONTARIO IS IN the middle of a labour organizing renaissance. On November 22, 2017, the Fight for \$15 and Fairness campaign celebrated the provincial legislature's passing of Bill 148, the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act. The campaign's feisty, creative struggle to raise the minimum wage and establish a series of worker protections for those toiling in precarious jobs achieved a remarkable triumph that changed the lives of millions of Ontarians. What makes these legislated gains even more impressive is the fact that it was workers employed in precarious jobs who, through their organizing efforts, made this possible.

But the crucial role played by workers in this story has garnered surprisingly scant attention. Big media outlets focused on chronicling the mounting anxiety among Canadian businesses, with some additional

commentary centring on the significance of these changes in relation to the machinations of the embattled (and since vanquished) Liberal Party of Ontario. If some commentators were ready to attribute the new law to the force of former premier Kathleen Wynne's moral convictions, others saw in it no more than craven political opportunism heading into the 2018 provincial election.

For their part, the labour and left media portrayed the passing of Bill 148 as a long-fought victory and, given the worker-hostile climate in the province, an extremely surprising one. But stories tended to move too quickly from

March for a \$15/hr minimum wage at the University of Minnesota, April 2015.

FIBONACCI BLUE (FLICKR CREATIVE COMMONS)

the campaign itself to the tremendous gains it extracted: the unprecedented timeline for raising the minimum wage to \$15; the introduction of equal pay for part-time workers and some paid sick time; the reigning in of the abuses of misclassification, zero-hour contracts and on-call scheduling; the re-introduction of card-based certification in some sectors where precarious work dominates; and the adoption of more stringent enforcement mechanisms.

It is hard to disagree that these gains are well worth reporting. For the millions of workers who will benefit directly and indirectly, the new legislation means not only an increase in wages but also an increase in workers' control over their working conditions. But it is to the detriment of the left that we have failed to pay more attention to the on-the-ground organizing efforts represented by the \$15 and Fairness campaign, especially

since workers in precarious jobs are often seen as paragons of the growing ranks of the unorganized.

A difficult sector to organize

Scholars who study the rise of precarious jobs over the last two decades don't always see eye to eye, but they generally agree on how difficult precarious workplaces are to organize. Precarity makes workers reluctant to protest their condition, they argue; pervasive fear and vulnerability achieve the same results for business as Pinkerton guards used to with bats and bullets.

Temp worker pools and the fast-food, retail and building services sectors present other big challenges for organizers. The jobs they offer tend to be massively dispersed, and workers may not even know who their employer is. The construction crews erecting Toronto's highrise condos or laying out Ottawa's new light rail transit line are often contracted by an array of employers and subcontractors. Outsourced building janitors can find their employer has changed overnight because the contract was flipped to another firm. Temp agency workers move constantly from workplace to workplace, rarely knowing where they will be from week to week.

Such a challenging organizing landscape may help explain why some unions and progressives initially thought the demands of the campaign were unrealistic. It seemed reasonable to assume that the Liberal government of the day would not support such a high wage demand; after all, even the NDP's minimum wage promises were capped at \$14 an hour. Given this context, it is more than pertinent to ask: how did some of society's most vulnerable workers manage to execute a winning campaign yielding a range of unprecedented legislative gains that many in the labour movement believed were impossible?

How the victories were won

In seeking an answer to this question, we may be tempted to draw comparisons to the Fight for \$15 campaign currently being fought across the United States. Not only has this struggle garnered a huge amount of publicity, but it has also seen some significant if more uneven (compared to Ontario) gains. The City of Seattle passed a \$15-an-hour wage ordinance, for example, and other cities have achieved victories around non-wage demands such as scheduling rules. In New York City, workers must know at least two weeks in advance when they will be working.

The Ontario and U.S. campaigns share a few other things in common, including the wage demand for \$15 an hour, the devotion to improving working conditions beyond income, and an emphasis on legislative reform rather than seeking change at the level of individual employers. It is also just as difficult to access precarious workplaces in Ontario as in the U.S. For this reason, both campaigns have deployed tactics based on creative action, including targeting corporate brands, lobbying government officials, and mobilizing in the streets outside workplaces and government offices.

But there are also important differences between the campaigns. Two main distinguishing features are the distributed and grassroots character of the movement in Ontario and the scale of the struggle on each side of the border. In the U.S., the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), one of the country's largest unions, led the Fight for \$15 campaign for many years, pouring millions of dollars into it and helping 400 New York City fast-food workers stage (in 2012) the sector's biggest strike action in U.S. history.

In Ontario, by contrast, the \$15 and Fairness campaign has been run out of the Toronto-based Worker's Action Centre (WAC), a small, spunky outfit with a skeletal staff of full-time organizers. Its limited resources betray the fact that \$15 and Fairness has received nowhere near the level of support from labour that the Fight for \$15 once did in the U.S.

The second distinguishing feature is that in many states in the U.S., wages and working conditions are legislated at the municipal level, whereas in Ontario minimum wages and most workplace protections are provincially regulated. For this reason, the \$15 and Fairness campaign had to encompass the whole province rather than targeting individual cities.

In 2014, when WAC set out to reignite an earlier effort to raise the minimum wage, its staff and activist base began by building up campaign groups in scores of cities all around Ontario.

"The organizing infrastructure in the province still hasn't recovered from the Harris days," argues Fight for \$15 and Fairness organizer Karen Cocq. "As time goes by, more and more people lack the experience, resources and capacity to be able to creatively mobilize on labour issues in and outside of unions." This frayed organizing infrastructure meant that workers needed to be given the tools and the experience of organizing if the campaign was to go anywhere.

I met with Cocq recently to discuss what made \$15 and Fairness so successful. Out of this conversation emerged three key organizing priorities that drove the campaign and enabled it to build the kind of grassroots power necessary to bring about structural change.

1. Echoing workers' complex and urgent issues

When I ask Cocq how the campaign's issues, concerns and priorities were identified, she says they came directly from the communities where the organizing was taking place, "by starting with asking questions." It was through this process of talking and listening to workers in precarious jobs that organizers grasped the importance of expanding the parameters of the original campaign to increase the minimum wage.

Cocq recounts how, through a constant cycle of focus groups, sidewalk discussions and kitchen table encounters, it became abundantly clear that workers were concerned about a range of problems. A higher minimum wage, organizers were told, would only address one aspect of multifaceted challenges, like having to send a sick child to school because they can't take a day off work, trying to

juggle more than one part-time, casual or on-call gig, and navigating child care or school given erratic schedules.

Many of the “beyond the wage” issues raised through the Ontario campaign relate to the need to attend to the often invisible background conditions that make life possible and bearable—from having time to buy and prepare food for oneself or one’s family to taking care of aging parents. This kind of unpaid work has an obvious gender component, as women still shoulder disproportionate responsibility for managing the complex demands of domestic and social life. And a disproportionate number of workers in precarious work are women, especially newcomer and racialized women. It is not surprising, then, that women made up a significant share of the campaign’s activist base.

The incorporation of demands beyond the minimum wage into the \$15 and Fairness campaign reflected the priorities and desires expressed by the workers. WAC was able to recognize these demands and bring them to the forefront thanks to a pre-existing and on-going commitment to building relationships with them.

2. Mobilizing through relationship building

\$15 and Fairness benefitted from WAC’s years of building a membership base in ways that reflect this commitment to creating and strengthening relationships, to build power from the ground up. Cocq relates this approach to a model of worker-centred organizing that seeks to build workers’ confidence and leadership through campaigns that can win concrete gains. “The \$15 and Fairness campaign took that model [and] just kind of massified it.”

It all begins with a solid understanding that the model is “really about relationship building,” says Cocq. “And that’s everything from building relationships with workers to building alliances. It’s that deep relationship building that creates the infrastructures you can then tap into to be able to mobilize people. Relationships instill trust and encourage a willingness to

get involved. Relationships are social power.”

As straightforward as this sounds, it is something that Cocq believes many of us have forgotten: “[If] you think meetings are the way things happen then you’re not seeing three-quarters of the things people are doing, things that are happening, the networks people have, the relationships people have and how you turn all that into social power. It is a latent social power that people use in all kinds of ways, whether it’s a community feast at the Gurdwara or a protest in front of the Ministry of Labour.”

Key to the relationship-centred form of organizing pursued by the \$15 and Fairness campaign is figuring out how to nurture those people in the movement that are best positioned to tap into relationship networks and build their leadership.

“It’s not me who should be going to Rexdale (in Toronto) to talk to newcomer Somali youth working in temp agencies,” says Cocq. “But we have workers who have relationships in—and are part of—those communities.” She recounts how it wouldn’t be unusual to see, at WAC meetings, “workers who range in age from 21 to 64, who are from all parts of the city, who speak Punjabi, Somali, Spanish, Mandarin or Tamil, who are white Anglo working class folks, all in a room together strategizing, making decisions together, learning from each other.”

3. Building workers’ leadership

This relationship-building approach differs markedly from established top-down political campaigns, which tend to focus on activating the already mobilized. “If we can invest in [workers] so we can actualize those relationships, [we can] convert the fire that they have into something bigger,” Cocq adds. “That builds a kind of resilience and responsiveness, a diversity of people power and experience that is invaluable.”

For this reason, a third priority of the campaign is to invest heavily in “building up a diverse and broad group of worker organizers who could lead the campaign’s efforts in their workplaces,

communities, schools and places of worship.” Cocq points to the example of a woman who became a \$15 and Fairness organizer in Toronto’s Regent Park. “Her social skills were her organizing skills,” Cocq says, explaining how this woman met regularly with other women in the neighbourhood. “She used their existing social networks and relationships to organize with them in a way that that worked for them.”

Developing this deep level of recognition and trust among workers and their communities helped the campaign to cultivate a spirit of courage and audacity, but also a sense of ownership over its ultimate success.

A few days after the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act went into effect on January 1, 2018, a few Tim Hortons workers in Cobourg, Ontario used social media to declare their boss was punishing them in response to the new legislation. Their postings went viral, triggering online calls for a boycott of the beloved brand. \$15 and Fairness organizers held press rallies and staged demonstrations outside Tim Hortons franchises.

“Workers know that the government didn’t just hand down this victory,” says Cocq. “They know they won this.” For many, she adds, this feeling translated into a long-term commitment to struggling for better working and living conditions within and beyond the workplace.

Instilling such a long-term commitment to struggle matters even more now that the Progressive Conservatives are back in power in Ontario. When we met in May, Cocq told me she saw ceaseless organizing as “the key to dealing with the inevitable corporate backlash to increased worker power and protections.”

These were prescient words: the day after Ontario’s provincial election, an op-ed in the *Financial Post* wasted no time calling on Premier-designate Doug Ford to repeal Bill 148. In this new political landscape, there is a clear need to continue organizing in order to defend the movement’s important gains. **M**



The good news page

Compiled by
Elaine Hughes

Five years after Tallinn, the Estonian capital, made public transit free for registered city residents, the whole country is getting on board. As of July 1, Estonia will be “the largest 24/7 free public transit zone in the world,” where it will be “possible (if complicated) to travel by bus from one end of this 1.3-million-strong Baltic nation to the other without paying a cent,” writes Feargus O’Sullivan. / A fleet of 18 electric buses are to be tested on five routes in three Canadian cities (Vancouver, Brampton and York Region) as part of a demonstration project organized and funded by the Canadian Urban Transit Research and Innovation Consortium (CUTRIC), a nonprofit outfit founded in 2014 with nearly 100 public and private sector members. / U.S. cities are also showing enthusiasm for electric buses, with New York City trialing models as part of a larger bid to reduce emissions. Last month, Los Angeles announced it will spend \$36.1 million on electric buses, joining London (U.K.) and Paris (France) in pledging to go electric by 2025. The Chinese city of Shanghai (pop. 25 million)

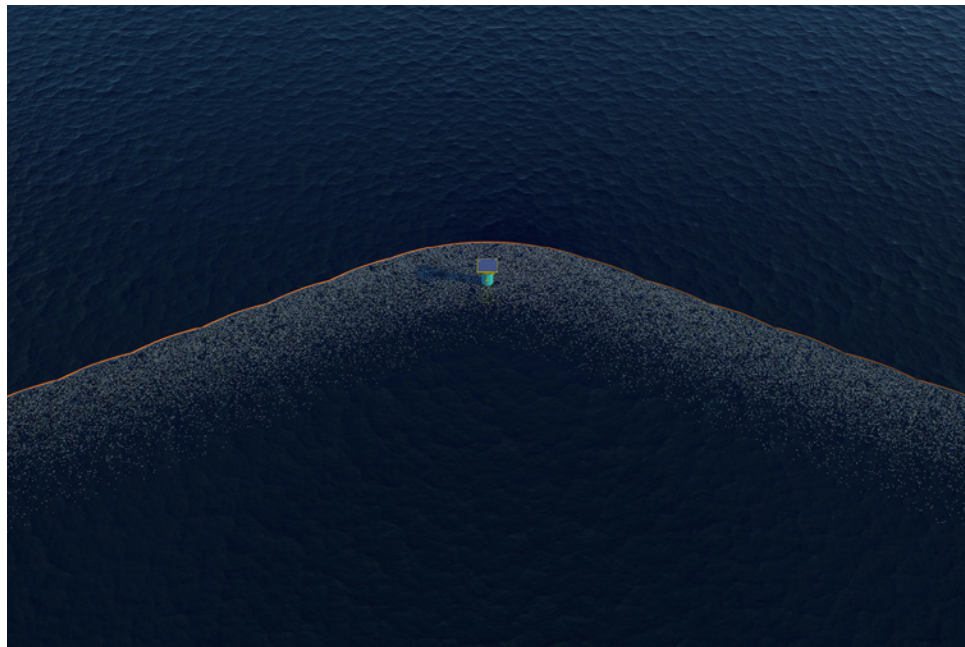
went completely electric in transit last year, and China is leading the world in e-bus use, with more than 350,000 on the road. / CITYLAB / INSIDEEVs / Curbed

Governors in the U.S. Climate Alliance, made up of states representing 40% of the population and half the country’s GDP, have renewed their pledge to the Paris Agreement a year after President Trump withdrew U.S. support for the initiative. / California, which is part of the alliance, has just announced that beginning January 2020, all new homes and apartment buildings in the state must have some form of solar power—a move expected to reduce greenhouse gases equivalent to taking 115,000 cars off the road. / In May, Chile became the first country in the Americas to ban plastic bags. “We have taken a fundamental step to take better care of Chile and the planet,” tweeted President Sebastián Piñera. “Today

we are more prepared to leave a better planet to our children, grandchildren and the generations to come.” / Dutch engineering prodigy Boyan Slat was 19 when he developed the Ocean Array Cleanup system (pictured) for removing plastic from the Great Pacific garbage patch (between Hawaii and California) where the pollutant has been accumulating. The system will finally set sail from San Francisco this summer and is hoped to have cleaned up half the plastic garbage in the patch within five years. / EcoWatch / Futurism / Lifegate

Plants are constantly sending and receiving signals that determine their growth strategies based on who (which other plants or trees) are doing what nearby. A new study published in the journal *Plos One* appears to confirm that plants will secrete chemicals into the soil when their leaves brush up against other plants, and that this message can be

“learned.” New plants put into the soil of an uprooted plant that had been tricked into thinking it would be crowded out will also start to divert resources from root to above-ground growth to compete for space. / Whitehorse, Yukon resident Lone Christensen’s sourdough starter, alive since at least 1897, will be entered into Belgian baker Karl De Smedt’s “library” of about 100 different strains and shared with Italian researchers who are studying the DNA profiles of the world’s sourdoughs. / Alberta’s edible plants are going organic, especially in the province’s most northerly municipality, Mackenzie County, which has the highest number of organic farmers, supported by a two-year, \$300,000 crop diversification program. According to Statistics Canada, 90% of the people in Mackenzie County work in agriculture or forestry. / Guardian (U.K.) / Alberta Farm Express





JIM STANFORD

What does progressive trade policy look like?

