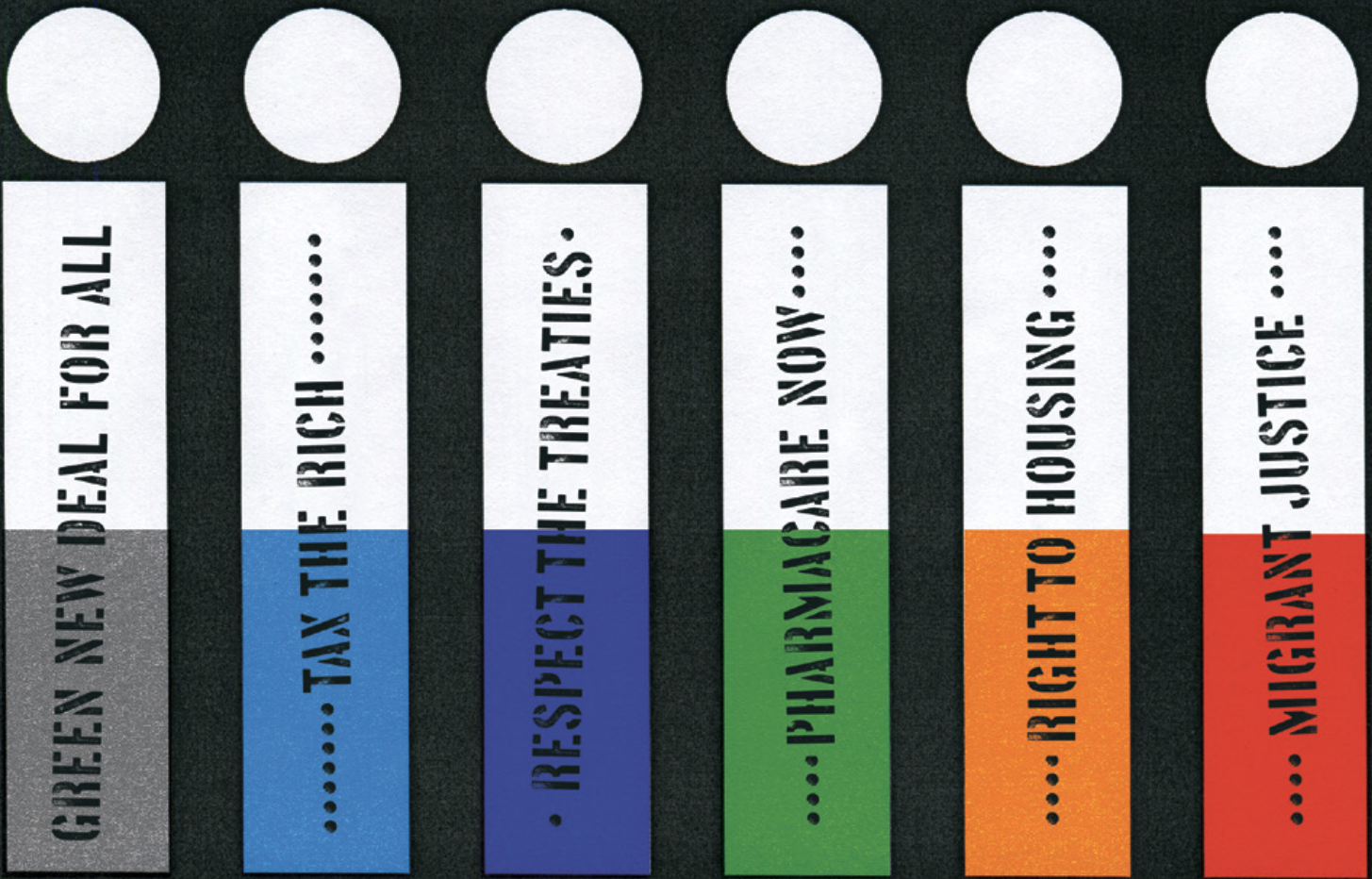


MONITOR

Progressive news, views and ideas





CCPA
CANADIAN CENTRE
for POLICY ALTERNATIVES
CENTRE CANADIEN
de POLITIQUES ALTERNATIVES

MONITOR

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

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Election 2019

THINKING BIGGER, DEMANDING BETTER

/12-41

DEMOCRATIC WORKPLACES
FAIR TAXATION
PHARMACARE NOW
EQUALIZATION
VOTER DECEPTION
A GREEN NEW DEAL FOR ALL
MILLENNIAL ACTIVISM
FREE AND INFORMED PRIOR CONSENT
CANNABIS EQUITY
RIGHT TO HOUSING
BATTLE OF POLITICAL BRANDS
ACCESS TO ABORTION
END AUSTERITY BUDGETING
BOYCOTT, DIVEST, SANCTION

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 SARAH KENNEL, SHEILA BLOCK
 AND CLARE MIAN.

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STUART TREW

From placeholder to activist government

CANADIAN ELECTIONS CAN be staid affairs. For all the talk of big change, campaigns tend to gravitate toward which party can be trusted to “manage the economy.” Trusted by whom? The coveted “middle class” voter, of course. Those at the higher-income end of that group are more likely to vote yet have the least to gain or lose, relatively speaking, from a shift in government in any direction. The political imagination is stifled by this electoral reality; the options for meeting today’s overwhelming challenges drastically reduced by the fiscal conservatism of a well-off minority.

Could 2019 be different? The pollster Nik Nanos claimed in June that climate change would be “one of the defining battle grounds” this election. “More important than jobs, more important than health care, more important than immigration.” In July, Abacus Data put climate change in third spot behind health care and cost of living, an important issue (with the environment) for the two-thirds of voters from the millennial and gen-X generations. If the polls are right, and those public attitudes hold, parties may be judged not on their ability to *manage* the economy, but on their plans to *transform* it.

As readers will know, the *Monitor* (and the CCPA) takes social transformation very seriously. It’s our jam, as (I think) the kids still say. Like in 2015, this special election issue doesn’t pretend to be comprehensive, and we have no interest in telling you how to vote. Instead, some big ideas for transforming Canada are presented alongside expert assessments of the current government’s record and critical takedowns of the right-wing propaganda—about immigration, equalization and deficits in particular—distracting voters from more important things, climate change high among them.

Five years ago, CCPA economists worked with the drafters of the Leap Manifesto to find the money it would take to rapidly de-carbonize and

de-colonize the Canadian economy. They determined that an actually effective carbon tax of \$200/tonne (compared to the current \$30/tonne) would, on its own, raise \$80 billion a year for investment in public transit, building retrofits and just-transition programs for fossil fuel workers. Modestly raising taxes for the highest-income earners and corporations, and closing tax loopholes that benefit the rich, would add at least another \$20 billion a year to this pot.

Obviously, the leap hasn’t happened yet. The Trudeau government’s contested carbon tax was set too low to have any effect on emissions, and 90% of new revenue was spent on individual tax credits, wiping out the potential of the tax to fund a green transition. In any case, a federal recommitment to new oil sands pipelines seriously challenged our hope of lowering Canadian greenhouse gas emissions. Expensive tax loopholes remain open and a “middle class tax cut” primarily benefited higher-income earners.

Where we needed massive increases in spending on large-scale public projects, the government created “clear, long-term investment paths,” in the Canada Infrastructure Bank, for private hedge funds and pensions to profit from new or refurbished toll roads, buildings, and public services. Finance Minister Bill Morneau’s advisory council on economic growth, speaking on behalf of these decidedly non-middle-class investors, called for “a pipeline of scalable projects with reasonable certainty” and “some source of revenue potential” (i.e., user fees). The government delivered.