THE PROGRESSIVE ECONOMICS FORUM awards a biennial prize named after John Kenneth Galbraith to recognize lasting contributions to progressive economic theory and policy in Canada. The 2018 Galbraith Prize was awarded to Jim Stanford, former economist with Unifor (previously the Canadian Auto Workers), long-time research associate with the CCPA and currently Director of the Centre for Future Work in Sydney Australia. Stanford delivered a lecture on occasion of his award at the Canadian Economics Association meetings in Montreal in June, on the theory and practice of progressive trade policy. The following excerpt from his talk leads off our Monitor feature on the promises and problems with the Trudeau government's so-called *Progressive Trade Agenda*.

I am humbled and deeply honoured to receive the Galbraith Prize, named after one of my true heroes. I was lucky enough once to meet Dr. Galbraith in person, when I was a graduate student at Cambridge University. He was a towering figure, both intellectually...and in his physical stature! I am also incredibly grateful to the 14 individuals who co-nominated me for this award, and to the selection committee of the Progressive Economics Forum. Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank the previous winners of the Galbraith Prize: Mel Watkins, Kari Polanyi Levitt, John Loxley, Mike McCracken, Lars Osberg and Marjorie

Griffin Cohen. On top of their enormous contributions to progressive economics in Canada, every one of them has influenced and mentored me personally in important ways; I pledge to return the favour, by supporting up-and-coming progressive economists as they find their role in our struggle to build a more diverse and emancipatory economics.

My lecture today will discuss the need for, and possible components of, a progressive trade policy. Progressive economists in Canada have been fighting neoliberal trade deals for a generation—to the point where we sometimes sound like a broken record. But suddenly, neoliberal trade policy is at a crossroads, and everything is on the table. This reflects the cumulating failures of the existing trade system: in particular, the imbalances and dislocations caused by decades of beggar-thy-neighbour competition to run ever-larger trade surpluses, and the race to the bottom in social, labour and environmental standards that the current business-friendly rulebook of globalization facilitates and endorses.

This moment also reflects a growing crisis in democracy in the advanced capitalist economies. Existing democratic mechanisms are proving inadequate to channel popular discontent in positive, evidence-based directions. Instead, ugly and increasingly dangerous forms of right-wing populism are capitalizing on discontent, creating a platform for inconsistent, arbitrary and ultimately destructive policy responses. Donald Trump and his xenophobic unilateralism is the most important case in point, but the phenomenon is much broader—and, with Doug Ford's election in Ontario, we see it taking firm root in Canada's political culture as well.

Into this ferment, progressives must inject an ambitious, honest and pragmatic vision of how to manage international trade, capital and human flows in ways that protect and enhance living standards, equality and the environment. A progressive understanding of globalization and its effects

must be rooted in our overall alternative analysis of how the capitalist economy works, and doesn't work, and draw on heterodox economic theories of why international trade and investment flows can cause lasting hardship and losses (in contrast to conventional trade theory, which always sees trade as a "win-win" outcome).

In my full lecture (a considerably abridged version of which is published here) I discussed the major channels through which progressive policy tries to make the economy work better for the majority within one national economy. These core strategies are useful in thinking about progressive international trade policy, because exactly the same tools will be important in our efforts to achieve progressive economic outcomes under globalization. The most important strands of progressive strategy include:

1. Stimulating more output and employment through measures like fiscal and monetary policy and other macroeconomic levers. Unemployment always exists in capitalism. But when unemployment is lower, workers are better off, for many reasons.

2. Empowering workers to win a better deal in the distributional struggle that is a hallmark of the economy. This means stronger minimum wage laws and other labour standards, stronger income security programs and other social policies, and stronger unions and collective bargaining.

3. Regulating private production to reduce the harm imposed on workers, communities and the environment—through labour laws, consumer protection standards, environmental measures and more.

4. Challenging the dominance of private investment and production in the economy by establishing and expanding a strong public and non-profit section of the economy, and expanding the sphere of collective social consumption (to supplement private consumption).

These have been the most important ways that progressives, over the history of capitalism, have tried to shape the economy to attain higher living standards, protect the environment and build stronger, more equal communities. To a large extent, describing "progressive trade policy" should start by preserving and enhancing our capacity to apply those same key strategies.

Moreover, it is important to note that the themes listed above, for the most part, are not usually discussed in trade agreements (whether bilateral, multilateral, or at global institutions like the WTO). So focusing on trade *agreements*—what is in them and what is not in them—may not be the most important avenue for achieving a progressive trade *policy*.

Finally, almost all the progress made along those four avenues was achieved through progressive organizing and campaigning at the national or sub-national level, not the international level. So to pursue a progressive vision of international trade, we still need to focus first and foremost on winning progressive policies at the national level—rather than focusing solely on changing the wording of trade agreements or trying to build new international institutions.

In that light, here are 10 key themes that I think are crucial to a progressive vision of globalization, one that is consistent with progressive goals of employment, equity and sustainability:

1. **Preserve the power to regulate.** A crucial tool for limiting the negative effects of private profit-seeking business is government's ability to regulate the conditions and side-effects of private production: through labour laws, consumer protection standards, environmental rules and other means. Neoliberal trade deals define these regulations as "trade barriers," banning many of them, in other cases establishing "ratchet" rules so that the intensity of regulation can only diminish over time. These provisions should be eliminated from trade deals; government can and should retain the authority to regulate any business activity in the public interest.

2. **Active sector development strategies.** To participate successfully in global commerce, every country needs a healthy share of desirable tradable industries—sectors characterized by technology intensity, high productivity and income potential, strong supply chain linkages and strong export orientation. Governments need to actively support these strategic industries (which can include high-value traded services, not just manufacturing and other goods-producing sectors) to maximize potential gains from trade. Ideally, these sector strategies would be negotiated on a multilateral basis, so all countries can attain a fair share of high-value industries, rather than waging a beggar-thy-neighbour war to increase one country's market share at the expense of others'.

3. **End preferences for investors.** Another symptom of the unbalanced priorities of neoliberal trade deals is their extraordinary provisions to protect and privilege businesses and the investors who own them—everything from strengthening patent and copyright restrictions to the anti-democratic judicial mechanisms of investor-state dispute settlement. These preferences have no justification in a progressive policy vision, which is premised precisely on *constraining* the actions of private firms, not privileging their freedom and mobility. Fundamental decisions such as patent systems, company taxes, consumer protection regulations and others should be left fully within the purview of national democratic decision-making.

4. **Regulate capital and currencies.** Flows of foreign direct investment (FDI) can enhance the productive capacity and know-how of the host country, and in some cases deliver benefits to the source economy as well. However, FDI must be held accountable to public interest goals through a thorough review process, to block unproductive investments (like takeovers that do not enhance investment but merely transfer control) and extract commitments from incoming firms to high-value domestic activity (such as global product mandates, commitments to R&D, and more). International financial flows are more volatile, and their benefits more questionable. Hence cross-border financial flows should be tightly constrained through stricter banking regulations (especially governing short-term money flows), limits on international investments by pension funds and other financial institutions, and transactions

taxes. Manipulation of exchange rates is another financial factor that distorts trade patterns. Existing practice allows countries to suppress exchange rates in order to achieve larger trade surpluses. Limiting that practice will be important in a broader system for managing trade imbalances (see below).

5. Invest in public export infrastructure. Canada has obvious need for a massive and lasting expansion of investment in public infrastructure, and the macroeconomic and job-creation benefits of infrastructure spending are well-known. Export infrastructure can be one useful component of this broader infrastructure strategy; investments should be directed into transportation, communication, research and development, and other facilities that support export-oriented enterprises.

6. Market access conditional on human and labour rights. Most free trade deals now pay token attention to labour and environmental issues. But their various “side deals” or special chapters never have real force. Suppression of basic human, labour and environmental rights distorts competitiveness and hence influences production and investment patterns. Limiting this damage requires powerful remedies, not symbolic commitments. Preferential market access under trade deals should be conditional on participating countries meeting basic standards of democracy, human rights, labour rights and environmental protection. Failure to meet universal standards should result in countries losing that access, either through the imposition of significant trade penalties or through exclusion from the trade zone altogether.

7. Meaningful adjustment, transition and training supports. Conventional trade policy also pays lip service to the risk that certain industries and groups of workers may suffer losses because of exposure to international competition. But there is rarely any meaningful commitment to transition, relocation or retraining assistance to help affected workers adapt. As part of a broader focus on job creation (see below), well-funded skills, adjustment and early retirement programs can reduce the human costs of sectoral and employment shifts resulting from international trade.

8. Humane and just immigration. Migration is one of the most important and potentially beneficial aspects of globalization, but also one fraught with hardship and risk. High-quality migration programs should permanently settle migrants (including refugees, who will become ever more numerous), supporting them with services, housing and employment, and protecting them under the same laws and standards that apply to other workers. Temporary migrant labour programs are highly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse; these programs should be phased out (with pathways to permanent migration for existing temporary foreign workers).

9. Manage trade imbalances fairly. Successful export countries (such as China, Germany and Korea) have every incentive, and full permission, under current trade rules to accumulate ongoing surpluses. Their experience of successful export-led growth proves that super-competitive jurisdictions can experience gains from trade far larger

than the modest efficiency improvements predicted in neoclassical trade theory. But those surpluses imply corresponding deficits (and stagnation and unemployment) among their trading partners. We must replace that beggar-thy-neighbour quasi-mercantilism with a more balanced adjustment process that limits trade imbalances and shares the burden of adjustment fairly between both surplus and deficit countries. Trade surplus countries must recycle net earnings into new spending (including imports from other countries) or else face restrictions on access to foreign markets. That recycling would in turn stimulate stronger output and job creation on all sides.

10. An inclusive, fully employed economy. Trade policy elites talk a lot these days about making sure the “gains from trade liberalization are shared more broadly,” conceding that many segments of society have not benefited from globalization (but still not conceding that anyone suffered actual losses). This won’t happen automatically. Indeed, the gains from economic expansion, wherever it comes from, are never broadly shared without active measures to make it so. So an overarching commitment to job creation, economic inclusion and equality is thus the most important prerequisite for ensuring that the large majority of people experience rising incomes and better security. The existence of a consistently inclusive domestic economic agenda explains why opposition to trade liberalization is mild in the social-democratic countries of Europe: there, most people know they won’t be left behind by *any* economic change (whether globalization, technological change or any other), and hence can embrace change rather than resisting it.

This vision of actively managed international trade and investment does not imply erecting barriers to trade, nor restricting the amount of trade. To the contrary, by eliminating deflationary biases inherent in the existing trade system (whereby all countries try to achieve trade surpluses, and deficit countries suppress domestic demand to reduce imports), our progressive approach would stimulate more trade, not less. It cannot therefore be described as protectionist or anti-trade.

The coming years will constitute a turning point for the international trade system, which is coming apart at the seams after decades of imbalance and dislocation. Donald Trump and other erratic populists, who ultimately want to reinforce corporate power (albeit in a more nationalist framework), will not help those suffering under globalization. Instead they will lead the world into intensifying social conflict, recession, and even war.

Into this maelstrom, progressives need to energetically inject a more hopeful and positive vision of how to rein in globalization, seriously address trade imbalances and resulting unemployment, and make rising living standards, inclusion and sustainability the goal of economic policy (including trade policy) rather than an afterthought. This is truly a time for progressive trade economists to think big, and to make our voices heard. **M**

AMY JANZWOOD

Rewiring our “trade brains” for the climate crisis

TRADE ETCHES PATTERNS and relationships into our global economic system that become deeply entrenched over time. This is not dissimilar to the way that neurochemical patterns are etched into our brains in a way that makes overcoming addiction, mental illness or trauma so challenging: perceptual responses are hard to change because they are literally fixed in the cells of our mind. So, too, trade flows and rules, fixed in a web of international agreements, can be difficult to change—even when they are not inherently beneficial for people or the planet.

Much like pipelines and other costly, long-term fossil fuel infrastructure, trade agreements contribute to the rigidity of our carbon-based economy. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), for example, is a key vehicle for the movement of hydrocarbons. Proportionality rules in its energy and trade in goods chapters require Canada to maintain a consistent share of energy exports to the U.S. The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) openly credits NAFTA with the incredible growth in exports of oil and gas, and has suggested that without the agreement the rapid pace of oil sands development would have been “unimaginable.” CAPP continues to lobby the federal government to further ease the movement of hydrocarbons to the U.S. For example, they are asking for a specific rule of origin for diluent, products added to bitumen oil to make pipeline transport easier.

In the current NAFTA renegotiations, environmental NGOs and activists have challenged these and other trade rules that interfere with Canada’s ability to protect public health and the environment, such as NAFTA’s investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) process. In May, Canada lost its legal challenge to an investor-state ruling claiming the environmental assessment process that rejected a planned quarry in Nova Scotia violated the U.S. mining company’s minimum standards of treatment in NAFTA. Notwithstanding Canada’s decision to purchase the Alberta-B.C. Trans Mountain pipeline, current U.S. owner Kinder Morgan has claimed a right to file a NAFTA lawsuit as a last resort in case its pipeline expansion falls through. In both cases, the rigidity of trade agreements—to the benefit of fossil fuel companies—is apparent.

In April, I was part of a gathering of trade activists, organized by the Council of Canadians, tasked with reimagining Canada’s trade agenda, specifically in my case to make trade more environmentally sustainable. There are a few clear starting points. Removing ISDS provisions from all trade agreements and taking the proportionality clause out of NAFTA are two of them. Canada won’t be able to meet its climate targets if it can’t simply—without penalties or the

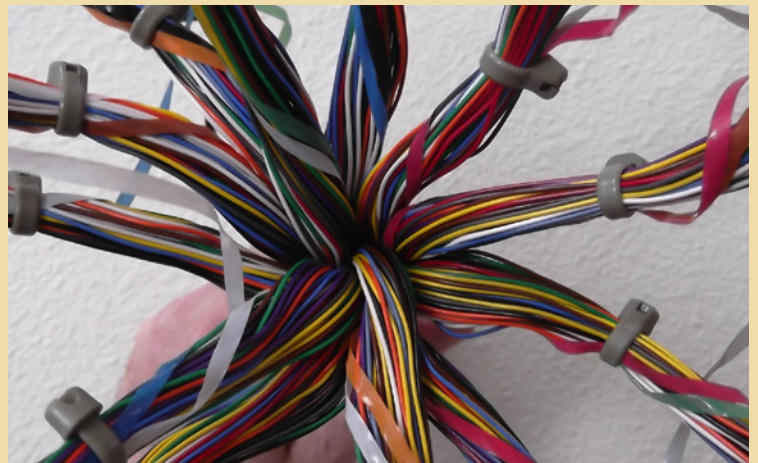
threat of a corporate lawsuit—start to turn the taps off fossil fuel exports.