CCPA-Manitoba Director Molly McCracken catches up with Leap co-founder Avi Lewis (page 23), who has been touring Canada with other social justice leaders to promote the idea of a Green New Deal for All. Emboldened by strong U.S. momentum for a Leap-like transition—from a resource-dependent, highly unequal

society to a better-paid and more sustainable one—these activists and organizers are making impressive inroads into Canadian mainstream debate, with polling data showing high levels of support for a Green New Deal here, too.

Leading off our election special, however, CCPA-BC researcher Alex Hemingway wonders why other big, democratic and socialist ideas that are popular abroad have less resonance in Canada (page 13). U.S. Democrats and the U.K. Labour Party are proposing inclusive worker ownership funds, worker representation on corporate boards, and the “right to own” or buy companies that are set to be shut down, for example. They are calling for more action to encourage and support co-operative enterprises, and seriously considering financial transactions taxes that would raise enough money to make all schooling free.

While the current federal government dithers with refined neoliberal methods of governing for big business, strange bedfellows are calling into question that defunct project. In a centenary declaration this year, the International Labour Organization asks governments to accept a “human-centred approach to the future of work,” including support for gender equality, universal access to social protections, living wages and the right to organize. In August, the *Financial Times*, a pro-market business paper, urged the U.S. (but really all countries) to “drop concerns around state planning” and realize “the need to transition to a worker-led economy.”

In her article on the 2015 election’s overblown fear of deficits (pg. 37), Sheila Block concludes, “a debate about who can spend less in government is the last thing we need.” With the threat of climate change so immediate, and money as cheap as it is now, Canada should be spending freely and generously—not to manage the economy for the comfort of those at the top, but to transform society for the good of all. **M**



Populism and inequality

The last issue provided excellent articles on populism. Paul Saurette did a fine job of defining this difficult term ("Populism as good storytelling," July/August 2019). I wish to comment on the source of populism in Canada and in other capitalist societies.

Many persons say that populism is characterized by a sense of economic pessimism, anger at elites, and deep mistrust of mainstream media and science. Some rightly suggest that part of the answer lies with high levels of inequality, tepid economic growth, etc. It is important to note that the trend to higher inequality started in the 1980s and continues to this day. It was promoted by Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman and picked up by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. In Canada the share of national total income received by the top 1% of population has risen from 7% in 1985 to 11.3% in 2016. Inequality is particularly bad in the United States followed by the United Kingdom.

The fundamental research on inequality was presented by Kate Pickett

and Richard Wilkinson in their 2009 book *The Spirit Level*, work that was extended in their 2019 *The Inner Level* (both from Penguin). These books show the correlation between many societal ills and inequality—and it is with inequality per se rather than low income. This trend is occurring throughout the liberal economies, giving rise to a general feeling on the part of many people of getting a bad deal. They are willing to follow populist demagogues out of desperation.

The worst cases are in economies that can be classified as neoliberal, that is, having an inherent belief that the market knows best and economic growth solves everything. To arrest these negative trends, it is necessary to adopt a policy of lowering inequality by having a more progressive taxation system that redistributes income and wealth to counter the natural tendency of capitalist economies to transfer wealth to the 1% from the rest of the population. This would be better for everyone, but don't count on those who benefit to fix this broken economic system.

Another aspect of inequality is the distortion of the market driven by the growing income share of the upper economic class and the aspirations to imitate them. Is it possible that the housing crisis in large urban centres is related to these inequality trends as well as rising personal debt? Economic liberalism has had its day and is leading to a general feeling of powerlessness among the lower middle classes. We seem to be beyond the restoration of welfare

liberalism. I would promote the idea of ecosocialism, but I don't know how to make it happen.

Don Kerr,
Collingwood, Ontario

Another side of Quebec's debt

Figures don't lie, but they can be made to support opposite positions. Guillaume Hébert ("Quebec's debt and borrowing rates are related, but not in the way you think," July/Aug 2019) does not mention that reducing Quebec's debt reduces the cost of servicing it. Using his numbers, a debt reduction of \$21.1 billion would reduce the cost of servicing it (at 2.1%) by \$443.1 million per annum. On the other hand, 2.1% is a pretty good rate at which to borrow money. I wish I could negotiate a mortgage that low. Should Quebec be amortizing its indebtedness or not?

E. Russell Smith,
Ottawa, Ontario

Correction

In the table of contents of the July/August issue, the *Monitor* accidentally referred to Gordon A. Bailey, author of "Civil disobedience in the time of Trans Mountain" (page 49), as "Robert A. Bailey." We apologize for the mistake, which we've changed in the PDF version of the magazine at www.policyalternatives.ca/monitor.

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

Awareness

He's "making the case for war."

Haven't we been here before—in the monumental deception that prepared for aggression against Iraq?

"It's a terrorist state."
Few hands are clean.

The millions of dead from Latin America, Cambodia, Vietnam, Iraq speak to my inner ear. The screams of the tortured return through the silence, the missing and the disappeared—appear.

A call for war betrays their memory, unpicks the links of life, foregoes a future—already hanging by a thread.

Is there a coalition that knows our condition and cares, speaks truth to call us back

toward life?

Frank Thompson,
Parry Sound, Ontario



New from the CCPA

Canada's climate policy drought

Hotter temperatures and extreme weather are bringing the reality of climate change directly into more and more lives. A new report from the CCPA and the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change research program (ACW), titled **Heating Up, Backing Down**, finds that Canadian governments are still not taking the problem seriously.

"Overall, we find that climate policy in Canada is less ambitious and less comprehensive than even two years ago," writes author **Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood**, a senior researcher at the CCPA. "More ambitious policies backed by bold climate leadership will be necessary for Canada to achieve its goals and make a positive contribution to humanity's existential fight against climate change. We cannot afford to back down as the world heats up."

Backlash against otherwise promising carbon-emission policies risks putting Canada back on the path of rising emissions. Mertins-Kirkwood recommends a shift from a collective fixation on controversial

climate change policies, such as the carbon tax, to focusing on energy policies that restrict the production of fossil fuels.

A B.C. budget we can get behind

In June, the **CCPA-BC** made a submission to the 2020 provincial budget consultation highlighting how B.C. could make the most of substantial surpluses in the next two fiscal years. Top recommendations include funding the next phase of the province's poverty reduction strategy, expanding climate action initiatives in recognition of the urgency of climate change, and making new investments in affordable housing. CCPA-BC also urged the government to accelerate investments in transit, create a fairer provincial tax system, and strengthen public K-12 and post-secondary education.

Specifically in the area of poverty reduction, the submission called for an immediate and significant increase to social and disability assistance rates; new investments in additional low-income housing stock, including co-op housing, and stronger renter protections; further improvements to the delivery of social assistance; funding for proactive enforcement of employment and labour law; expanded access to affordable dental and eye care, as well as pharmacare for low-income people; and improved access to justice for lower-income and marginalized communities.

Employment insurance's hidden deductible

A report from the CCPA-Ontario finds that just one in four minimum-wage workers are eligible for employment insurance benefits even though they make significant contributions to the program. CCPA-Ontario researcher **Ricardo Tranjan** analyzed the three most common EI coverage indicators and determined that only 68% of minimum-wage workers—as compared to 80% of all unemployed workers—are considered eligible for benefits. This is despite the fact that lower income earners tend to pay more into the EI program.

"EI began as a program targeting lower-wage workers. It became a program offering near universal coverage, and yet today it fails to support most precariously employed, low-wage workers," Tranjan writes in his new report, **Toward an Inclusive Economy**. He recommends a basic level of income security for all workers in recognition of their payment into the program. Tranjan also suggests that the EI program should recognize the reality of lower-wage work so that minimum-wage workers are no longer penalized for part-time work and shorter tenures.

Making change by making some noise

A concerted effort from anti-poverty organizers was behind the implementation of Manitoba's Rent Assist benefit, write **Josh Brandon** and **Jesse Hajer** in their

new CCPA-Manitoba report, **Making Space for Change**, which traces the history and implementation (in 2014) of the social program, and changes that have taken place since then.

Activists made a strategic decision to focus their organizing on housing assistance, recognizing that housing affordability was an issue that more people could relate to. The result, as Brandon and Hajer document, was widespread public support across party lines for the creation of the Rent Assist benefit program.

However, Rent Assist has faced several cuts since then. Manitobans receiving benefits are now paying a higher deductible even though rental allowances have stayed the same or decreased. A 2017 KPMG study, which called for more cuts, could result in the program being rolled back even further by the current government.

Still, as Brandon and Hajer explain, Rent Assist remains one of the most successful shelter programs in Canada. "The achievement and maintenance of Rent Assist represents a major victory for anti-poverty organizers in Manitoba," they write. "Their success offers lessons for housing and social assistance advocates across Canada."

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

Up Front



GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

NICK FALVO | ALBERTA

Province must find alternatives to cutting social spending

The Alberta government led by Premier Jason Kenney will almost certainly announce major cuts to social spending in the near future. It doesn't have to. In fact, it could increase social spending while being fiscally responsible.

The Alberta Alternative Budget (AAB) is an annual exercise whose working group consists of researchers, economists and members of civil society. Our mandate—like that of the Alternative Federal Budget co-ordinated each year by the CCPA—is to create a progressive vision for Alberta that boosts economic growth and reduces income inequality.

This year's AAB discusses several social challenges in Alberta. For example, more than 80% of Alberta's kindergarten through Grade 3 classes currently exceed the provincial government's own class size targets. The AAB therefore recommends substantial increases in spending on K–12 education alongside reduced public funding for private schools (which are currently subsidized at higher rates than in any other province).

Tuition fees as a share of university operating revenue roughly tripled in Alberta over the last 30 years. The AAB therefore proposes a five-year phase-out

of tuition fees, starting with a 20% reduction in fees for all post-secondary students for the upcoming year, including for international students.

One in five Alberta households include someone unable to take prescribed medications in the past 12 months because of cost. The AAB therefore proposes a provincially funded, universal pharmacare program. After all, if you're sick, you're sick.

Finally, social assistance caseloads have risen substantially since the start of the economic downturn. This is especially the case for single adults without dependents. The Alternative Alberta Budget would therefore increase funding for retraining Albertans experiencing prolonged periods of unemployment. This would halt the flow of people onto social assistance and improve the likelihood they will find new jobs.

Alberta still has, by far, the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio of any province, projected to be 6.5% in 2018-19. The next lowest is British Columbia's, which stands at 15.2%, while Ontario's 2018-19 debt-to-GDP ratio is above 40%. In other words, there is no fiscal crisis in this province. Alberta does not have to cut social spending to preserve its long-term financial health.

Albertans are also taxed less than residents of any other province. According to Alberta Treasury Board and Finance, if the province adopted a tax structure similar to the next lowest-taxed province in the country (British Columbia), Alberta would generate an additional \$8.7 billion in annual revenue.

Meanwhile, Alberta remains the only Canadian province without a provincial sales tax. The Alberta Alternative Budget working group estimates that the implementation of a 5% provincial sales tax in Alberta would generate approximately \$5 billion in new revenue annually. What's more, even after the implementation of this tax, Alberta would remain Canada's lowest-taxed province.

There is a need for increased, not decreased, social spending in this province. There is also the fiscal capacity to do it. Now is the time to move forward, not backward. **M**

NICK FALVO IS A CALGARY-BASED ECONOMIST AND CONSULTANT, AND THE EDITOR OF THIS YEAR'S ALBERTA ALTERNATIVE BUDGET. A VERSION OF THIS ARTICLE RAN IN THE EDMONTON JOURNAL ON JULY 4.



ILLUSTRATION BY KARA SIEVRIGHT OF THE GRAPHIC HISTORY COLLECTIVE

ETHAN EARLE, MANUEL PÉREZ-ROCHA
AND SCOTT SINCLAIR | INTERNATIONAL

Envisioning a progressive trade agenda

The extraordinary surge in popular support for expanding public health care, a “Green New Deal” (see page 23 of this issue) and other progressive policies demonstrates a powerful public appetite for meaningful social change. Decades of neoliberal austerity and “the market made me do it” politics, which boosted inequality in most countries, have also created pent-up demand to change the rules of globalization and international trade.

Our new report, *Beyond NAFTA 2.0: A Progressive Trade Agenda for People and Planet*, addresses a key question: what kind of trade, and what kind of trade agreements, might complement growing demand for better social programs, more ecologically sustainable production, and more egalitarian ways of living? What kind of trade regime, in other words, should progressives support?

The extraordinary expansion of international trade and globalized supply

chains over the past several decades clearly exceeds the planet’s ecological limits. Rapid climate change is simply the most alarming symptom of multifaceted environmental destruction and unsustainable resource exploitation—of fossil fuels, forests, farmlands and fresh water—that are at the heart of this system. At the same time, the economic gains from growth in trade have been overwhelmingly captured by a tiny elite.

To now, free trade agreements have been employed by governments and corporate lobbyists, in the interests of this elite, to lock in those harmful (but profitable) ways of producing and exchanging goods and services. For those pursuing social change, it is imperative that we rethink free trade ideology and the prevailing template for the agreements that govern globalization.

Progressives can and do seek to preserve the benefits of trade, but at the same time to embed trade agreements in a new legal ecosystem of rights and obligations that looks first to the rights and health of citizens, workers, communities and the planet. In other words, progressives insist on trade rules that give priority to human rights and the rights of nature over corporate rights.

A reformed international trading system must be inclusive, and tolerant of different ideas about how our economies and societies are organized. Through special and differential treatment, trade rules must accommodate the development aspirations of the Global South. A progressive trade model would also redress the long-ignored rights of excluded and disadvantaged groups everywhere to productively participate in the global economy. The harmful secrecy surrounding trade and investment treaty negotiations must be replaced by an open and transparent treaty-making process that no longer gives the upper hand to corporate lobbyists and other insiders.

Another overarching theme in our report is the demand for a new trade treaty framework that supports core progressive policy priorities such as universal health care; strong public services; robust environmental protection and resolute action on climate change; full employment in meaningful work that provides a good standard of

living; strengthened labour standards and trade union rights; the primacy of universal human rights, especially the rights of women, Indigenous Peoples, and all those seeking equity; and the greater democratization of economic decision-making.

Realizing this policy vision will clearly mean defying and ultimately dismantling key corporate-biased aspects of existing trade treaties, such as investor–state dispute settlement. It will also require organizing politically to thwart corporate-driven efforts to expand the current, deeply flawed model into new areas including digital trade, e-commerce, data privacy, regulatory co-operation and expanded intellectual property rights.

For too long, trade treaties have been instruments of policy suffocation, key tools for enforcing a neoliberal policy monoculture. This must end. The existential threat of climate change and the corrosive effects of inequality have exposed current trade treaties as counterproductive and dangerously out of sync with today's challenges and priorities. It is critical to reverse the prolonged "mission creep" through which trade agreements have strayed far from basic trade matters, such as tariff reduction, to instead become instruments of corporate control and privilege in all areas of governance.

Despite Trump's populist and anti-establishment rhetoric, his unilateralism is clearly aimed not at undoing but at deepening the pro-corporate biases of the current trade regime. The evolution of NAFTA into the USMCA is proof of that.

The approach advocated in our report could not be more different. Through close analysis of the USMCA (CUSMA in Canada and T-MEC in Mexico), trade experts and activists explore how that agreement and the current neoliberal trade regime set back progressive aspirations across the policy spectrum.

This analysis is guided by four basic principles: recognizing the primacy of human rights over corporate rights; respecting the policy space of democratic governments to ensure trade contributes to national and local economic development; safeguarding public interest regulation; and adopting a climate-friendly approach to trade.