While taking the most harmful language out of trade deals, we might also consider adding new rules that are pro-climate. The leaders of all three NAFTA countries have pledged to phase out “inefficient” fossil fuel subsidies by 2025, but none have any plans to do so, and Canada has been unwilling to release much information on its public transfers to industry. NAFTA currently allows Canada to subsidize the discovery and development of oil and natural gas without fear of tariffs from the U.S., when instead the deal could be changed to penalize government handouts to the fossil fuel sector.

Given the political hurdles to co-operation on subsidies, as well as carbon duties and taxes, a trade negotiation like NAFTA might not be the most appropriate venue for this kind of climate action. Still, there is no good reason why climate change should not be considered in all phases of free trade negotiations and in all parts of the agreements. This could be done through ex-ante assessments of carbon emissions produced through greater trade liberalization, and by adding responsibilities for investors (emitters) and rules for emissions reduction.

Canada’s free trade agreements must also recognize the right of Indigenous peoples to free, prior and informed consent as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This is particularly relevant in ongoing negotiations for the Canada-Pacific Alliance Free Trade Agreement, since Canadian companies are heavily invested in the extractive sectors in Latin America. More broadly, trade agreements could include binding, enforceable rules and mechanisms to redress environmental and social injustices caused by corporations operating at home and abroad.

In short, Canada’s trade agreements do more to get in the way of addressing today’s climate and ecological crises than they do to protect the environment. We need to be thinking much more creatively about “alternative trade” if we’re going to fix this problem. To return to the brain metaphor, overcoming our addiction to fossil fuels requires us to rewire our “trade brains” so that our trade rules facilitate, rather than frustrate, healthier and more humane relations. **M**



BREWBOOKS (FLICKR CREATIVE COMMONS)

ELLEN GOULD

Supreme Court flattens “free the beer” campaign

THE SUPREME COURT gave Canadians cause to celebrate this April in its *R v Comeau* decision. However, because of the way the ruling was covered in the media, most people will not know how much was at stake and what we might have lost had things gone the other way.

Tagging it the “free the beer” case, the media generally criticized the Supreme Court’s decision as an affront to some fundamental right to cheap beer. In 2012, New Brunswick resident Robert Comeau was fined for possessing alcohol he had purchased at liquor outlets in Quebec in contravention of New Brunswick’s Liquor Control Act, which limits the quantity of out-of-province alcohol residents can possess. Comeau took his case to provincial court and convinced judge Ronald Leblanc that the Liquor Control Act was unconstitutional.

Leblanc did not follow Supreme Court precedent and gave a novel interpretation to Section 121 of the Constitution that says goods from any province shall be admitted free into other provinces. He acknowledged that finding New Brunswick’s law unconstitutional would fundamentally change Canadian federalism and “have a resounding impact.”

When the Crown appealed to the Supreme Court, Canada’s top justices unequivocally rejected Leblanc’s ruling. The Court clarified the meaning of Section 121 (see box), saying it cannot be interpreted as “imposing an absolute free trade regime within Canada” or in a way that “would impinge on legislative powers under ss. 91 and 92 of the Constitution Act, 1867.” (Sections 91 and 92 spell out the division of powers between federal and provincial governments.) In

critiquing Leblanc’s reliance on one historian’s view of the original intent behind Section 121, the Supreme Court said that “the historical evidence nowhere suggests that provinces would lose their power to legislate under s. 92 of the Constitution Act, 1867 for the benefit of their constituents even if that might have impacts on interprovincial trade.”

The Court’s unanimous decision is a stunning setback for what has been termed “trade creep,” or the increasing dominance of trade considerations over more and more areas of government policy. Canadians are being subjected to an ever-louder drumbeat to embed the restrictions on government contained in international free trade agreements within domestic law.

After Comeau had won in provincial court, one commentator portrayed him as a “national hero” striking a blow against the supposedly huge economic burden caused by interprovincial trade barriers. Former Senator David Angus, when asked to justify his oft-repeated claim these barriers cost \$50 billion a year, admitted he was taking high numbers out of the air to make a political point.

Absent from most media reporting on the Comeau case was discussion of whether New Brunswick could have valid reasons for not wanting to have its alcohol legislation undermined by cross-border beer runs. Comeau himself complained he did not know why he can buy cars or clothes in other provinces and bring them back but not beer.

While getting lower prices and more choice through interprovincial competition may seem like an unquestionable benefit, alcohol is no ordinary commodity. A World Health Organization report identifies higher prices, restricted availability, and government alcohol distribution monopolies as proven methods of reducing alcohol-related harm. And more revenue from higher taxes on alcohol can help governments address the added health and criminal justice costs that result from its consumption.

This case, though, was about much more than alcohol. The basic argument that Comeau’s lawyers advanced before the Supreme Court is that an extremely broad interpretation should be given to what constitutes a “non-tariff” trade barrier, which they defined as any “restriction on the movement of goods that is not a tariff trade barrier.” By doing so, they attempted to import international trade agreement concepts into the Canadian constitution.

Since the 1990s, these agreements have been less about lowering tariffs and more about redefining pretty much anything government does as a possible trade barrier. That way, environmental regulation, consumer protections, health and safety rules and publicly delivered services can be challenged in a legal context that gives priority to commercial interests.

Comeau’s lawyers also argued that certain powers governments currently have, like maintaining provincial liquor distribution monopolies, should be simply prohibited outright as unconstitutional. They stated Section 121 should be “paramount over any legislative restriction on the interprovincial movement of goods made under either s. 91 or 92.” That would prohibit, for example, legislation



MORGAN (FLICKR CREATIVE COMMONS)

in Northwest Territories that allows its citizens to decide for themselves in local plebiscites whether they want their communities to be dry.

Given how difficult it is to change the Canadian Constitution, such government policy options would in effect be eliminated for all time, regardless of the wishes of the electorate. The Supreme Court ruled, however, that laws that have only incidental effects on trade do not violate Section 121: “To prohibit incidental impacts on cross-border trade would allow s. 121 to trump valid exercises of legislative power.” Of course, stripping governments of their constitutional powers would have been a desirable outcome for the anti-government interests supporting Comeau.

If you are wondering how a retired worker like Comeau had the money to hire a team of lawyers and take a constitutional challenge all the way to the Supreme Court, the answer is that he did not. The Canadian Constitution Foundation (CCF) backed him, seeing in the case an opportunity to advance a key aspect of their agenda—to get a Supreme Court ruling “against government meddling in all transactions across provincial boundaries.”

The CCF, whose directors include board members and staff from the Fraser Institute, also contributed to Brian Day’s challenge to B.C.’s ban on private health clinics. Like its counterparts in the U.S., such as the Federalist Society, the CCF works to achieve constitutional rulings that would set government on a permanent right-wing trajectory.

Provincial governments intervened at the Supreme Court to say they were working toward eliminating inter-provincial trade barriers through negotiation. They cited the recently signed Canadian Free Trade Agreement that provides for monetary penalties of up to \$10 million and allows businesses to launch CFTA challenges against government legislation. The CCF, though, dismisses the CFTA as having too many exceptions and sought to do away with them with one fell swoop through a constitutional ruling.

But it was a high-risk gamble for the CCF to tell the Supreme Court its previous decision on Section 121 had been made in error, and a gamble that they lost badly. The Court did not have to clarify the meaning of Section 121. The fact that the lower court judge had not properly followed precedent was enough to overturn his decision.

However, since they had been invited to interpret Section 121, the Supreme Court did so—with no dissenting opinions, and in a way that left the CCF and right-wing commentators apoplectic.

In order to establish that a law violates Section 121, the Court ruled a complainant would have to prove that the law “in essence and purpose” restricts the trade of goods across a provincial border. If that cannot be proven, the complaint immediately fails. If complainants pass the first hurdle, then they additionally have to prove that the primary purpose of the law is to restrict trade. Laws that have incidental effects on trade as part of a broader regulatory scheme “do not offend” Section 121.

Unlike the WTO and other trade regimes, the Supreme Court did not say governments can only maintain laws

SECTION 121 OF THE CONSTITUTION ACT OF 1867

CANADIAN MANUFACTURES, ETC.

ALL ARTICLES OF THE GROWTH, PRODUCE, OR MANUFACTURE OF ANY ONE OF THE PROVINCES SHALL, FROM AND AFTER THE UNION, BE ADMITTED FREE INTO EACH OF THE OTHER PROVINCES.

that might restrict trade if they can prove they are “necessary.” So, in contrast with trade panel rulings, the Supreme Court decision means no judicial weighing of whether governmental objectives are “legitimate” or sufficiently “important,” no second-guessing governments on whether they could have done something else that was more effective and less trade restrictive.

In a blow to Alberta’s recent legislation targeting B.C. for the latter’s opposition to the Kinder Morgan pipeline, the Supreme Court did state that laws with the purpose of punishing other provinces could be judged to have the primary purpose of restricting trade and therefore be unconstitutional.

Provinces intervened in the beer case with eloquent arguments on why the Court should not agree with Comeau. Alberta stated Section 121 should not be interpreted in a way that would frustrate provincial capacity to support local industry and employment. Ontario said Comeau’s argument would “constitutionalize a particular economic philosophy that views unfettered trade as a supreme good to be facilitated, and government regulation of goods as an evil to be minimized.” It would require deregulation and invite judicial activism, empowering judges to rule on the merits of government policies.

Quebec said its margin of maneuver to legislate in the public interest would be greatly diminished. B.C. warned that if all differences in provincial regulations and taxes were defined as a “non-tariff barrier,” this interpretation would be incompatible with both democracy and federalism and would violate “the right to decide differently.”

One would hope that the provinces would remember their words the next time they are asked by the federal government to give their consent to a free trade agreement that offends these democratic values. **M**

LAURA MACDONALD, NADIA IBRAHIM
AND SCOTT SINCLAIR

Gender, trade and austerity

THE TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT has espoused a Progressive Trade Agenda (PTA) in its pursuit of international free trade agreements. This stance, particularly the government's pledge to include gender and Indigenous chapters in a renegotiated NAFTA, has garnered much public attention and sparked welcome debate. Yet many researchers, activists and civil society organizations have questioned whether the PTA is genuinely progressive or merely window dressing for what continue to be pro-corporate trade deals.

What is "progressive trade" anyway? New research by the CCPA and Carleton University, under the SSHRC-funded Austerity and its Alternatives project, analyzes the "progressiveness" of Canada's trade agenda by looking in more detail at its gender dimensions and gleaned insights from interviews with government and civil society actors. In our view, there are several different ways of thinking about a "progressive" trade agenda and what it would entail. Such an agenda may, for example, emphasize one or more of the following four criteria:

- Helping marginalized groups to participate in the benefits of trade;
- Ensuring formerly marginalized groups participate meaningfully in trade policy-making and negotiations;
- Providing adjustment assistance and support to groups adversely impacted by trade and trade agreements; and/or
- Ensuring that trade agreements provide the policy flexibility to redress historic human rights abuses, enable affirmative action, include clear, enforceable anti-discrimination provisions, safeguard public services relied upon by women, and support alternative, more inclusive forms of economic development.

So far, our research finds that while the Canadian government's effort to incorporate a gender dimension into its trade policy under the PTA banner includes some progressive elements, these are not always addressed meaningfully. Furthermore, some important features of a potentially progressive agenda are missing, an omission which may exacerbate the already-existing gendered impacts of austerity policies and trade liberalization.

The PTA and gender

The Liberal government's PTA calls for examination in global trade and trade agreements of gender equality, as well as issues like labour rights, the environment, Indigenous rights, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

and investment. For decades, feminists have argued that trade is not gender-neutral, and that without intervention by government, civil society and/or the corporate sector, benefits tend to go disproportionately to men. The Trudeau government first exhibited a gender approach to trade policy in its negotiation of the Canada-Chile Free Trade Agreement (2017), which includes a gender chapter modelled on that of the Chile-Uruguay FTA. The Liberal government is also pushing for the inclusion of a gender chapter in a renegotiated NAFTA and has raised it as part of its agenda in deals with China and India, and a renegotiated deal with Israel.

Interviews with representatives of women's groups, labour and other civil society actors, as well as the Canadian government, have provided insights into the gendered impacts of trade policy, the effectiveness of Canada's PTA and recommendations for improvement. While many agree that standalone gender chapters in trade agreements are in theory a good thing, as they demonstrate, according to the Conference Board of Canada's Barbara MacLaren, "a positive symbolic recognition of (or commitment to) gender equality," they may be just that—symbolic.

Based on the text of the Canada-Chile gender chapter, and statements from the Trudeau government around a NAFTA gender chapter (which suggest similarities between the two), the language of gender chapters—like other "progressive" chapters for labour and environment—tends to be weak and purely aspirational. Provisions are voluntary and lack effective enforcement mechanisms—the "teeth" required to realize the chapter's stated goals. Aspirational commitment without enforcement "represents a fundamentally weak approach," according to one labour researcher we interviewed.

The Canadian government recently announced that its updated trade agreement with Israel will include a gender chapter that will be subject to the dispute settlement process, provided that both parties agree to take a matter to dispute settlement. This would make the gender chapter the first of its kind. A Canadian government trade official described this as "a huge step forward," underlining the importance of willing trade partners.

In addition to the need for enforceable provisions, advancing gender equity requires gender mainstreaming, or the adoption of a gender lens throughout an entire agreement or trade policy agenda. For example, the protection of public services such as not-for-profit child care, exempting preferential government procurement policies aimed at women or minority-owned businesses or not-for-profits, and enforceable labour rights, including those for migrant workers, would contribute to a gender-equitable trade policy. This idea must be supported by gender mainstreaming throughout the Canadian government.

According to one trade union representative we spoke to, the PTA is "a really great exercise in public relations, but there seems to be nothing of substance behind it.... The gender chapter especially aligns with the general positioning of the Trudeau government. They want to be seen as [Canada's] first feminist government and are clear

on that. On trade, but also on many issues, their rhetoric is much stronger than the follow-through.”

In gender chapters, the main focus “is on supporting a small group of women (i.e., women entrepreneurs and business owners) to benefit from trade,” said Francesca Rhodes of Oxfam Canada. While this is important, it does not represent or benefit the majority of women, and does not reflect the fact the majority of vulnerable workers—those performing unpaid, low-wage, precarious and care work—are women. Nor do gender chapters “ameliorate what we see as negative aspects of other elements of a trade agreement (e.g., ISDS, regulatory co-operation),” said Angella MacEwen, economist with the Canadian Labour Congress.