This positive, progressive trade agenda proposes the following actions (among others):

- Eliminate ISDS and investment protections that undercut the right of duly elected governments to regulate in the interests of their citizens and the environment, and establish binding investor obligations.
- Enshrine binding, enforceable obligations to reduce and mitigate the effects of climate change in all international commercial agreements and safeguard greenhouse gas reduction and climate protection initiatives from challenge by foreign investors or governments.
- Replace excessive intellectual property rights with balanced protections that encourage innovation while supporting user rights, data privacy, and access to affordable medicines.
- Replace non-binding, unenforceable labor provisions with strong, fully enforceable labor rights and standards that enable citizens and trade unions to take complaints to independent international secretariats, which should also have the authority to proactively investigate labor rights abuses.
- Fully recognize and respect gender and Indigenous rights, including prioritizing women's employment and economic well-being, and recognizing Indigenous title to land and resources and the right to free, prior, and informed consent.
- Ensure international trade agreements respect food sovereignty and the livelihoods of small holdings and family farmers by giving priority to local producers and providing a fair return for small-scale agricultural producers.
- Encourage policy flexibility for those industrial and community economic development strategies striving to ensure that trade and foreign investment contribute to good jobs, local economic benefits, healthy communities, and a clean environment.
- Pursue international co-operation that respects regulatory autonomy and aims to harmonize to the highest standards, instead of the current corporate-dominated regulatory co-operation agendas that erode autonomy



Index Wasted Spaces

Compiled by Elfreda Tetteh

600 million

Number of cars' worth of greenhouse gas emissions created annually by clearing forested land, mostly to pasture cows.

83%

Portion of global farmland allocated to meat and dairy.

60%

Amount of agricultural greenhouse gas emissions produced through meat and dairy production.

18%

Portion of calories provided by meat and dairy.

44%

Amount of all methane emissions in agriculture, forestry and human land use produced by cows.

500 million

Number of people who currently live in areas where once-productive land has dried out and turned to desert.

\$1.8 billion

Average annual insurance costs associated with extreme weather in Canada between 2009 and 2017, up from an average of \$405 million in 1983.

1.2 trillion

Number of new trees the world could plant—a startlingly achievable goal—to remove two-thirds of all carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Sources "Estimated carbon dioxide emissions from tropical deforestation improved by carbon-density maps," *Nature Climate Change*; "Reducing food's environmental impacts through producers and consumers," *Science*; "Climate Change and Land," the 2019 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; "New report says Canada should start adaptation measures to offset climate-change effects," *Globe and Mail*; "Tree planting 'has mind-blowing potential' to tackle climate crisis," *The Guardian* (U.K.).

and harmonize to the lowest common denominator.

- Remove the pressure under current services and investment rules to privatize public services and instead fully protect the right to preserve, expand, restore and create public services without trade treaty interference.
- End the current secrecy in trade negotiations and privileged access for vested interests, and establish procedures that provide full disclosure, transparency and meaningful public participation.

A final theme of our report is that while the existing trade and investment regime needs to be transformed, policy alternatives can and must be pursued immediately. Given the destructiveness of runaway climate change and rising inequality, we cannot afford to wait until the current international trade system is reformed before acting. Recognizing the obstacles that current trade and investment rules pose to a just economic and ecological transformation should never imply giving in to their chilling effect.

Our working paper is meant to be a roadmap, not a blueprint. We hope it will be a living document, subject to discussion, criticism and revision, and a tool for stimulating deeper debate and discussion about trade alternatives in civil society, trade unions and social movements. **M**

SCOTT SINCLAIR DIRECTS THE CCPA'S TRADE AND INVESTMENT RESEARCH PROJECT. MANUEL PEREZ-ROCHA IS AN ASSOCIATE FELLOW AT THE WASHINGTON, D.C.-BASED INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES. ETHAN EARLE IS A FORMER PROGRAM MANAGER AT THE ROSA LUXEMBURG STIFTUNG-NEW YORK OFFICE AND IS NOW A POLITICAL CONSULTANT IN PARIS. THEIR REPORT, BEYOND NAFTA 2.0: A PROGRESSIVE TRADE AGENDA FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET, CAN BE FOUND ON THE CCPA WEBSITE.



WILLIAM ROSMUS (FLICKR CREATIVE COMMONS)

EVELYN PINKERTON | BRITISH COLUMBIA

We need an independent commission on West Coast fishing licensing

British Columbia's coastal communities, long dependent on fishing for their livelihoods, are in serious trouble. Populations are down, along with youth retention, incomes, investment, infrastructure, health outcomes and levels of well-being. It's now almost impossible for young people to enter the fishery because of the high cost of purchasing or leasing the individual transferable quotas (ITQs, permits to catch a certain quantity of fish, attached to most licences). Coastal communities that used to have dozens of fishermen now may have a handful at best. The boat-building, repair and gear supply businesses that service the sector are disappearing. How did this happen to our once prosperous coast?

A big driver in this change is how many fishing licences and ITQs are freely—and anonymously—tradable. Policy on the West Coast has allowed ownership of licences and ITQs by all sorts of people and companies who never set foot on a boat. Their only qualification: they have a lot of money. Some are investor-speculators. Some are laundering money. Some are shell companies owned by people living

outside of Canada. Some are processing companies that freeze or can the fish. All are able to lease out the ITQs at rates (as high as 80% of the value of a catch in some fisheries) that force fishermen to take virtually all the risk and little of the benefit. Some Canadian corporations, because they own licences and fish-processing plants, are able to land and flash freeze the fish in Canada, but then export the fish overseas to be processed, further removing jobs from our coastal communities. So we are losing jobs, opportunity and benefits in fishing, fish processing and related support industries.

These problems don't occur as much on the East Coast. The official policy since the 1970s for both coasts has been to consider the social, economic and cultural consequences of fisheries management, but this policy has not been implemented on the West Coast. Furthermore, the licensing systems on the two coasts developed very differently. On the West Coast there are virtually no rules around licence ownership. On the East Coast, measures such as the owner-operator policy (which requires most licence holders to be fishermen

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Preparing for battle

With the November 1999 “Battle of Seattle” alter-globalization protests around the corner, the *Monitor* spent a lot of time in its September and October issues on the push by rich countries, including Canada, to negotiate new corporate priorities (a “Millennium Round”) into the binding WTO agreements—investment protection, government procurement, competition policy—over the strong objections of developing countries. Deriding how the WTO and other free trade deals create “substantial new obstacles to environmental protection, food safety regulations, cultural support programs, and resource conservation initiatives,” Steven Shrybman, then executive director of the West Coast Environmental Law Association, proposed the adoption of “equally enforceable international agreements to achieve broad societal goals, rather than entrenching the narrow interests of large corporations and foreign investors.” Twenty years later, Canada has fully committed to “Millennium Round” disciplines on state-owned enterprises, public spending, financial services, domestic regulation, and many other areas, in a network of ever-more-intrusive free trade deals such as CETA and the CPTPP.

The law is the law

A short article in the September issue reported on “exceptional” research by University of Saskatchewan labour law students, which showed that the provincial Roy Romanow government “violated both provincial laws and international human rights codes when it legislated striking nurses back to work [in April 1999].” Based on their findings, the students issued a Declaration of Freedom, “to show their solidarity with the nurses, drafted language for a new law to repeal [the back-to-work legislation], and announced plans to file an official complaint against the government with the ILO and the United Nations.”

Tax facts and fictions

The October 1999 issue included 24-page report by CCPA research associate Murray Dobbin, “10 Tax Myths,” which aimed to clear the smoke created by yet another corporate-led PR campaign against Canada’s tax system. The number one myth? “Canadians are

overtaxed.” According to Dobbin, that was true only relatively speaking—and it was low-income Canadians who were facing higher taxes relative to their incomes, not the well-off. But old propaganda dies hard. This summer, the right-wing, business-funded Fraser Institute lumped all taxes (including import duties, profit taxes and payroll taxes) into the average family income tax to make the false claim we all spend more on taxes than living costs—a myth the media largely reported as fact. Well, most media. *The Beaverton*, a parody news site, covered the Fraser Institute report this way: “In 2018, the average Canadian family earned an income of \$88,865 and paid total taxes equaling \$4,988,921,656,429.12, approximately 5600000000% of their income,” the study says. ‘Individuals in Canada are not only paying more taxes than individuals in any other country, they are each paying more taxes than the entire population of any other country.’”

Privacy legislation showing its age

Freelance writer Paul Bobier wrote about plans to introduce a Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) in our October 1999 issue. The legislation was introduced that spring by John Manley, then industry minister, “to give consumers more control over how their personal information is used by the banks, cable and broadcasting companies, telecommunications firms, and other businesses that come under federal jurisdiction,” reported Bobier. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce opposed the new privacy act, along with the Conservative Party (the U.S. would be upset with Canada) and Bloc Québécois (it infringed on provincial jurisdiction), but it would eventually pass in 2000. Today, however, PIPEDA is once again out of date in an era of mass intrusions by social media and new tech companies. Following last year’s introduction in Europe of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which sets a new benchmark for personal privacy, the federal government has promised to legislate a 10-point “digital charter,” which, if enacted, “would constitute the most significant privacy law changes in decades,” according to Michael Geist of the University of Ottawa.

WORTH REPEATING

“A total failure of accountability”

From the outset, we asked for an independent and transparent public inquiry into my wrongful extradition. We boycotted the external review because we believed that it would amount to a whitewash exercise. It is profoundly upsetting to see our concerns and fears materializing.

I endured over five years of draconian bail conditions and more than three years of imprisonment away from my family and home. My reputation was tarnished; my financial savings were wiped out; my physical and mental health deteriorated, and most importantly I missed the birth of my son and more than three years of my children's lives.

My suffering and that of my family was prolonged due to the conduct of senior officials at the Department of Justice. Yet the report found that no one was responsible for this miscarriage of justice. Neither does the report call for a serious reform of the very problematic extradition law to ensure that Canadians are protected.

I trusted the government's promise that what happened to me should never happen to anyone else. However, the report promises a continuation of the old way where every Canadian is at risk. It was alarming to see that the report was seeking to strengthen the existing law by recommending educating the public about extradition steps and procedures.

The report represents a total failure of accountability and transparency. We demand a public and transparent judicial inquiry because justice dies in the darkness.

—Statement by Hassan Diab at a press conference on July 26 following the release of Murray Segal's external review of Diab's wrongful judicial extradition to France to face charges, thrown out for lack of evidence, that he was involved in a 1980 bombing outside a Paris synagogue. Segal concluded "(counsel) acted in a manner that was ethical and consistent—both with the law and... practices and policies."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

who own and operate their own boats) protected coastal communities and independent fishermen. The federal fisheries minister at the time, Dominic LeBlanc, proposed in February 2018 that these ideas be not just policy but legal requirements on the East Coast. So discussion of amendments to the Fisheries Act (Bill C-68) began.

In response, civil society mobilized on the West Coast. Shortly after LeBlanc's proposal to amend the Fisheries Act, Ecotrust Canada and partners convened a broadly representative gathering of B.C. fishermen and communities. Over 120 fishermen, coastal community mayors, First Nation leaders, academics and environmental organizations agreed on the need for fisheries policy reform on the West Coast. The Canadian Independent Fish Harvesters Federation added their voices to this plea. The Fishermen's Union, representing many fishermen and shoreworkers on the Pacific coast, surveyed many fishermen's (not just its members') opinions on a licensing policy review. There was strong support for putting licence ownership in the hands of active fishermen. And lots of ideas about how to do it gradually, causing the least disruption.

In the process of considering Bill C-68, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans received numerous additional West Coast complaints about the injustice of licensing there. The committee was particularly moved by the BC Young Fishermen's Network, whose members explained how difficult it is for a young person to get into the fishery. The committee began its own separate review of West Coast licensing in January 2019, inviting people with a great array of perspectives—including Pacific region officials from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), fisheries experts from Canada and other jurisdictions, fishermen and processors, among other witnesses—to help them understand the regional challenges.

The committee's final recommendations, unanimously supported by all parties and released on May 7, overwhelmingly support a licensing policy that reverses the numerous problems identified above. We must make sure this transformation happens, and that it brings about a more equitable distribution of benefits. DFO advisory boards

Over 120 fishermen, coastal community mayors, First Nation leaders, academics and environmental organizations agreed on the need for fisheries policy reform on the West Coast.

must be more inclusive of the fishing community, for example. Among other changes, an owner-operator policy is essential.

When Bill C-68 received royal assent on June 21, the owner-operator policy was recognized as something the minister could legally require, alongside other social, economic and cultural considerations. When Prime Minister Justin Trudeau shuffled his cabinet in July, he charged new Fisheries Minister Jonathan Wilkinson with continuing to advance LeBlanc's changes to the Fisheries Act. The new minister must ensure that the necessary corrections are made to the B.C. licensing system so that our fisheries once more are for the benefit of working fishermen, the small businesses that support and depend on our fishing industry, and fisheries-dependent coastal communities. Toward that end, the government must strike the independent commission advocated by the committee, with participation from fishermen and fishing communities, to figure out how to implement the committee's crucial recommendations.

But the minister will need a lot of encouragement from citizens to do this, as there are significant vested interests in the status quo. Furthermore, all candidates in the upcoming election should be forewarned that this issue matters a great deal to British Columbians. **M**

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Colour-coded Justice

ANTHONY N. MORGAN

What's a Black lawyer to do?

LIKE MANY BLACK children who grew up in Canada in the mid-80s and early 90s, I was raised with the idea that making your parents proudest meant becoming a doctor or a lawyer. It didn't matter if your family descended from 18th century Black Loyalists or 19th century African American Refugees, or if your parents had recently immigrated from the Caribbean or Africa to serve as working class labourers or foreign-trained professionals, or to find greater safety and security. For "bright" Black children, the best way to make your family and community proud was to gain entry into the legal profession.

Whether or not we welcomed, actualized, resented or resisted this family pressure, it was generally understood to come from a good place. Black families typically want their Black babies to grow up to escape poverty and, if possible, even achieve the highest ranks of Canadian social acceptance and respectability. This is not unique to Black families in Canada. But it is especially common due to Canadian anti-Blackness, which perpetually impales the prospects, well-being and sense of belonging of Black Canadians as equals in this country.

It's on this backdrop of my parents' and community's Jamaican immigrant dreams that I became a lawyer. But it doesn't explain how I became a Black lawyer, or why.

I was born in Toronto and raised in racialized and working-class neighbourhoods in the Greater Toronto Area. As proudly Afro-Jamaican as my family and community encouraged me to be, we equally claimed "Canadian" as an inextricable part of social identity. As a result, I developed a deep sense of power and pride in the interconnected complexities of my African heritage, Jamaican parentage, and Canadian social inheritance.

So when I decided in high school that I wanted to become a lawyer, it was far more than an expression of acquiescence to my family's and my community's projections of Canadian immigrant dreams. I deeply wanted to play an active part in helping Canada fully realize its democratic ideals of multiculturalism, fairness and equality. Years before Black Lives Matter became the clarion call of a global generation of justice-seeking Black advocates and communities, I chose the law as the avenue by which I would pursue social change for the betterment of Black life in Canada.

Though mostly motivated by books I read about American icons of the Black Power Movement, such as Huey Newton

and Black Panther Party for Self-Defence, I drew much inspiration from Canada's own histories of struggle for Black freedom—organizations like the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the Black Action Defence Committee, and the African Canadian Legal Clinic, for example, and individuals such as Charles Roach, Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré and M. NourbeSe Philip. I chose to become a lawyer so I could carry on the tradition set by these leaders of the Canadian Black liberation movement. That is what makes me a Black lawyer.