Complementary laws and policies to promote gender equity may include protecting existing public services, strengthening domestic social policy (including support for care work) and preserving future policy space (e.g., for expanded pharmacare and child care). According to a Canadian trade official, the government considers “public interest”—such as the protection of the right to regulate, carve-outs for public services and health care—to be an important, cross-cutting aspect of the Progressive Trade Agenda.

A fundamental weakness of the government’s PTA is the failure to undertake a gender impact assessment of existing or future trade agreements. Intersectional gender-based analysis throughout all stages of trade policy-making is essential for understanding gendered impacts of trade and advancing gender equity. In its announcement of trade negotiations with the Mercosur bloc, the Canadian government committed “to expanding...the impact assessment process to include, for example, labour and gender.” The availability of gender-based data will be essential to undertaking these assessments and improving trade policy.

Although the Trudeau government has arguably engaged in more stakeholder consultations than its predecessor, civil society actors have identified a lack of “meaningful consultation,” particularly with women’s organizations, due in part to a lack of transparency. This stands in contrast to other negotiations, such as international climate talks, in which civil society is engaged, permitted to see draft text and able to present alternatives.

There is little doubt that the focus of the women’s movement on trade and gender issues has declined compared to the movement’s high level of involvement during the Canada-U.S. FTA and NAFTA negotiations of the late 1980s and early 1990s. This is likely because, as MacEwen put it, limited capacity is “common across government departments, labour and women’s organizations.” It can also be difficult to mobilize members, supporters or the broader public around trade issues in general due to their complex and seemingly abstract nature, according to another union researcher we interviewed.

Echoing more critical theoretical perspectives, Unifor’s Angelo DiCaro called for “a fundamental rethinking or reforming of the global trading system.” Likewise, Rhodes told us that “a truly progressive trade agenda would require a rethinking of the fundamental objectives of a trading

relationship.” This would involve a shift away from the current preoccupation with economic growth, resource extraction and corporate rights, and toward trading relationships and agreements that place human rights and economic, social and ecological justice at their foundation.

What makes trade progressive?

While the Trudeau government’s feminist approach has resulted in some innovative policies, the fact that this shift is coming from above, and not as a result of pressure from or genuine consultation with Canadian feminist organizations, undermines much of the progressive potential of a feminist approach to trade policy. The limited results, as demonstrated by the unenforceable gender chapter in the Canada-Chile agreement or the creation of the Canada-U.S. women entrepreneurs’ council, reflect elitist liberal feminist priorities and do not address the inequalities faced by most women in a globalizing political economy.

First, regarding consultation, the current government has done a far better job of meeting with women’s groups and other civil society actors on trade policy matters than the previous Conservative government. However, the customary secrecy of trade negotiations, including the confidentiality of negotiating texts, strictly limits how informed and meaningful such consultations can be.

Secondly, regarding impact on marginalized groups, there are reasons for concern. As feminist economist Armine Yalnizyan has highlighted, most of the attention in the NAFTA negotiations has been focused on traditional industries such as manufacturing and energy, where the best jobs are disproportionately held by men. Less attention has been given to the service industries, which could be hit hard by any agreement to raise the limits on cross-border electronic shopping, worsening already precarious employment relied upon disproportionately by youth and women.

It’s also not clear what, if any, consideration the government has given to assisting groups adversely affected by new concessions in a NAFTA 2.0. This would be difficult to do without serious efforts to analyze the impact of the current NAFTA rules on women and other vulnerable groups, even before trying to estimate the impacts of a renegotiated deal.

Finally, regarding policy flexibility, the Trudeau government’s approach to safeguarding public services under trade treaties has not changed from previous governments. Despite a strong mandate to fully exclude public services, negotiators continue to rely on the same flawed reservations that have been widely criticized, including by the 2002 Romanow Commission into health care, as providing only partial protection for new or expanded public services.

A meaningful and truly progressive trade agenda requires changes both in domestic policy related to trade and in trade treaties themselves. Otherwise the “progressive gender agenda” will not improve the lives of most women and do little more than “pink-wash” a business-as-usual approach. **M**

HOWARD MANN

Time's up for ISDS

A **DECISION BY JUSTICE** Anne Mactavish in the Federal Court of Canada this May should spell the end of the investment chapter in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and ignite a renegotiation of similar chapters in the Canada–EU trade agreement (CETA) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Justice Mactavish was ruling on a federal claim for judicial review of an arbitration award against Canada under the controversial investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provisions in Chapter 11 of NAFTA. The legal question was relatively narrow: under what circumstances could the Court overturn an arbitral award under NAFTA?

The NAFTA arbitration, *Bilcon v. Canada*, arose after a proposed quarry in Nova Scotia was rejected by the provincial and federal governments on the basis of a recommendation by a joint environmental assessment panel. The joint panel had found the U.S. company's proposal would create harm that was simply beyond mitigation and should therefore be rejected. Federal and provincial ministers agreed and nixed the quarry. Bilcon, which is based in Delaware, took this decision to the NAFTA ISDS process instead of the Canadian court system. They won their claim in 2015 on the basis that the decision was arbitrary and discriminatory and contrary to NAFTA's requirement to provide fair and equitable treatment to potential foreign investors. The majority decision ruled, along the way, that the approach of the joint review panel was in breach of Canadian law, a key part in their reasoning.

It is widely acknowledged that the arbitration decision raised serious concerns—so serious that the decidedly environmentally unfriendly Harper government took the unusual step of asking the Federal Court of Canada to review it. The most critical element was the ISDS panel's interpretation of fair and equitable treatment (in NAFTA Article 1105). The result of the interpretation was seen as turning back environmental law by decades, according to the dissenting voice on the panel, Donald McRae, one of the world's most respected arbitrators. Judge Mactavish put her concerns as follows:

I accept that the majority's Award raises significant policy concerns. These include its effect on the ability of NAFTA Parties to regulate environmental matters within their jurisdiction, the ability of NAFTA tribunals to properly assess whether foreign investors have been treated fairly under domestic environmental assessment processes, and the potential "chill" in the environmental assessment process that could result from the majority's decision.

This is an extraordinary assessment for a Federal Court judge to make. Justice Mactavish then said she can do

nothing about it because the ability of courts to review arbitration awards is remarkably constrained under federal arbitration law. Her ruling opens the door for a final NAFTA award on damages by the arbitration tribunal, claimed to be over \$400 million by the company, for a quarry that was never built.

There can be no more pretense that the investment chapters of CETA or CPTPP are more environmentally friendly, or more protective of the right to regulate, than NAFTA or other prior treaties. This is because the language on fair and equitable treatment for investors in those two newer treaties is the same language used by the arbitration tribunal in *Bilcon v. Canada* to establish the scope of such treatment under NAFTA. That is to say, while the *language* in the text of the agreements themselves may differ, the test to apply by arbitrators in NAFTA is precisely the same as the text now in CETA.

Consequently, as Justice Mactavish stated in her ruling, the CETA and CPTPP texts present the exact same risks as NAFTA does to public interest and environmental protection decisions. The new agreements therefore broaden those risks exponentially by extending this protection to European and Asian investors in Canada, who will be able to challenge via ISDS new and existing laws affecting their investments. Sadly, both the Conservative and Liberal governments knew of this risk before finalizing the EU and Asia-Pacific deals. The Bilcon arbitration decision was out long before the ink on CETA and CPTPP was dry. The fact the same language appeared in the Bilcon decision and in the CETA investment chapter text was noted by government lawyers and negotiators, who simply refused to make the necessary changes.

There is not even a fig leaf left now to argue that the investment chapters in CETA or CPTPP are better for environmental protection and the right to regulate than NAFTA. Linguistic sophistry in post-negotiation statements extolling the values and virtues of the agreements does not override what those agreements actually say. After the Mactavish ruling, it's time to get serious about ISDS. With NAFTA renegotiations still underway (as the *Monitor* went to print), Canada can simply support the U.S. proposal to take ISDS out of the agreement, which would stop the risks to Canadians. For CETA and CPTPP, there are opportunities still to reopen negotiations before the texts are ratified by all parties and enter into force. The "investment court system" proposed in CETA does not change this need: as discussed here, the language of the text (defining fair and equitable treatment, for example) is the problem.

Canada continues to call for progressive trade and investment agreements. The time is ripe to act in relation to NAFTA, CETA, CPTPP and other ongoing negotiations. The Federal Court of Canada has, if nothing else, driven home that point. **M**

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GERARD DI TROLIO

Trump's tariff trap

DONALD TRUMP'S UNEXPECTED victory in the 2016 presidential election created a paradox for labour and other progressive movements. Here was a rather extreme right-wing politician who nonetheless opposed the corporate free trade deals Republicans love and the left has always opposed. The confusion lives on in debates about Trump's steel tariffs and efforts to renegotiate NAFTA.

Earlier this year, the Trump administration announced it would be applying high tariffs on imported steel and aluminum. Initially, when the tariffs appeared to apply only to China (most other countries, including Canada, were given temporary exemptions), several U.S. unions supported them. Now that the Trump exemptions have been revoked for Canada, Mexico and the European Union, labour support for the policy is in doubt. There are two good reasons why it should never have been offered.

First, many of the countries exempted from the tariffs (e.g., Argentina, South Korea) have weaker worker protections and safety and environmental standards than the U.S., so why pick on China? Furthermore, China accounted for only 2.9% of U.S. steel imports in 2017 while South Korea supplied 9.7%. We must also acknowledge that global competition is not the only reason for the loss of steel jobs in the U.S. Productivity per hour in the steel industry grew fivefold from the early 1980s to 2016, meaning fewer workers are needed wherever the metal is made.

Second, embracing Trump's tariffs, and perhaps by extension his erratic foreign policy, will have a corrosive effect on international solidarity. Canadian and European labour unions denounced the tariffs. And as the unofficial labour movement in China continues to grow and win strikes, anti-Chinese rhetoric may get in the way of building worker-to-worker bridges across the Pacific.

That China is dumping steel on the world market is beyond dispute. Over the last few years, the Chinese central government has pledged it will deal with domestic steel overcapacity, for example by lowering production by 150 million metric tonnes by 2020. But progress has been slow, leading to accusations these efforts are not genuine.

The reality is more complex. A 2016 study from Duke University noted that Chinese provincial officials, especially in the country's interior where steel is one of the few major industries, are resisting efforts to curb overproduction. For example, some provinces are demolishing obsolete factories then claiming to have complied with central government orders, without having any effect on capacity. At the same time, according to the study, major Chinese state-owned steel companies, like Hesteel and Shougang, have pledged to invest in new steel mills in Africa and Southeast Asia, which may worsen the glut. Lest we think that Chinese steel dumping is only a U.S. concern, the issue has reared

its head in Argentina, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and South Africa, to name but a few countries.

But China is not at the centre of every trade dispute involving steel. New Zealand complains that Malaysia is dumping the metal onto its market, while Malaysia complains that Taiwan is doing the same. The problem is clearly a product of instability in the current global economic order, one that is further complicated by the World Trade Organization's inability to settle a proliferation of steel-related disputes. We need a heterodox solution, so where to look?

North American labour unions see some hope in NAFTA 2.0. They are calling on their governments to use the renegotiation to increase wages and improve labour laws in Mexico, safeguard "buy local" procurement policies and protect Canada's pro-worker supply management systems for dairy, poultry and eggs. At one point, the Canadian government, backed by Unifor and other Canadian unions, appeared to be asking the Trump administration to ban right-to-work laws that make it harder to unionize and easier to decertify unions in many U.S. states.

Making such demands on governments is essential. Their willingness, at least in North America, to entertain alternatives to the status quo trade vision is a sign of how serious policy-makers are taking the current crisis in globalization. But while it may be expedient to focus on the opportunities presented in one localized trade negotiation (NAFTA), labour and other progressive organizations should still be striving for transnational co-operation to reform the broader economic order.

That does not mean totally abandoning (or fully embracing) things like tariffs. An equitable global economic order should allow for tailored development models on a country-by-country basis. Economist Ha-Joon Chang makes a compelling case that tariffs and state intervention, not laissez-faire doctrine, were the critical ingredients in Western countries' industrialization. These tools should still be available to countries in the Global South so that they, too, can develop nascent industries—even if it means shutting out foreign competition entirely.

Economically and politically, though, tariffs may not make sense here in North America. For one thing, Trump's aluminum and steel tariffs are unlikely, in the absence of an overall industrial strategy or international co-ordination to curb overcapacity, to create or protect enough decent American jobs. More worryingly for the left, backing the U.S. president risks appearing to endorse his racist and xenophobic agenda. This will only hamper the albeit difficult task of uniting national labour movements behind a common demand for a global economy that is equitable for workers on every continent. **M**

Anti-Chinese rhetoric may get in the way of building worker-to-worker bridges.

MARTIN ADELAAR, ROGER PETERS AND GEOFF STILES

All power to the community

Regaining public and community control of our electricity system

GOVERNMENTS TRIGGER STRUCTURAL issues when applying liberal market concepts to our electric power systems benefitting a few and hurting the majority as manifested by increased corporate ownership and increased energy poverty. However, in the Canadian context, it would be wrong to conclude that the growth of renewable energy is somehow a key driver of such outcomes when instead it offers us a platform for taking back our economy.

In Canada and globally we are in the early days of a technological revolution whereby services previously dependent on fossil fuels are being increasingly electrified. Renewable electricity is already cost competitive with other forms of supply and its growth potential is enormous. Eventually, distributed renewable sources such as wind, solar and smaller-scale hydro will become the most common forms of electricity supply in a predominantly decentralized smart grid.

Currently, renewable energy provides about 18% of Canada's primary energy supply, which is dominated by large hydro (about 67% of the total). Distributed renewable sources of wind and solar power currently represent nearly 6% of the renewable supply. However, wind and solar electricity's share of the primary energy mix has been growing significantly. At over 12,000 megawatts, Canada's wind capacity alone represents about 6% of total electricity supply and it has been growing at a rate of 15% a year since 2009. By 2016, Canada's solar capacity was 2,310 megawatts, almost all of it in Ontario.

Unfortunately, to now, the renewable energy technical revolution is not being accompanied by a similar revolution in economic democracy.

Aside from public utility-owned large hydro facilities, the majority of distributed renewable energy capacity is privately owned and operated, a situation largely created by regressive provincial government policies that favour large corporate investment in the electricity sector.

In this ownership model, provincial intervention is designed to grease the wheels (i.e., de-risk) the marketplace so that private entities can develop and operate utility-scale wind and solar projects. Consequently, 87% of new renewable power capacity in Ontario has been captured by the private sector, including large, often foreign-based companies, frequently over the objections of local municipalities.

Sadly, the NDP government in Alberta is making the same mistake. Their Renewable Electricity Program recently selected three bids amounting to about \$1 billion of private sector investment in four large-scale projects. While demonstrating that renewables are price competitive with fossil fuel-based electricity, the Alberta process has marginalized community-based developers.

To reverse this trend toward privatization, we need to move away from the current model so that priority can be given to renewable power capacity that is owned and controlled publicly by community-based enterprises. Indeed, without radical policy changes, the prevailing ownership model will be tough to dislodge.