Using a critical race or race-conscious frame of analysis to ground and guide my work, I have served Canada and its Black communities as a policy and research lawyer, a civil litigator, and now as a public servant. Public thinking, writing and speaking with this lens has been an integral aspect of my commitment to racial justice lawyering. At every step of my professional career, a focus on addressing anti-Black racism in Canada has been central.

I plan on sticking to that tradition in this column. "Colour-coded Justice" will explore racial justice issues in Canadian law, policy and society—issues like racial profiling, gun violence, Black community development, Black politics and leadership, Black and Indigenous relations, reparations in Canada, and other questions and challenges facing Black life in this country.

In early 2018, for example, the current federal government announced with great fanfare that it would officially

I chose to become a lawyer so I could carry on the tradition set by these leaders of the Canadian Black liberation movement.

recognize the United Nations–declared International Decade for People of African Descent. In support of that declaration, the 2019 budget committed \$25 million over five years "for projects and capital assistance to celebrate, share knowledge and build capacity in our vibrant Black Canadian communities."

But what does this commitment (and its future) mean during in an election year? Is this really enough money to truly support Black communities' needs? Which Black communities are best served by such endeavours, and has the government identified the right priorities to fund? These are the kinds of questions this column will explore and provoke.

I hope you enjoy it, learn something useful, and perhaps gain new perspectives, insights and even inspiration on how to equitably think through law and policy as they impact Black communities in Canada. But if it does nothing else, my humblest hope is that this column will simply make my parents proud. :) **M**

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**THINKING
BIGGER,
DEMANDING
BETTER**

A MONITOR
GUIDE TO THE
DEBATES
AND DISTRACTIONS
FRAMING THE
2019 FEDERAL
ELECTION

VOTE

ALEX HEMINGWAY

OWN IT

THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST DEBATE CANADA SHOULD BE HAVING THIS ELECTION

We live in an era of extreme inequality of wealth and power across much of the developed world, and Canada is no exception. Public confidence in political institutions and “political classes” in the West is in long-running decline. The failure of established institutions to grapple adequately with the crises we face is giving way to an environment of growing instability and unease, providing fertile ground for the rise of the far right and delivering the likes of Donald Trump and Boris Johnson into the highest offices.

Yet there is also reason for optimism. The left, too, is in many places also reinvigorated—and quite suddenly bursting with big, bold new policy agendas. This includes, perhaps most visibly, a push for a Green New Deal, crucial in the face of the ticking clock of the climate crisis. But another set of developing policy proposals relating to the ownership and control of our economy also deserve our attention.

In the U.K. and U.S., transformative policy ideas for economic justice are emerging and starting to move quietly into the political mainstream. These include policies to promote worker ownership and control of companies, breaking up large monopolistic corporations, and an annual wealth tax on the super-rich. These ideas are being advanced not only by activists and think-tanks, but now also major political parties and candidates, including the U.K.’s Labour Party and U.S. Democratic presidential candidates Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren.

These policies are not exclusive to any single ideology, but they could reasonably be called “socialist,” since

they centre matters of who owns and controls core economic institutions and wealth. And they could be described as “democratic” because they take a bottom-up approach that would reshape and significantly equalize economic ownership and control. These policies are also, in many cases, extremely popular among voters across the political spectrum.

In short, the policy debate is rapidly being populated with innovative and far-reaching economic proposals of a kind that we should be considering much more seriously in Canada. To that end, let’s take a look at a selection of big policy ideas now on the table south of the border and across the Atlantic, which represent potential starting points for important debates here at home.

PUTTING POWER AND OWNERSHIP IN WORKERS’ HANDS

We generally take for granted, at least in principle, that everyone has the right to a say—and certainly a vote—in what our governments do. But the expectation of democracy stops quite abruptly at the door of the workplace. When it comes to some of the most powerful institutions in our society and our daily lives—corporations and workplaces—there is little practice or pretense of democratic control.

But why shouldn’t working people have more of a say over the institutions that govern their working lives? And indeed, why shouldn’t people have more *ownership* over the firms we work for? These are major economic and political questions with a long history, and they are starting to make

a comeback. Concrete policy proposals to address them are now emerging in the U.K. and U.S. in particular.

Inclusive ownership funds

Perhaps one of the boldest ideas currently on offer, the inclusive ownership fund is an ambitious plan to transfer part of the equity ownership of large corporations to a trust held by the company’s workers. Proposed by the New Economics Foundation, a British think-tank, this policy was adopted by the U.K. Labour Party last year, and Bernie Sanders recently announced plans to adopt a similar policy.

In the Labour version, corporations with over 250 employees would be mandated to transfer 1% of equity per year to worker-owned trusts. (To avoid raising too many alarm bells by big capital owners, the transfer would be capped at 10% of equity.) The dividends earned from this equity would be paid out annually to the company’s workers. To ensure equity between firms and sectors, the dividends would be capped at £500 (just over \$800), with any additional funds allocated to broader social investments at a national level. The worker ownership stake would also come with a seat at the table in the corporation’s board of directors proportionate to the ownership share.

Strikingly, there appears to be a strong public appetite for this type of policy. In a recent poll of Americans, 55% supported (and 21% opposed) a version of this policy that would go even further, transferring up to half of corporations’ equity to their workers. Even 50% of Republicans polled supported the plan, demonstrating

EQUALIZING THE TAX TREATMENT OF CAPITAL AND LABOUR INCOME COULD RAISE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN ADDITIONAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE.

that this is an issue that doesn't break down along simple left-right lines.

Worker representation on corporate boards

Another set of new proposals would require corporations to give their workers elected representation on their boards of directors, even absent a transfer of equity. For example, Democratic presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren's version of this policy would require 40% of corporate board seats to be reserved for representatives of the company's workers.

Such a shift in corporate governance could substantially change the balance of priorities in favour of workers and

away from a single-minded focus on maximizing value for shareholders. Evidence suggest that having workers at the board table could result in less inequality, lower CEO pay, and fewer layoffs during economic downturns, while tending to put a lid on stock prices. Because stock ownership is so concentrated among the rich, this would also amount to a non-tax-based form of redistribution (a potential complement to other taxation and spending-based progressive policies). Germany and many other European countries have long required worker representation on corporate boards.

Warren's proposal would also put new restrictions on corporate influence in politics and elections by requiring a vote of 75% of the board to authorize any political spending (i.e., worker representatives would have to back it). Warren's policy would curb the ability of directors to engage in short-term share selloffs of their company's stock, and federal corporate charters would be amended to require directors of large corporations "to consider the interests of all corporate stakeholders." These provisions would be backed up by the threat of the federal government revoking a company's corporate charter in the case of repeated violations.

Bernie Sanders has also come out in support of worker representation

on boards, as has the U.K. Labour Party. Like the inclusive ownership fund policy, worker representation on boards polls very strongly in the U.S., with 52% of likely voters in support compared to only 23% opposed.

"Right to own" and worker-owned enterprises

Beyond the partial ownership of large firms created by an inclusive ownership fund, another proposal to democratize the economy is to promote full worker ownership of more firms. One elegant but potentially far-reaching policy measure would give workers in a company the *legal right of first refusal* to buy their business if it's being sold or shut down.

Such a "right to own" has recently been advocated by the Labour Party in the U.K., and detailed proposals along these lines have been developed by both the New Economics Foundation and Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) in the U.K., as well as the Democracy Collaborative in the U.S. Each of these proposals includes mechanisms to assist workers in financing the upfront costs of purchase. A "right to own" law has long existed in Italy, where the Emilia Romagna region has one of the highest levels of co-operative ownership of the economy in the world (equal to about one-third of GDP).

While there is no "right to own" in Canada, its potential can be seen in examples such as the Harmac Mill on Vancouver Island. Slated to be shuttered a decade ago, but successfully bought out by its employees, the mill is thriving today (shuttered West Fraser Timber and Canfor workers take note). Like the other policies mentioned so far, U.S.-based polling suggests that a "right to own" is very popular, with 69% support versus only 10% opposed in that country.

Thousands of worker-owned enterprises and co-operatives already exist in the U.S., U.K. and Canada. The economic evidence, much of it summarized in Tom Malleson's 2014 book, *After Occupy: Economic Democracy for the 21st Century* (Oxford University Press), suggests that productivity in worker-owned co-operatives is as good as or better than in conventional

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
BC	18	23	24	37	29	31	17	27	24	230
AB	9	15	7	8	7	14	10	11	14	95
SK	2	2	10	11	7	2	15	7	6	62
MB	13	17	9	10	8	10	11	7	5	90
ON	27	22	43	63	53	25	25	23	21	302
QC	135	116	131	143	125	107	91	87	96	1,031
NB	3	10	10	7	3	9	7	13	22	84
NS	21	22	33	13	11	19	13	15	15	162
PEI	6	7	1	3	7	2	1	2	5	34
NL	2	1	2	0	4	1	4	3	0	17
NU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
NT	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	2	6
YK	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	5
Federal	5	6	6	7	6	6	2	7	0	45
Total	241	242	276	304	261	230	196	203	211	2,164

▼ U.S. ESTIMATES OF THE EFFECT OF A FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS TAX ON FEDERAL REVENUES, \$BILLIONS

SOURCE: U.S. CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2019–23	2019–28
-43.9	22.0	70.2	93.2	100.7	103.7	106.2	106.3	107.9	110.4	242.2	776.7

firms. Thus, there doesn't appear to be any sharp efficiency trade-off with worker ownership. In fact, this model can provide many benefits, including better working conditions, more employment stability, and a genuine sense of control for employees over their working lives.

Important barriers do exist to the sector's expansion, though, and the reports referenced above propose a range of further policies to help this sector to thrive. These include improving access to financing, reforming legal frameworks to protect and grow co-ops' capital assets, and enhancing training and support, since business schools typically aren't set up to teach the development of co-operatives.

TAKING ON BIG BANKS AND POWERFUL TECH MONOPOLIES

Two of the most powerful sectors in today's economy are big finance and big tech. Both make large profits, wield political influence, and consistently recruit some of the brightest minds to help them make even more money. Taming these sectors and reshaping them for the public good is another area in which bold, innovative policy ideas are pushing their way into the political mainstream.

Financial transactions tax

One far-reaching policy to help rein in the financial sector is a financial transactions tax. This is a small tax on short-term financial flows such as stock trades, with the purpose of both discouraging unproductive speculative activity and raising revenue for important social or other investments. When applied internationally, this is often known as the Tobin Tax (after economist James Tobin) or the Robin Hood Tax. Because ownership of financial wealth is so highly concentrated, a financial transactions tax would have highly progressive effects on inequality.

In its most recent incarnation, Bernie Sanders recently introduced legislation that would implement a 0.5% tax on stock trades, 0.1% on bonds and 0.005% on derivatives in the United States. The law's backers estimate the tax could generate \$2.4 trillion in revenue over 10 years,

which is broadly consistent with the estimates for other variations of a financial transactions tax in the U.S.

The Sanders campaign has pledged to use the revenue in part to fund a mass cancellation of all student loan debt in the United States. More generally, a financial transactions tax has the potential to redistribute from the financial industry and the wealthy, unleashing an enormous amount of revenue that could be invested in important social, economic and environmental priorities.

Publicly owned banks

Another set of policies relate to creating publicly owned alternatives to large private financial corporations. In terms of consumer banking, this includes growing proposals to use the existing national network of post offices to create new retail bank options, which would help serve smaller communities and underserved neighbourhoods often neglected by private banks. Public postal banks would also provide an alternative to the mounting fees and service charges imposed by corporate banks, and an alternative to predatory payday lenders.

Public postal banks already exist across several European countries, and once existed decades ago in the U.S. and Canada. Recent public postal banking proposals have been developed by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Bernie Sanders in the U.S., the Labour Party in the U.K., and the CCPA and postal workers in Canada (see "Why we need postal banking" in the Nov/Dec 2018 *Monitor*).

Distinct from consumer banking, public investment banks are another policy option to help spur and shape economic development toward a range of important societal goals. These goals could include accelerating climate action, revitalizing economically depressed and deprived regions, and serving co-operative and worker-owned enterprises, among many others.

Finance and investment are so central to shaping our societies and economies that there is a strong case there should be substantially more democratic control over investment decisions, rather than leaving them almost entirely to powerful and unaccountable financial corporations. The IPPR and Labour Party in the U.K. have each outlined detailed proposals for public investment banks. These should not be confused with the privatization-promoting Canada Infrastructure Bank, a matter that CCPA research and analysis has discussed (see "Creating a Canadian infrastructure bank in the public interest," March/April 2017).

Breaking up powerful tech monopolies

Digital technology is another increasingly powerful economic sector including large corporations like Amazon, Facebook, Google, Apple and Microsoft. These firms dominate much of our day-to-day digital lives and have control over—and profit

BERNIE SANDERS RECENTLY INTRODUCED LEGISLATION THAT WOULD IMPLEMENT A 0.5% TAX ON STOCK TRADES, 0.1% ON BONDS AND 0.005% ON DERIVATIVES. HIS CAMPAIGN HAS PLEDGED TO USE THE REVENUE TO CANCEL ALL STUDENT LOAN DEBT.

massively from—our personal data. Concern has been mounting about how big and powerful these firms have become, and yet they remain largely unaccountable to their users and society more broadly.

In the U.S., where most big tech companies are based, Elizabeth Warren has released a set of aggressive antitrust and merger policies that would see them broken up. For example, Amazon's takeover of Whole Foods in 2017 would be reversed, Facebook would be required to spin-off competitors it has bought up like Instagram and WhatsApp, and Google would have to do much the same.

Warren's proposals would have the U.S. government designate large digital platforms as "platform utilities," which would be "required to meet the standard of fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory dealing with

users" and would not be allowed "to transfer or share data with third parties." Tech billionaire and Facebook investor Peter Thiel has admitted he is "scared" by Warren's proposals.

The U.S.-based Roosevelt Institute recently published a detailed report on overhauling antitrust standards. It suggests a dramatic expansion of the mandate of these laws beyond the narrow bounds they've worked within for the past few decades, including by adding the sweeping goal of "dispersing and de-concentrating private power."

Bernie Sanders recently joined Warren in pledging to break up the tech giants, and the U.K. Labour Party says it would create a new regulator empowered to do the same. Beyond breaking up these corporations, there is also an emerging "platform co-operative" movement for replacing

them with co-operative enterprises accountable to their workers and users. CCPA analysis has discussed how this could work in the case of a co-operative ride-hailing alternative to Uber (see my article, "What's missing from the Uber debate?" on the Policy Note website).

GETTING SERIOUS ABOUT TAXING THE RICH AND CORPORATIONS

Taxes on high incomes have made a modest comeback in Canada and some provinces in recent years. But top tax rates remain low by historical standards, and taxes on the rich have focused too narrowly on income, largely overlooking ballooning wealth inequality. Discussions of corporate taxes, in turn, have focused too narrowly on moving the headline rate up or down. Bold new proposals are broadening the menu of policy options for how to tax the wealthy and corporations.