For example, under the auspices of the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO), Ontario has begun a "market renewal" initiative to "lay the foundation for a more dynamic market place in the future, leading to lower costs for consumers and new opportunities for market participants."

But close examination of those participating in this initiative reveals that municipalities, as well as co-operatives and other local stakeholders, are excluded from the independent IESO Market Renewal Working Group. Meanwhile, the IESO has established a "CEO Roundtable" to "create alignment at the executive level," but it also does not include representation from the co-operative and community-based sectors.

This de-risking model has considerable agency among economic and policy elites. Earlier this year, it was endorsed in a report by the Ottawa-based Smart Prosperity Institute, a think-tank that argues "the primary engines to drive clean innovation across the Canadian economy are private investment and initiative." Because of "the array of market barriers facing clean innovators," the Smart Prosperity report says, "governments can de-risk and catalyze the large amounts of private investment needed to grow these inventions into market successes."

Unfortunately, this approach leaves little room for alternative economic models that encourage participation by co-operatives, communities (e.g., municipalities) and First Nations in the renewables market.

We must caution that a return to the old, publicly owned but centralized model would also be counterproductive, as it never really fostered community-based ownership and control. Aside from occasional consultations and opportunities to act as interveners in utility regulatory proceedings, municipalities and citizens really have no standing when it comes to controlling their electricity system. Although many Ontario utilities are municipally

owned, the returns on shareholder equity typically go into general revenue, where the prospect of surpluses being used to enhance democratic forms of energy ownership and investment is subject to the vagaries of local politics.

So, what would a more democratic energy system look like and what policies would we need?

First, we must urgently consider co-operative and community-based enterprises as the most viable and effective model for the renewable energy sector. In the words of Charlie Angus, NDP MP for Timmins–James Bay in Northern Ontario, co-operatives and community enterprises “meet community needs locally, to build prosperous and equitable communities, and lay the foundations of a more democratic economy.”

Indeed, more than 10 million Canadians are already members of co-operatives and credit unions. In renewable energy co-operatives across the country, such as the Ottawa Renewable Energy Co-operative (OREC), Solar Share in Toronto and the SES Solar Co-op in Saskatoon, members purchase securities and reap an annual return on investment in addition to full repayment of capital. They are proof that citizens will invest millions of dollars of their “community savings” in local renewable energy projects if there is a sound business case.

By mid-2016, 24 Ontario renewable co-operatives comprising 7,000 members had successfully raised over \$100 million leading to 75 MW of installed or planned renewable electricity (solar and wind) projects. There are also significant local economic development benefits. OREC’s 2017 Community Impact Report stated that its investment of \$7 million resulted in \$2.5 million worth in local jobs, \$35,000 in other local economic activity, and \$60,000 in lease payments to local schools and other community facilities.

Other models can also play a role in the renewable energy marketplace, including community economic development investment funds, and First Nations and labour pension funds. Together, these investment sources can be used so that communities can reap the huge local economic development and job opportunities inherent in the transition to decentralized, distributed power.

Step one is to put the brakes on much of what is passed off as electricity market renewal. We need time to consider a broad range of policies, regulation and approaches, drawing from other jurisdictions where appropriate. Germany and Denmark vigorously supported community-owned power in the early days of their renewable market reforms, and government investment strategies in Scotland and Greece favour local investment. We can look also to several U.S. states that have passed “community solar” legislation enabling businesses and residents to invest in and own solar capacity in their community, reaping the benefits of fixed price power.

Closer to home, we can consider new business models for community investment (e.g., tax credits) such as Nova Scotia’s Community Economic Development and Investment Fund (CEDIF). Finally, we must also ensure that “just transition” policies are in place to help workers who may be negatively affected by the shift to a renewable grid, like



The Tiny House Warriors install solar panels on one of 10 homes built last year along the route of the proposed Trans Mountain pipeline expansion.

GREENPEACE CANADA

the approach recently proposed by the CCPA (see article by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood in this issue).

Step 2 is to ensure that utilities are not only brought into full public ownership but to reform their ownership and management structure so that they function democratically and are accountable to the communities in which they operate. This reform must extend to a more central role for community-based democratic enterprises to plan local grid development and regulate its evolution and operation in a renewable future.

Finally, Step 3 is to ensure that renewable energy co-operatives, First Nations and other democratic energy ownership models gain predominance to sell power from renewable sources directly to customers through net metering. These entities should be empowered to invest in and own renewable non-electric supply (e.g., renewable fuels), as well as energy efficiency projects.

In its recent report to the federal government, the Smart Prosperity Institute quotes World Economic Forum founder Klaus Schwab, who referred to technological innovation’s potential “to lift humanity into a new collective consciousness based on a shared sense of destiny.” This is nonsense. If technology had such magical qualities we would already be living the utopian dream.

The reality is that Schwab and his peers see the clean energy revolution as a new market opportunity, not as a platform for social change. Unless we act soon to take back our economy, starting with our electricity system, that self-interested vision may become the only one on offer. **M**



ASAD ISMI

Maduro wins another

Labour delegation observes fair, secure election in contrast to Canadian claims of fraud

VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT Nicolás Maduro was re-elected for a second six-year term in national elections held on May 20. As the candidate of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), Maduro got 67.8% of the vote, while his closest rival, the right-wing Henri Falcón, received 21%. The opposition was divided and some parties boycotted the poll, which may have been a factor in the relatively low voter turnout (for Venezuela) of 46.1%.

However, in lockstep with U.S. policy, the Canadian government denounced the election results as “fraudulent, illegitimate and anti-democratic.” Following the vote, the Department of Global Affairs imposed further economic sanctions on the Maduro government, including against 14 Venezuelan officials Canada claims to be responsible for “the deterioration of democracy in Venezuela.”

Ottawa started sanctioning Venezuela in September 2017 in co-ordination with the Trump administration, imposing an “asset freeze” on the country and “dealings prohibitions” on targeted officials. Forty Venezuelan officials have had their assets in Canada frozen. Canada has also funded the Venezuelan opposition and expelled the country’s diplomats from Ottawa.

Canadians who visited Venezuela to observe the election as part of a labour union delegation, however, do not agree with their government’s policy.

Re-elected Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro holds a copy of the constitution while addressing the National Constituent Assembly on May 24.

REUTERS/MARCO BELLO

“The Venezuelan electoral process produced a fair election,” says Wayne Milliner, equity officer with the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF), who was part of the delegation. “This process is impressive as overseen by the National Electoral Council (CNE) and demonstrates organization, access to information for voters, security, identification authentication, automation and oversight.

“We also had the opportunity to witness the process after the polls closed and how the electronic vote count is double-checked against the paper ballots in 54% of all polls. Our [Canada’s] election processes are far less sophisticated and we could learn a lot from the CNE.”

Raul Burbano, program director of Common Frontiers, a coalition of Canadian labour unions and non-governmental organizations, was part

of the same observer delegation. He agrees with Milliner, telling me the Venezuelan electoral system is “100% auditable at every stage, including the electoral register, the software and the voting books.” The whole process is presided over by international observers and representatives of each participating political party, he adds.

Burbano also contrasts the real choice he says Venezuelans have at the polls and the one voters have in most Western democracies. “In Venezuela there is a plurality of political voices and political parties” he says. “Maduro represents a real socialist alternative—the Bolivarian Revolution—which has won presidential elections since 1999 and given the people free medical care, free education, land reform, subsidized accommodation and food, as well genuine participatory democracy.”

Maduro’s victory is even more significant, for Burbano, “because even with the difficult economic situation in Venezuela, caused in large part by the economic embargo [enforced by the U.S. and Canada] and sabotage by the Venezuelan business elite, the majority of Venezuelans still voted for him. This tells you that the Bolivarian movement continues to be the dominant political force in the country. It signals that Venezuelans want to stay the course and continue down the road of alternatives to the corporate neoliberal model.”

Milliner adds that Venezuela is a “post-capitalist system trying to survive in a world that does not want a successful progressive example to exist.” This includes the Canadian government, whose hostility toward Maduro is motivated by the desire to win favour with Washington, which wants to militarily overthrow Maduro. Canada also wants to maintain the neoliberal economic model in Latin America, especially for the benefit of its mining companies, which always saw the rise of progressive governments since 1999 (the “Pink Tide”) as a threat.

Canada currently leads a bloc of 12 mostly Latin American countries called the Lima Group that is opposed to progressive social change in the Americas, but especially in

Venezuela. On May 21, the Lima Group issued a statement condemning the Venezuelan election, discouraging financial institutions from doing business with the Maduro government, downgrading their diplomatic relations and announcing the creation of a high-level meeting of regional immigration officials to discuss the numbers of Venezuelan refugees leaving the country. According to the UNHCR, there has been a 2,000% increase in global asylum applications by Venezuelans since 2014.

Yet, according to Alfred M. Zayas, the UN independent expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order who visited Venezuela in an official capacity in December 2017, it is wrong to define the situation in the country as a “humanitarian crisis.” He told *Venezuela Analysis* in December that while there are shortages of some products, including food products, “the population does not suffer from hunger as for example in many countries of Africa and Asia—or even in the favelas of São Paulo and other urban areas in Brazil and other Latin American countries.”

Milliner drew similar conclusions to Zayas during the delegation to observe the Venezuelan election.

“As a first-time visitor to Venezuela, I expected some of the stories and coverage expressed by the Canadian and American media reflected in what I saw,” he tells me. “Nothing could be further from the truth. I travelled throughout the greater Caracas area and saw middle class and poor neighbourhoods. I saw active construction sites, stores full of produce, fish and meat shops, drug stores with shelves of merchandise, cars on the road and people going to and from work. I saw people living their lives as you would almost anywhere.

“During the entire trip we encountered one person at a stop light asking for money, something I encounter five times every day getting to work in Toronto,” he adds. “This trip reinforced that you should never judge a country or its people by the media.”

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland has linked her aggressive anti-Maduro rhetoric

and Canada’s sanctions to the allegedly deteriorating political and economic crisis in the country, claiming in October, “This is our neighbourhood. This is our hemisphere. Canadians feel strongly about human rights for people in other countries.”

Yet this concern for human rights and democratic procedures does not seem to extend to the people of other Lima Group member countries with pitiful records in these respects.

Honduras, where Canada backed a military coup in 2009, subsequently suffered under a repressive regime that killed hundreds of environmental activists, human rights defenders and journalists. In November 2017, the regime retained power through an election recognized as fraudulent by independent observers but legitimate by Canada and the U.S.

Nor is Freeland protesting the governments of Brazil and Paraguay, which gained power through legislative coups this year. Or that of Mexico, which stifles labour rights and is substantially responsible for a devastating human rights crisis involving 180,000 homicides and 33,000 disappeared people over the last decade.

“As a Canadian of Latin American origin, I am ashamed of the Justin Trudeau government’s Latin American policy,” says Maria Paez Victor, a Canadian-Venezuelan sociologist and director of the Canadian, Latin American and Caribbean Policy Centre (CALC). “This is a colonial attitude of domination towards Venezuela and Latin America.”

Freeland’s “sadly passé, Cold War mentality and anti-socialist ideology, has thrown Canada into the U.S. adventures of regime change,” says Paez Victor, who points out that while accusing Maduro of being anti-democratic, Freeland has refused to let Venezuelan citizens residing in Canada vote in their elections.

“With duplicity and cynicism, Canada disallowed the Venezuelan authorities in Canada to have election stations, alleging they were ‘protecting’ Venezuelan democracy!” she says. “George Orwell himself would be astonished at this hypocrisy.” **M**

REVIEWED BY AMY HALL

Chronicles of repression and resistance

WHEN THEY CALL YOU A TERRORIST: A BLACK LIVES MATTER MEMOIR

PATRISSE KHAN-CULLORS
AND ASHA BANDELE

St. Martin's Press (January 2018), \$32.50

A T WHAT POINT do you become a terrorist? Is it when, as a Black man going through a mental health crisis, you get into a minor road accident with a white woman? Is it when you're sleeping in bed and the next thing you know you are being dragged out by armed police because you "fit the description" of someone who has committed a robbery? Or is it when you organize with your community and inspire a global movement for Black liberation?

As Patrisse Khan-Cullors and asha bandele explore in their "Black Lives Matter Memoir," *When They Call You a Terrorist*, in the eyes of the U.S. state it could be any one of these moments.

The prison-industrial complex, and its friend the war on drugs, are

dominant themes throughout Khan-Cullors's life story. The impacts on her and her loved ones are heartbreaking: her ex-army father, repeatedly imprisoned while struggling to move past his addictions; her older brother, battling severe mental illness, encountering nothing but violence and degradation as he moved in and out of prison; her mother, holding down several jobs while raising children and grandchildren on a shoestring.

Khan-Cullors herself was first arrested—taken from school by the police—when she was 12 years old. She and bandele skilfully describe at more than one point in the book the confusing complexities of childhood emotions, including the overwhelming guilt (is it my fault?) when something goes wrong. Importantly, the book never separates the "domestic" from the political and economic. It is peppered with historical references that place the story in context, and Khan-Cullors's relationships are discussed on both personal and political levels.

Why was she often left without a father or one of her brothers while growing up? Why was she shocked when her white school friend's dad (who was also her family's slum landlord) asked her what she wanted to do for a career when she grew up? Why did she and fellow members of her queer community face so much stigma, and often end up dropping out of school, leaving home or both? Why were her family and Black community overwhelmingly more likely to live in poverty, poor housing, have bad health or be unemployed compared to the middle class, white community just next door?

The U.S. state has waged war on Black people since it began forcibly removing them from Africa and making them slaves on land stolen from Indigenous peoples. This war on working class people of colour continues to this day, through their criminalization from childhood and mass incarceration. It keeps people in poverty and in underresourced but overpoliced communities. Racism has been the tool by which those with power have justified these conditions. Criminals and the lazy do not deserve to be free.

The writers play with time a lot throughout the book. While it is always written in the present, the order in which events take place is not linear. At times this can be difficult to follow, but it reflects how we remember our lives and how these past experiences impact on our present.

When They Call You a Terrorist doesn't go in depth into the inner workings of the Black Lives Matter



Khan-Cullors speaking in Tottenham, North London in January 2015

STEVE EASON

network, but it is an important read for anyone who wants to understand one of the perspectives that helped give birth to the movement. For those of us who didn't grow up working class and Black in the U.S., it's a sharp reality check. Khan-Cullors's and bandelet's account is also reflective, exploring how the organizers have learned from mistakes along the way.

Thrust into challenging situations since she was a young child, forced to fight for justice and recognition from the people she loves, Khan-Cullors has, along with other Black Lives Matter co-founders and organizers, taken that fight to the global stage. Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi, Khan-Cullors and hundreds of others have built Black Lives Matter into over 40 chapters in the U.S. and inspired groups across the world. In Canada, Black Lives Matter Toronto shut down the Pride Parade in 2016 and has continued to fight for victims of police violence and the rights of migrants.

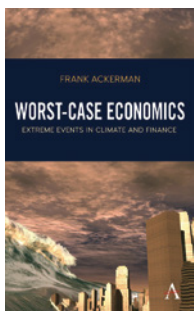
Black Lives Matter built on the work of generations of civil rights activists to expose the racism ingrained in U.S. society. Legal equality was not enough to ensure that Black people had the same freedom and opportunity as white people. Vitally, the network has also worked to keep Black, queer and female voices at the forefront of its movement for change.

As the title of this book shows, the white establishment clearly sees the movement as a threat. Activists in the U.S. have been labelled as "black identity extremists" by the FBI and are often branded as terrorists by the right. Undercover officers have infiltrated groups of Black Lives Matter activists, gaining access to their text messages. Khan-Cullors, Garza and Tometi were sued by a right-winger who claimed they instigated riots.

The election of Donald Trump, which is touched on near the end of the book, presents new challenges that Black Lives Matter seems determined to take on. Ultimately this is a story of survival and the determination to thrive, throwing love and mutual support in the face of a state that has shown neither. **M**

REVIEWED BY MARC LEE

How bad could it get? Let's not find out.



WORST-CASE ECONOMICS: EXTREME EVENTS IN CLIMATE AND FINANCE

FRANK ACKERMAN

Anthem Press (October 2017), \$62.96

LONG AGO, **ECONOMICS** was termed "the dismal science," but in recent years that title has arguably been passed on to climate science, with its regular and dire warnings about the future.

Faced with the certainty of rapid global warming and ecological disruption, governments have been slow to respond. The 2015 Paris Agreement offers some hope, as does the small but growing share of renewable technologies in the energy mix. But, by and large, we are not doing enough to keep global temperatures from rising more than 1.5 to 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels—the limit we have to meet to avoid the worst of climate change.

Is inertia on the climate challenge related to our inability to imagine the consequences of inaction? Life is lived in the immediate whereas climate change is a slow burn with unclear spatial and temporal repercussions. We understand that tipping points with irreversible consequences lie ahead, but do not really know at what point those critical thresholds will be crossed.

Worst-Case Economics steps into this fray with a refreshing look at the state of the discipline and how its standard toolkit leaves us poorly equipped to address crises, whether of the climate or financial variety. Over the years, I have greatly admired Frank Ackerman's work on cost-benefit analysis, the social cost of carbon and the economics of climate change. This book compiles much of that analysis under one cover, but goes beyond it by critically examining how economists think (or don't think) about extreme events.

Ackerman shines when dissecting the core assumptions of neoclassical economics, the dominant academic form of the discipline. His critique begins with 19th century economic models emulating classical physics and the concept of equilibrium. But while physics moved on in the 20th century, economics did not. So we are left with theoretical models that require an array of simplifying assumptions that abstract away from the nature of real-world economic problems.

In the simplified neoclassical view of the economy humans are assumed to be rational, self-interested maximizers of personal benefit who are unswayed by advertising, fashion or the behaviour of their peers. In this universe there is no market power, insider information or external costs imposed on third parties (like carbon emissions).

To be fair, each of these limitations has been explored in the economics literature, but usually only as one-offs while other standard assumptions are upheld. Ackerman points out that it is precisely these deviations from the model—bounded rationality, susceptibility to social pressures, imperfect markets—that are central to understanding financial or climate crises.

That said, Ackerman may be putting too much blame on economics and not enough on the failure of politics to implement adequate climate policies. Climate change is a collective action problem that requires governments to step in. This fundamentally conflicts with conservative values and the free market worldview of the right.

One area where economists have had a disproportionate effect on the public climate conversation is around carbon taxes. The economics of pricing carbon go back to Arthur Pigou who, observing the many smokestacks of England in the 1920s, came up with the idea that there are external costs imposed onto third parties from certain market transactions. In the case of emissions the fix is to “internalize the externality” through a price on carbon.

Ackerman comments that “getting the prices right’ is an incomplete response to climate change and other complex environmental problems.” We don’t actually know when certain tipping points will be reached, and poorly understand the value of expected damages. We can develop estimates from models but they are riddled with uncertainties about the future. At one extreme, the “dismal theorem” proves the value of carbon reductions to be literally infinite if we accept worst-case scenarios that destroy the sources of human well-being or that undermine the ability of the human race to survive.

“There is no fixed formula for good policy decisions about the greatest risk, no calculation that leads automatically to the right answer.”

Standard cost-benefit analysis is particularly ill-suited for addressing extreme risks in Ackerman’s view. Even under ideal circumstances, attempting to put a dollar value on human life or suffering is a task fraught with difficulty. For finance and climate, cost-benefit analysis has limited utility because it looks at potential outcomes in terms of averages and does not consider low-probability events with catastrophic implications.

It is one thing to assess risk when dealing with well-defined problems with an accumulated evidence base from past events; quite another when uncertainties abound and climate change itself affects the probabilities and magnitudes of damages.

In place of neoclassical approaches, Ackerman shows that financial crises are far more common than would be expected from a “normal” distribution

(i.e., the standard bell curve). The same non-linear relationship is likely for climate extremes, meaning our standard practices greatly understate the likelihood of extreme events. Such extreme weather events are already becoming our new normal: heavy precipitation events that overwhelm storm sewers; heat waves causing premature death; extreme dry conditions fueling forest fires, etc.

Insurance is central to any response to this new normal. Ackerman notes that people are risk averse and therefore willing to pay for a proposition that is likely to lose them money on average in order to guard against a truly catastrophic outcome. It would be interesting to scale this thinking globally to events too large for private insurance companies to handle, such as regional crop failures or disasters that displace millions of people.

We should also be modelling scenarios to help us make decisions. But when all we can know is what the worst-case scenario might look like, the precautionary principle should guide our decision-making. Ackerman invokes the wartime mobilization as a model for rapidly dealing with climate change.

The book’s links to our growing understanding of financial crises provide much interesting fodder. But the analogy is imperfect. Economic thinking based on periodic financial crashes does not ultimately translate well into the climate discussion, with its irreversible and catastrophic tipping points such as changes in the Earth’s ocean circulation system, the collapse of the Amazon rainforest or the loss of Greenland’s ice sheet.

“There is no fixed formula for good policy decisions about the greatest risk, no calculation that leads automatically to the right answer,” concludes Ackerman. “Politics, ethics, and judgment inevitably enter the decision-making process, along with science and economics.”

In other words, just get on with it. The future is at stake and we can, and must, do better. **M**

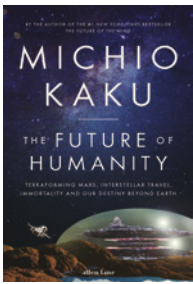


Flooding in Jakarta in February 2017.

KOMPAS/HENDRA A SETYAWAN (HAS)

REVIEWED BY FRANK BAYERL

Space junky



THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY: TERRAFORMING MARS, INTERSTELLAR TRAVEL, IMMORTALITY, AND OUR DESTINY BEYOND EARTH

MICHIO KAKU

Doubleday (February 2018), \$39.95

IF YOU ARE feeling somewhat overwhelmed this summer by fears of a global trade war, an interprovincial war of words over a proposed pipeline, or any of the myriad threats to our survival as a species, you may find at least temporary refuge in outer space.

The sweeping title of Michio Kaku's new work, *The Future of Humanity*, fairly captures the volume's contents, which range from the relatively modest and foreseeable (journeys to Mars) to such wildly speculative, far-future goals as colonizing planets in other solar systems, modifying ourselves biologically to adapt to life in space, and digitizing our brains to ensure we make it alive to distant stars and even other galaxies.

Kaku, a renowned theoretical physicist and founder of string field theory, begins by listing some of the existential threats that humanity faces just from our natural environment: the inevitability of another ice age some thousands of years off; the ever-present possibility of a catastrophic meteor or comet impact; and the certainty that our sun will, in some five billion years, expand into a red giant and engulf the Earth. It only makes sense, proposes Kaku, to think

about a future for humanity beyond our home planet.

Despite its freezing temperatures, carbon dioxide atmosphere and much lower surface pressure than Earth, Kaku sees Mars as a realistic "terraforming" goal for humans. Ice under the soil could be extracted and melted for drinking water and oxygen. Underground shelters could be built for protection from radiation and the fierce cold. It would cost a fortune, but the author optimistically sees a permanent base on Mars as possible by 2050.

Beyond the red planet, some of the moons of Jupiter and Saturn seem to offer conditions conducive to human exploration, if not habitation. Jupiter's moon Europa is covered with ice that likely hides an ocean of liquid water below it, and Titan, Saturn's largest moon, has a thick atmosphere mostly of nitrogen, and lakes of ethane and methane, which could be turned into an inexhaustible supply of energy.

The next leap beyond our solar system, to planets orbiting other stars, or exoplanets, would be an order of magnitude larger. The sheer distances involved—the nearest star is more than four light years away—would require new means of propulsion. Kaku discusses such exotic technologies as laser sails, light sails, ion or plasma engines and even antimatter rockets, all of which are currently unproven.

These technological thought experiments sometimes give the impression that Kaku is detached from our present mundane reality. But, in a similar vein to Yuval Noah Harari's *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*, the scientist also devotes considerable space to ethical questions surrounding the role of artificial intelligence, human bioengineering and the search for digital immortality—technologies that would be required, he says, for travel

Kaku excels when it comes to clearly explaining difficult scientific concepts.

to even a relatively nearby exoplanet suitable for colonization, and which are already transforming society on Earth.

Digital immortality, for example, would involve transferring the contents of our brains to transistors or their equivalent in future computers. "If our mind can be digitized, then is the soul just information?" Kaku asks, noting that if your mind is uploaded into a computer, you will spend eternity trapped in a machine. Viewers of the British sci-fi television series *Black Mirror* have been exposed to several terrifying, though darkly hilarious, visions of how this might work in practice.

If we are to travel the universe in search of new worlds to inhabit, we also have to be prepared to meet other forms of intelligent life or robots, which are better adapted to space exploration than biological beings. The possibility of the existence of more advanced civilizations raises far more questions than we can answer in our present state of knowledge, says Kaku, who leaves that conversation to the realm of speculation.

He is less concerned, it seems, about speculating on the more problematic and politically fraught notion of civilizational advancement. For Kaku, humanity is transitioning from what he calls a Type 0 to a Type I civilization, i.e., we are just emerging from sectarianism, dictatorship and religious strife, and advancing toward a planetary culture based on science and prosperity. One wonders, at this point, if he reads the news at all. For Kaku, the success of his transition is threatened mainly by global warming and bioterrorism.

If Kaku glosses over history and avoids political economy and class conflict, he excels when it comes to clearly explaining difficult concepts like faster-than-light travel, wormholes, dark matter, string theory and multiple universes. In this way, he is much like that other great pop-scientist, the late Stephen Hawking, who Kaku quotes optimistically in the conclusion of *The Future of Humanity*: "If we can avoid disaster for the next two centuries, our species should be safe, as we spread into space." **M**

REVIEWED BY PAULA MALLEA

Double jeopardy

Two very different books expose the structural failures of Canada's penal system

TAKING THE RAP: WOMEN DOING TIME FOR SOCIETY'S CRIMES

ANN HANSEN

Between the Lines (May 2018), \$29.95

AFTER PRISON: NAVIGATING EMPLOYMENT AND REINTEGRATIONS

ROSE RICCIARDELLI AND ADRIENNE M. F. PETERS (EDITORS)

Wilfrid Laurier University Press (December 2017), \$31.99

AT FIRST GLANCE, Ann Hansen's new memoir *Taking the Rap* and the more scholarly compilation *After Prison* by Rose Ricciardelli and Adrienne Peters do not have much in common other than a shared locale. But read together, they do enhance our understanding of how Canada's prison system is failing society, women in particular, when it comes to reintegrating the incarcerated after their terms have been served.

Taking the Rap is a wild ride with the Squamish Five, a group of anarchists that travelled the country in the early 1980s lobbing bombs in order to draw attention to the evils of capitalism (and in the hope of pushing other activists to be more extreme). Hansen, a senior member of that group, begins her story with its exploits and excuses. There was no intention to injure people in the infamous 1982 bombing of the Litton factory in Toronto, for example. Any injuries were the fault of the authorities, writes Hansen, since they are the ones who failed to evacuate the plant within 25 minutes, as the Squamish Five warned them to do.

A truck containing 550 pounds of dynamite had been parked at the doorway to the plant, near a busy highway in Toronto. It should have been clear that 25 minutes was not enough time

to evacuate the site. Hansen's group also failed to predict that police radios might set off the bomb, which they did 10 minutes early. As one of the 10 people injured in the blast said, it was a "brainless" scheme.

Hansen continued with her version of political action after she and the other Squamish Five members were arrested. She threw tomatoes at her sentencing judge, and one of her first acts in prison was to overthrow the lunch cart to protest a perceived injustice to another inmate. The response by the institution was to deliver lunch to no one that day. Lesson learned. Her politics and activism would cut no ice in the penitentiary.

Hansen is at her best when describing life in the former Prison for Women in Kingston. The book is a much-needed exposé of incarceration, with its petty payback, mindless violence, failure to produce much by way of rehabilitation, and corrupt culture. Guards bring in drugs as a way of controlling the population. Punishments are arbitrary and widespread. Indigenous women are overrepresented and treated differentially. Hansen sees all of this during her years inside.

Hansen says she did not abandon her principles in prison, but realized she would need to be pragmatic if she was ever going to emerge whole from the experience, and in order not to jeopardize others. She admits that her own behaviour was shameful and despicable, and that being in prison made her into a "giant asshole" at times. She lists the coping mechanisms that prisoners use to do their time: wear a mask, speak only when spoken to, establish a reputation, conceal your feelings, appear to be cold, detach from physical and emotional pain in order to obtain higher status and

respect, be able to defend yourself, do not establish an attachment to anything because everything can be taken away—even your life.

Her description of prison life resonates, as do her accounts of managing life on the outside. She is gradually released and goes to work making cabinets. She establishes a degree of stability, but is revoked twice for minor infractions. These two occasions of being returned to prison have a serious effect on her psychologically. She becomes paranoid and afraid, believing all the prisoners are talking about her. For years after she is released from both revocations, Hansen becomes reclusive, feeling that she has some form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). She also develops a heroin habit as a way of compensating.

Hansen especially notes the difference in the administration of one prison before and after the advent of the Conservative government in 2006. When she first stayed at Grand Valley Institution for Women it was "amazing," she writes. There were no bars, the guards were in civvies, the "con" and "bull" code was gone (these dictated an "us vs. them" approach to corrections, where guards and prisoners were never friendly to each other and there was an ugly, adversarial atmosphere). When she was returned to Grand Valley after the Harper government's "tough on crime" agenda was implemented, she found that things had changed markedly. The staff were tough and wore uniforms, the former cozy housing was gone, there was lots of double-bunking, consequences for misbehaviour were tougher than back in 2006—tougher even than in the Prison for Women.

Hansen saves her final political statement for the epilogue, where

she restates her Marxist view that we will have prisons until capitalism and the neoliberal political system are abolished. While her political analysis is sparse, there is no gainsaying her lived experience, from which we can learn much. She says that prisons are society's most important social control mechanism and that prisoners are scapegoats. She supports this position by pointing out that 75% of women prisoners are non-violent. The percentage of women—especially Indigenous women—in maximum security is far higher than for men. And the number of federal women prisoners increased from 350 to 850 in one decade.

It is when Hansen lays out the statistics and her own experience navigating the prison system that this book is strongest. When she tries to justify her own actions and insist they did not constitute terrorism (because she did not intend to hurt people), she weakens her argument.

Asked in an interview in 2002 what she would say to someone who might want to emulate her actions, Hansen finally admits that “they should probably really think about it, not romanticize it.” She says she is not sure that they would accomplish anything except going to prison and hurting other people. This self-enlightenment serves as the best outcome of the many wasted years she endured and the pain she both suffered and caused.

It requires quite an adjustment to move from Hansen's breezy account of her years in prison to the austere language of academe in the Ricciardelli and Peters book. In *After Prison* a number of authors talk about employment and the part it plays in helping ex-prisoners to succeed upon release. Anecdotes illustrate the difficulties encountered by former prisoners (including the story of lifer “James Young” in Chapter 1), and there is a good deal of theory that may appeal more to the specialist.

It is generally agreed that securing employment upon release improves the likelihood that an ex-prisoner will not reoffend. At the same time, many of the authors here point out the obstacles that prisoners encounter

when applying for jobs. Stigma does not go away, even when the prisoner has been exonerated from his or her crimes. The long absence from society and the workforce still convince many prospective employers that such a person will not perform as well as others. Employers and the public in general are not well-informed about prisons and prisoners and so may make unwarranted assumptions about who they are and how they might perform.

Kemi S. Anazodo et al. set the stage with a chapter that describes how reintegrating into society after a long separation is not easy, and having a job is important to easing the transition. These authors also say that a punitive system of justice makes it harder for wrongdoers to reintegrate than would a system of restorative justice.

Prisoners with mental health diagnoses have special difficulties in obtaining employment. In her chapter, Krystle Martin recommends that such prisoners be assessed immediately upon arriving in prison so as to match them up with potential employers when the time comes. She and other authors emphasize that automatic criminal background checks impede the employability of many ex-prisoners, even where a particular offence should not cause concern to an employer. And she makes a strong argument for the early expungement of criminal records.

Samantha McAleese provides a very readable analysis of the importance of pardons and points out that obtaining a “record suspension” (as Canada now calls them) has become much harder (it takes longer and is more expensive) under the “tough on crime” regime. She talks about the “Ban the Box” campaign in the United States, where employers are encouraged not to eliminate people from their hiring process because of criminal records. McAleese argues that making it more difficult for people to obtain pardons and thus employment will lead to more rather than less crime, pointing out how specious is the counter-claim that harsh restrictions somehow help victims.

An empirical study by Mike Harmon et al. investigates whether having a

criminal record affects job performance or termination. They gathered data on 425 production workers and found no support for the assumption that former prisoners would be “trouble at work.” They encourage the development of “second chance” businesses like Dave's Killer Bread in Oregon, owned by an ex-prisoner who hires ex-prisoners, who perform as well as those without a criminal record.

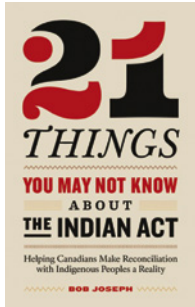
In a chapter concentrating on the special needs of South Asian and Muslim offenders, Christine Victoria Hough laments the new tendency to privatize services in many sectors, including the criminal justice system. A study by Adrienne M. F. Peters describes a different type of special offender, setting out the special needs of gang-involved youth. She cites Canada as a leader when it comes to moving away from punitive responses to youth crime. For example, Vancouver's successful PLEA Community Service program includes a Career Path segment, while other programs may include housing and other individual support plans.

The creation of such plans accounted for the astounding success of Jerry Miller who reduced the numbers of youth in custody in Massachusetts in the 1970s from 1,000 to 40 within five years, without an increase in the crime rate. This underused model has been available to us for years. The client-centred case management approach is described at length here by Ashley Brown, who also emphasizes the importance of access to employment.

Which brings us back to Ann Hansen. The former Squamish Five prisoner walked into a job immediately upon her release from prison. She had trained as a cabinetmaker and there was ample need for her skills in the Kingston area. A reduction in available programs in recent years, however, means that few prisoners will benefit from this type of training. In this respect, both *Taking the Rap* and *After Prison* paint a grim picture of the prospects for ex-prisoners who will need to work when they return to their homes and communities. **M**

REVIEWED BY HANNAH WYILE

Law of subjugation



21 THINGS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT THE INDIAN ACT

BOB JOSEPH

Indigenous Relations Press (April 2018), \$19.95

WE OFTEN EXTOL the Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Canada, but don't often acknowledge the ways another document is foundational to the creation of this country as we know it today: the Indian Act. The Indian Act is central to the unjust displacement of treaties as the guiding agreements for sharing these lands. It enacted the dispossession and oppression of Indigenous peoples—as nations and as individuals—that enabled the acquisition of territory for the establishment and governance of Canada as a settler colony. Without it, the current configuration of Canada and its provinces and territories might not exist. Without it, those of us who have come from elsewhere over the last five centuries might live here in a just form of coexistence with Indigenous peoples.

Bob Joseph's *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act* is a valuable introduction for those unfamiliar with the act and how it shapes contemporary realities. Rather than undertaking an exhaustive chronicle of the act and its effects, *21 Things* presents a short list of policies that, even while being selective, gives the reader a striking impression of the

all-encompassing control exerted over Indigenous lives by the Canadian state.

To list just a few of them, these policies include the imposition of the elected band council system; the disruption of Indigenous cultures and systems of governance; the removal of children to residential schools; the imposition of a harmful gender hierarchy; and the creation of the reserve system, which as Joseph notes was “created as a means of containing and controlling Indians while providing European settlers full access to the fish and game, water, timber, and mineral resources that had formerly sustained Indian life and culture.” Joseph carefully intertwines passages from the Indian Act, quotations from political and bureaucratic leaders such as John A. Macdonald and Duncan Campbell Scott, and descriptions of the effects the legislation had on Indigenous peoples, foregrounding both the attitudes that gave rise to the law and related policies, and their destructive consequences.

Joseph also highlights contradictions that belie some of the Indian Act's proclaimed benevolent intentions. Whereas the government's purported goal was assimilation, the creation of reserves and the pass system (whereby the Indian agent's permission was required for leaving the reserve) were mechanisms that enforced segregation rather than integration. Residential schools were allegedly supposed to offer Indigenous children an education that would prepare them for life in Canadian society, but as Joseph writes, in many cases they “often degenerated into exploited child labour.” Key bureaucrats like Scott supported the residential school policy while knowing how many children were dying in the schools.

Some of these policies expose the double-standard of a Canadian government that, while convinced Indigenous peoples should not continue their own ways of life, was also not comfortable with them thriving in the mainstream. For instance, Indigenous people were pressured to adopt European agricultural practices, but then restricted from selling the products of their labours over concerns they

might compete with non-Indigenous farmers. Joseph also underscores both continual resistance to Indian Act policies by Indigenous peoples and initiatives by the Canadian government to criminalize their resistance.

The book concludes with a short section on the need to dismantle the Indian Act, along with a brief consideration of recent Canadian government announcements that seem to give Joseph hope for this prospect. However, many questions remain regarding the logistics of dismantling the act, particularly with respect to attitudinal shifts required on the part of Canadians and their governments, as is clearly highlighted in the late Arthur Manuel's recent book *The Reconciliation Manifesto* (reviewed in the January/February 2018 *Monitor*). For Manuel, meaningful reconciliation is not possible while Indigenous nations continue to be asked to relinquish their right to self-determination as part of negotiating their way out from under the Indian Act.

These are challenging but essential questions to contemplate. None of us living here today is responsible for creating the Indian Act, but we are collectively responsible for the power relations it continues to perpetuate, where some people are subjugated by it while the rest of us benefit materially from its legacies. Working toward more just relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and the lands we share requires understanding the history of the Indian Act and its role in dispossessing and subjugating Indigenous peoples. While *21 Things* does not necessarily provide a clear road map for answering all of these questions, it pushes us to be open to looking for the answers and sets us at the beginning of the path. We have to start from a place that is rooted in historical fact and understanding of Indigenous peoples' experiences of the policies they have been subjected to and their resistance to them. Joseph's book provides an accessible entry point to begin developing that understanding. **M**

The making of feminist loneliness studies

MODERN LIFE IS increasingly atomized. We work harder and longer into the day than people used to, and are increasingly reliant on social networking technologies to connect with others when we know, and research tells us, this is less satisfying than face-to-face interactions. I am a person who struggles with loneliness, but it was only through reading about other women's experiences of being alone that I came to understand how, as cultural critic Olivia Laing put it, "loneliness and isolation are political as well as personal."

Gabourey Sidibe's beautiful memoir, *This Is Just My Face* (HarperAvenue), makes the connections between loneliness and a political climate of white supremacist patriarchy viciously apparent. Famous for her Oscar-winning performance as Precious in the 2009 movie of the same name, Sidibe's tell-all depicts, sometimes hilariously and often devastatingly, her feeling of violent exclusion from the film industry as a woman of colour and its effects on her well-being.

The book begins with the star's potential cover shoot for *Vogue*. Rushing to discuss the idea at the magazine, Sidibe overhears *Vogue*'s (former) editor-at-large, André Leon Talley, repeatedly saying he is going to put that "fat bitch" and that "Black bitch" on the cover. Talley is speaking to Sidibe's director on *Precious*, Lee Daniels, who says nothing.

The anecdote captures perfectly the emotional toll of being systemically forced onto the outside. In Sidibe's experience we find both the loneliness of the child who listens from the doorway of the lunchroom to the other children laughing, and the exclusion of so many women of colour from decisions about

their careers, their artistic visions and their political space in society.

With the release last year of *This Is Just My Face*, Sidibe joined a dialogue started by feminist memoirists who are carefully detailing the personal and political factors that contribute to loneliness, and how the act of writing, in Sidibe's words, can help women "find purpose for pain."

In her 2016 book *The Lonely City* (Picador), Olivia Laing documents the ways that the geography of Manhattan makes it "possible—easy, even—to feel desolate and unfrequented in oneself while living cheek by jowl with others." Loneliness, according to the author, doesn't require "physical solitude, but rather an absence or paucity of connection."

Like Sidibe, Laing notes the political nature of loneliness, claiming that being a woman who is single and lonely in her thirties is "no longer socially sanctioned and carries with it a persistent whiff of strangeness, deviance and failure," a halo inviting sexist tropes of the spinster life. Laing compares loneliness to being hungry "in a place where being hungry is shameful, and where one has no money and everyone else is full."

These feelings of shame and loneliness are tied up with whether one's "body or sexuality is considered deviant or damaged," writes Laing, highlighting the cruel systemic determinations of who is considered desirable, which remain bound to sizeist, queerphobic, ableist assumptions about a person's ability to find romantic partners, to make new friends, to connect.

Before Laing there was Caroline Knapp, most famous for her 1996 memoir *Drinking: A Love Story*. In

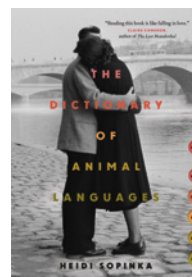
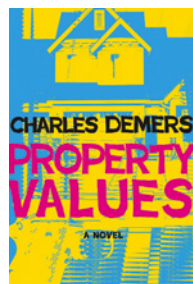
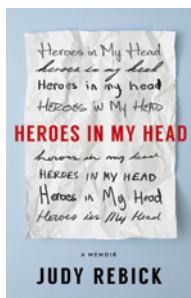
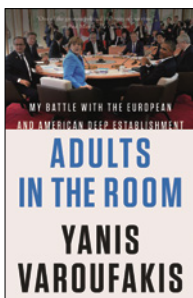
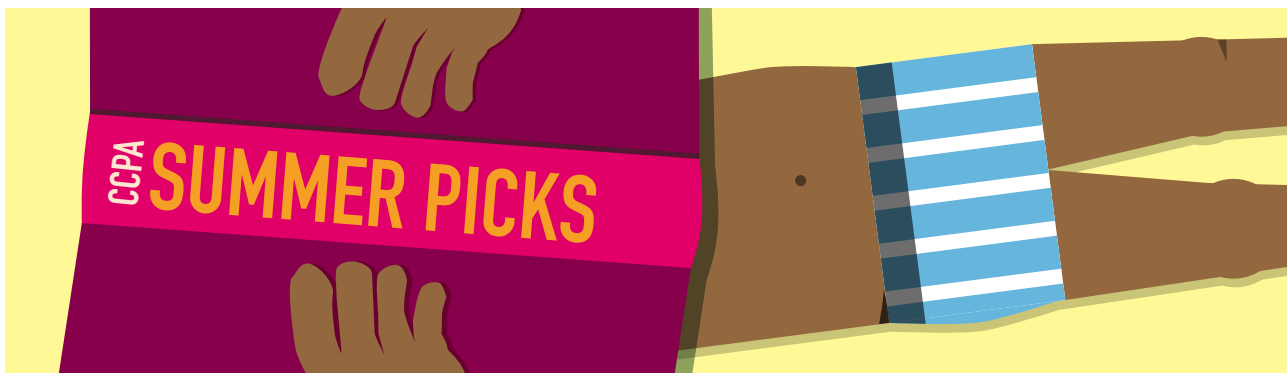
Sidibe's memoir felt like a kind and generous hand extended to me over the void.

Appetites, her posthumous follow-up (she died of lung cancer in 2002), Knapp presents one of the most desolate yet moving descriptions of the political reasons for women's loneliness that I have ever read. Building on Germaine Greer, who wrote about how often we see women weeping in society—at the movie theatre, emerging red-eyed and alone from the bathroom, etc.—Knapp observes:

women weep...because they feel powerless, and because they are exhausted and overworked and lonely. Women weep because their own needs are unsatisfied, continually swept into the background as they tend to the needs of others. They weep because the men in their lives so often seem incapable of speaking the language of intimacy, and because their children grow up and become distant, and because they are expected to acquiesce to this distance, and because they live lives of chronically lowered expectations and chronic adjustment to the world of men, her interest in connection considered trivial, her core never quite seen or known...her true self out of alignment with so much that is valued...her love, in a word, unrequited.

What can a feminist loneliness studies offer? For Laing, the "strange, almost magical thing about [books on loneliness] is that in examining loneliness they also serve as an antidote to it." Sidibe's memoir felt like a kind and generous hand extended to me over the void. Fifteen years after Knapp, the actor's descriptions of her community, family and art being continually sidelined by an individualist, celebrity-oriented, racist and sexist culture continue to expose the ways we are all kept isolated from one another, and the devastating emotional toll this can take.

Writers like Laing, Sidibe and Knapp struggle to understand the complex meaning of loneliness, but also its healing and generative capacity. Their writing is a pathway that interrupts all of our aloneness by giving voice to our shared pain of isolation, and by exploring an artistic space in which to connect not only with each other but with ourselves and our deepest longings. **M**



SETH KLEIN / DIRECTOR, CCPA-BC

I've got several books on the go heading into the summer, more than I can mention here. I'm halfway through Yanis Varoufakis's *Adults in the Room: My Battle with the European and American Deep Establishment* (Farrar, Straus Giroux), a political-economic memoir of the economist's short-lived and tumultuous experience as Greece's finance minister. Varoufakis is a terrific writer, and this is a great introduction to modern economics. *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* by Adrienne Maree Brown (AK Press) has been recommended to me many times for its insights into the political challenges progressives face at this moment. Rod Mickleburgh's *On the Line: A History of the British Columbia Labour Movement* (Harbour Publishing) looks terrific, as does Judy Rebick's *Heroes in my Head: A Memoir* (House of Anansi Press), a personal and courageous account of her experience with childhood sexual abuse and multiple personality disorder. Finally, for a great romp, I highly recommend *Property Values* (Arsenal Pulp Press), the latest book by my friend, the comedian and essayist Charlie

Demers. This is Charlie's first "crime" novel, full of funny plot twists and very rooted in Vancouver's real estate crisis and other realities.

LYNNE FERNANDEZ / RESEARCH ASSOCIATE AND PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR, CCPA-MANITOBA

I'm looking forward to reading two novels this summer. The first is Canadian Heidi Spink's *The Dictionary of Animal Languages* (Penguin Canada), called "an atlas of the heart" by one reviewer. I don't know what to expect, but I am an animal lover and fascinated by inter-species relationships. I have also discovered my favourite books by jumping into the unknown. The second book will be something by the recently deceased Philip Roth, perhaps his 2010 fiction *Everyman* (Vintage), in which he wrote "Life's most disturbing intensity is death." Though I think that can wait till I'm in the warm sun of a luminous northern Spanish beach.

HADRIAN MERTINS-KIRKWOOD RESEARCHER

My visit to Helsinki two years ago was a revelation in social development, from the vibrant public spaces to the world-leading

social safety net. No wonder Finland took top spot in the UN's 2018 World Happiness Report! That's why I'm so excited to dive into *The Finnish Way* by Canadian-Finnish journalist Katja Pantzar (TarcherPerigee). The book promises practical tips on staying happy and healthy, which are always welcome, but I'm also interested in learning more about the social and cultural factors that make Finland such a standout. What lessons can we learn, at the policy level or otherwise, for improving social well-being in Canada?

GAURI SREENIVASAN DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND RESEARCH

I was captivated by the wonderful Canadian author Carianne Leung as she read from her collection *That Time I loved You* (HarperCollins) at the Ottawa Writer's Festival recently. I felt instantly at home and drawn in to her stories of growing up in the suburbs of the 1970s—"Scarberia," as she and so many of my friends call it—trying to navigate relationships with other kids, teachers and neighbours across lines of race, age and place. From her reading, and a peek inside my new copy, I know I'm going to enjoy connecting with Leung's tender insights into feelings

of belonging and difference, and the complex boundaries between kids and adults.

SHEILA BLOCK / ECONOMIST, CCPA-ONTARIO

I'm looking forward to reading *The Very Marrow of Our Bones*, a debut novel by Christine Higdon (ECW Press). It's about family, messy secrets and two women who disappear from a small working class town in B.C. I'm also intrigued because it's a novel where a woman who leaves her children (five of them!) is portrayed sympathetically.

ALYSSA O'DELL / MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

This summer I'll be reading *There There*, the first novel by Tommy Orange (McClelland & Stewart). I'm excited to dive into his portrait of an America few of us have ever seen—the urban Indigenous community in California—through a “multigenerational story about violence and recovery, memory and identity, and the beauty and despair woven into the history of a nation and its people.”

TRISH HENNESSY / DIRECTOR, CCPA-ONTARIO

My summer reading list includes a dive into AI, automation, digitization and the future of work. The first is *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor* by Virginia Eubanks (St. Martin's Press), a book that Naomi Klein says is “downright scary—but...you will emerge smarter and more empowered to demand justice.” *The Future of Professions: How Technology Will Transform the Work of Human Experts* by Richard and Daniel Susskind (Oxford University Press) makes bold predictions about

how new technology will radically transform the nature of professional work and the elite quality of professionals. *Four Futures: Life After Capitalism* by Peter Frase (Verso) argues that automation and the impact of climate change will spell the end of capitalism, leaving room either for a resurgent Left to shape the future or something that looks more like barbarianism.

SIMON ENOCH / DIRECTOR, CCPA-SK

Suspect the sharing economy is just a scam to make us all work harder for less? Think “disruption” is just clever tech jargon to avoid laws and regulations? In *Live Work Work Work Die: A Journey into the Savage Heart of Silicon Valley* (Henry Holt and Co.), Corey Pein punctures the hype to reveal the thoroughly dystopian future these tech bros have in store for us. Everything you suspected is true!

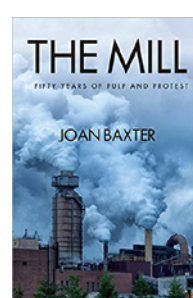
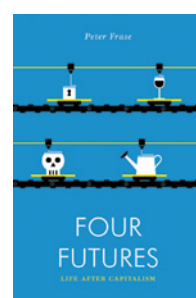
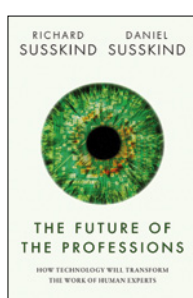
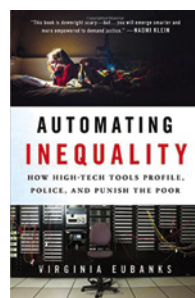
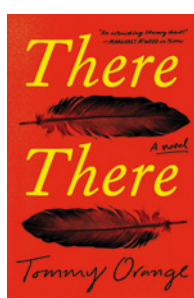
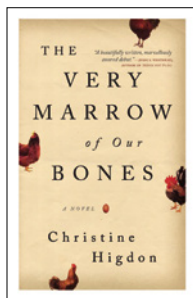
STUART TREW / EDITOR, THE MONITOR

I always plan to read more in the summer than I actually do, but rarely plan what the books will be. This year, if I remember, I hope to pick up *Mistaken Identity: Race and Class in the Age of Trump* by Asad Haider, editor of the “militant research collective” *Viewpoint Magazine*. According to publisher Verso, Haider draws on an intensive reading of Black revolutionary theory and history to argue that today's identity politics “marks a retreat from the crucial passage of identity to solidarity, and from individual recognition to the collective struggle against an oppressive social structure.” A few books mailed to us at the *Monitor* look promising, too, including *Homeless Youth and*

the Search for Stability (Wilfred Laurier University Press), which relates the stories of young people in three Canadian cities as they try to find their way off the street, and Todd Tucker's *Judge Knot: Politics and Development in International Investment Law* (Anthem Press), a novel take on investor-state dispute settlement that I've just couriered to CCPA trade researcher Scott Sinclair for a review.

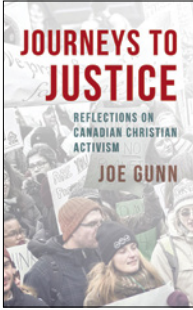
**CHRISTINE SAULNIER
DIRECTOR, CCPA-NOVA SCOTIA**

This has been a great year for books written and published by Maritimers. In March, investigative journalist Joan Baxter released *The Mill: Fifty Years of Pulp and Protest* (Nimbus), which chronicles the controversial life to date of a mill in northern Nova Scotia. In April, Fernwood published a timely book by Dalhousie nursing professor Ingrid Waldron, *There's Something in the Water*, examining the legacy of environmental racism and its health impacts in Indigenous and Black communities in the province. Next on my list is the autobiography *Doug Knockwood, Mi'kmaw Elder: Stories, Memories, Reflections* (Roseway Press), “a personal story of how one man overcame the ravages of colonialism, racism, tuberculosis and alcoholism to become an honoured and respected Elder.” I also hope to get to a 10th anniversary edition of the children's book *Everybody's Different on Everybody Street* (Nimbus) by Sheree Fitch, which de-stigmatizes mental health, is beautifully illustrated by Emma Fitzgerald, and is perfect for reading out loud to your children, grandchildren or the whole family this summer.



REVIEWED BY MURRAY MACADAM

Moral imperatives



JOURNEYS TO JUSTICE: REFLECTIONS ON CANADIAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVISM

EDITED BY JOE GUNN

Novalis (2018), \$14.95

WHILE WRITING THIS review, I took a break to serve meals to low-income people at my church. I enjoyed our crew's camaraderie, meeting guests, and felt good about serving healthy food for people who can't afford it. But afterwards, I felt frustrated. Why, I asked myself, do so many people in this affluent nation have to rely on handouts to ward off hunger? Why is it far easier to involve people in charitable efforts like meal programs than inspire them to tackle the root causes of hunger and poverty?

That's why *Journeys to Justice*, edited by veteran social justice activist Joe Gunn, executive director of the Christian-based public advocacy organization Citizens for Public Justice, is a breath of fresh air. Based on interviews with key players in various campaigns, the book chronicles the efforts of faith-inspired social justice activists to move from charity to justice by influencing public and corporate policies in Canada.

The remarkable achievements of churches over the past 50 years would surprise many people. How

many Canadians know that Christians saved thousands of Chileans from torture and death under the Pinochet regime by persuading the Canadian government to accept them as refugees? That they joined forces with others to help end apartheid? That more than 600,000 Canadian Christians signed petitions to cancel debts in the Global South? And that they've sparked debate about how capitalism fails to work for so many?

Activists will appreciate the nuts and bolts of how the churches organized campaigns, among them the one to push banks and corporations not to invest in apartheid South Africa. The large-scale education and mobilization of church people is portrayed as essential, along with forging alliances with allies outside the churches.

Another key element outlines how faith groups have confronted capitalism, challenging us to think about our values and those upon which our economy is based. A bold reflection in 1983 by Canada's Catholic bishops noted that the suffering of jobless Canadians constituted "a moral disorder" and that "the needs of the poor have priority over the wants of the rich, the rights of workers are more important than profits, and the participation of the marginalized takes precedence over an economic system that excludes them."

The bishops called for an alternative economy based on participatory democracy. United Church moderator Bill Phipps led a major effort within his church in the 1990s focusing on how "the Market had become God," to remind church members that economic justice is a fundamental cornerstone of biblical theology. Heady stuff, indeed.

While many will recall campaigns to end apartheid, stop the Mackenzie Valley pipeline and welcome refugees, a

few chapters lift up initiatives far less known. One was an effort to raise the tragedy of violence against women in northern communities led by a feisty nun, Marie Zarowny, supported by Catholic bishops. However, an account of the clash between anti-abortion Catholics and more progressive ones around the International Women's March in 2000 makes for painful reading.

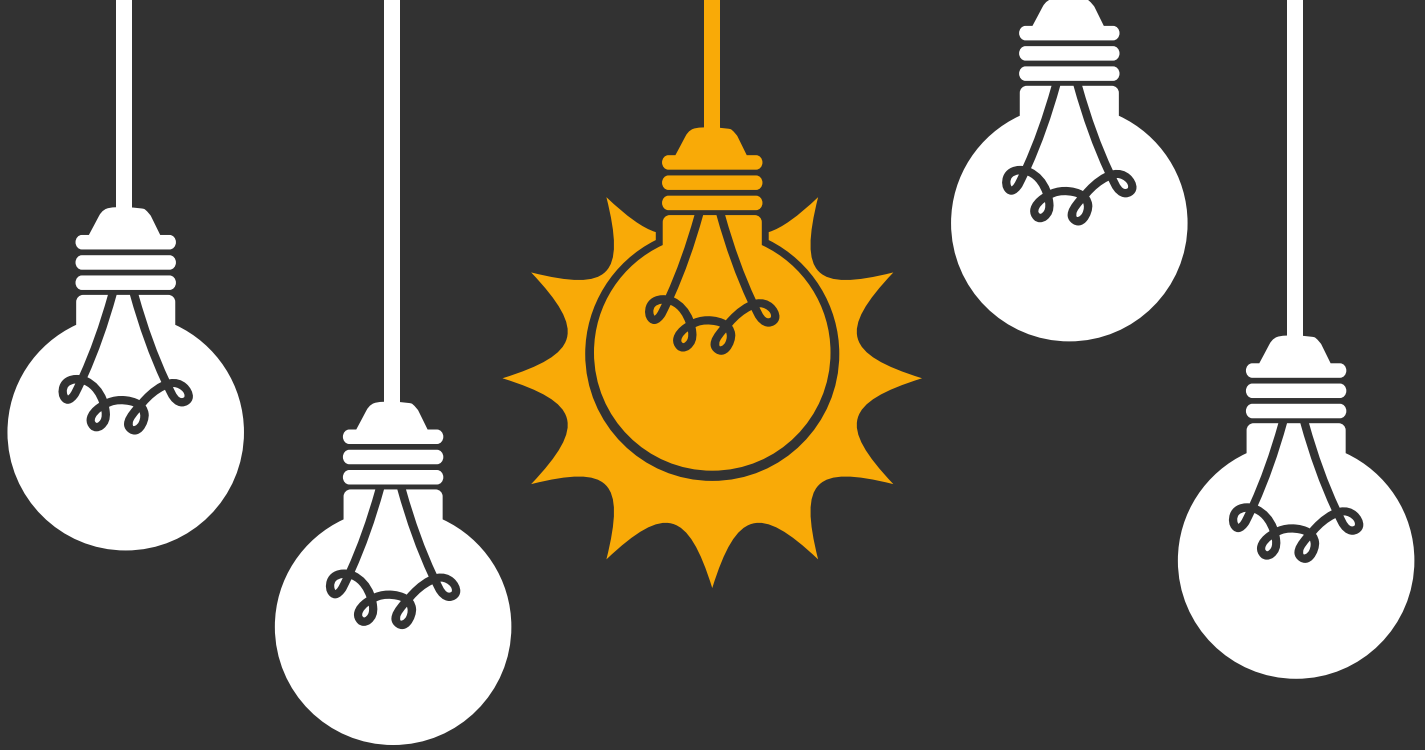
Opponents of the Kinder Morgan pipeline can take heart from an account of the successful campaign in the 1970s to stop the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, a David-and-Goliath battle pitting Christians, Indigenous peoples and others against oil and gas companies and their allies.

The book doesn't only look backward, but wraps up with a "Where Do We Go From Here" section by two young Christian social justice advocates who point to new ways of organizing for the future based on lessons from the past and on collaboration with people from other faiths or with no faith.

Today, churches and other faith-based organizations continue educating and advocating on such issues as ending fossil fuel subsidies, nurturing reconciliation efforts, fighting racism and Islamophobia, and urging the federal government to stop compelling refugees to pay their travel costs to Canada.

Occasionally, excessive details make the book drag a little. The "churchy" language in spots may put off non-Christian readers. But even as mainline churches lose members, *Journeys to Justice* reminds us of the impact that people of faith can still have, especially when they join forces with like-minded partners. **M**

JOURNEYS TO JUSTICE IS AVAILABLE FROM CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE (WWW.CPJ.CA).



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(we've got some bright ideas)

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