Wealth taxes on the super-rich

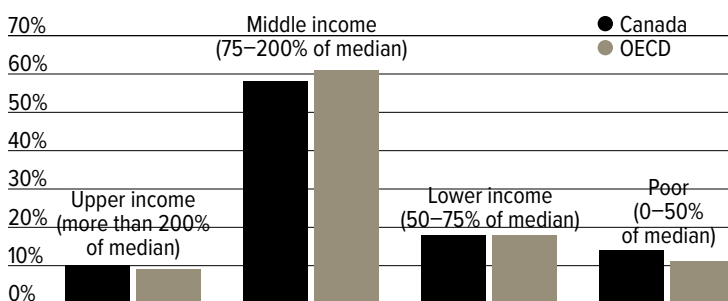
In his monumental work, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, French economist Thomas Piketty raised alarm bells about the growing wealth and power of the super-rich globally. He argues that profits from capital ownership are outstripping economic growth itself. In other words, those who make money from their existing wealth—rather than those who make money from their labour—are amassing a growing share of global wealth. As a key remedy to this self-perpetuating wealth concentration, Piketty proposed a comprehensive annual global wealth tax.

Following his lead, Elizabeth Warren recently announced a wealth tax policy for the world's biggest economy, the United States. Warren's plan would apply a 2% annual wealth tax on household wealth levels over \$50 million, and a 3% tax on wealth over \$1 billion. The proposal would raise a breathtaking \$2.75 trillion in revenue over 10 years, based on analysis by UC Berkeley economists Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman. An annual wealth tax of this kind would begin to put a serious dent in wealth inequality, and it would make possible massive

MIDDLE INCOME EARNERS UNDER PRESSURE

On average across OECD countries, the share of people in middle-income households, defined as households earning between 75% and 200% of the median national income, has grown smaller with each successive generation. In Canada, 67% of the baby boomers were part of the middle class when they were in their twenties compared to only 59% of millennials. In 2016, 58% of the population lived in middle-income households, below the OECD average. Middle incomes have indeed barely grown, in both relative and absolute terms, in most OECD countries. Overall, over the past 30 years, median incomes increased a third less than the average income of the richest 10%. At the same time, the cost of essentials has increased faster than inflation; house prices, for example, have been growing three times faster than household median income over the last decades.

—Katherine Scott, senior economist, CCPA



SOURCE: UNDER PRESSURE: THE SQUEEZED MIDDLE CLASS, FIGURE 2.1, OECD

increases in social and environmental investments.

While I have suggested that Canada is behind the curve on many of these emerging economic policy debates, a wealth tax is one area that has recently received some attention here at home. The C.D. Howe Institute sought to head off the idea in June, arguing that it would be “unnecessary” in Canada. This came shortly after the federal NDP added a wealth tax of 1% on fortunes over \$20 million to its suite of policies.

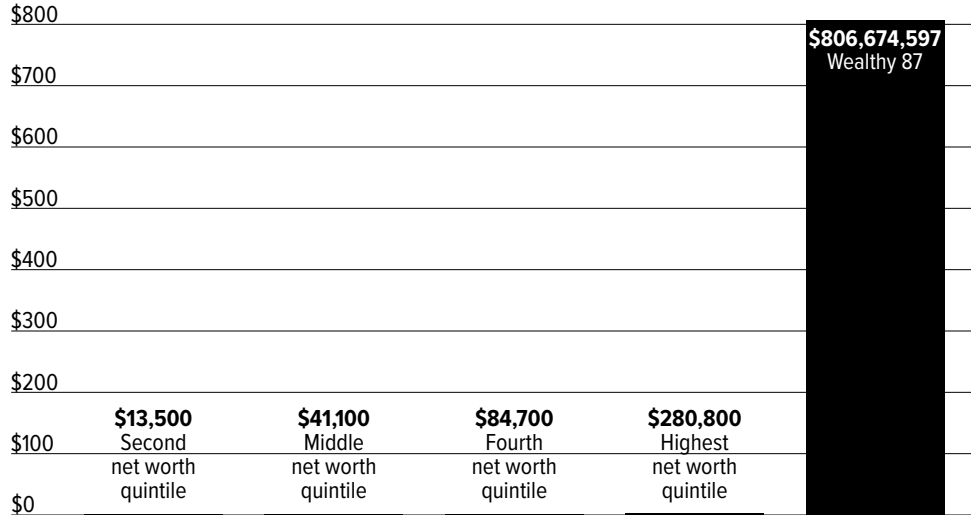
Another approach to taxing large pools of private wealth is via targeted inheritance and gifts taxes. For example, the CCPA has previously called for a Canadian inheritance tax of 45% on estates over \$5 million. Bernie Sanders recently proposed an inheritance tax of 45% on estates over \$3.5 million, with the tax rate rising as high as 77% on estates over \$1 billion. Taking a slightly different tack, the IPPR think-tank in the U.K. has proposed an aggressive tax on wealth transfers, but with thresholds focused on the size of the windfalls a recipient receives. The U.K. Labour Party is considering adopting a policy along these lines.

Each of these proposals has the potential to seriously tackle the huge disparities in wealth across the western world, while creating a large pool of revenue available to be invested in public goods.

Ending special tax breaks on capital income

Though not quite on the scale of a direct wealth tax, another important policy idea aimed at tackling wealth inequality is to begin taxing capital income on equal footing with labour income. Currently, in Canada and many countries, income gained from owning capital is taxed much more favourably than income earned from working. For example, in Canada only 50% of income realized from capital gains is considered taxable.

The CCPA has long advocated ending this special tax treatment, and similar proposals have been put forward by the IPPR in the U.K. This ought to be a subject of increasing discussion in Canada, where equalizing the treatment of capital and labour



SOURCE: BORN TO WIN: WEALTH CONCENTRATION IN CANADA SINCE 1999, CCPA, JULY 2018.

income could raise billions of dollars in additional revenue.

Taxing corporations like we mean it

In an era of enormously wealthy, tax-shifting global corporations, there are some new policy ideas to ensure these giants pay their fair share of tax. One proposal to stop perpetual corporate profit-shifting is to levy corporate tax based on the share of sales to customers in a given country (as a portion of global profits).

Footloose corporations like Amazon and Netflix can threaten to move their headquarters all they want, but they can't easily shift the location of their customers, making this type of corporate tax much more difficult to avoid. Known as “destination-based” corporate taxation, the idea has been outlined by economists in a report for the U.K.'s Institute for Fiscal Studies, with a similar sales-based tax structure outlined by the IPPR think-tank.

Another intriguing approach comes (once again) from Elizabeth Warren, in a policy backed by Berkeley economists Saez and Zucman. Warren's proposal would leave the existing corporate tax infrastructure in place, but layer on an additional “real corporate tax” of 7% on companies with over \$100 million in profit.

What makes it a “real” corporate tax? Instead of basing the tax on the

profits these companies report for tax purposes, which are subject to a whole swath of deductions and loopholes, it would be levied based on the profits they report in financial statements to their own investors. Saez and Zucman estimate this policy would raise over \$1 trillion in public revenues over 10 years.

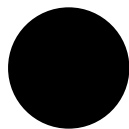
CANADA NEEDS TO THINK BIG. LET THE DEBATE BEGIN.

This round-up of burgeoning economic policy ideas is far from comprehensive, and these particular proposals are not the final word. But they do represent a window on an impressive proliferation of bold, left-wing economic thinking that should inform our discourse and debate in Canada. This debate should include other emerging big ideas like a Green New Deal, four-day work week, universal basic income, universal basic services, land value capture and maximum wages, among many others.

In a time of growing global instability, we should be prepared to develop new ideas and solutions. We can learn from the past but need not limit ourselves to existing options. When it comes to policies for economic justice, in addition to redistributing income and reducing poverty, we should be looking at ways to fundamentally reshape who holds economic power in this country, putting working people in the driver's seat. **M**

MELANIE BENARD

THE HOME STRETCH FOR UNIVERSAL PUBLIC PHARMACARE



CANADA has been debating the adoption of a national pharmacare program for over half a century. Our current patchwork system of drug coverage leaves countless people falling through the cracks. Approximately 20% of Canadians have inadequate drug coverage. Currently, one in four households can't afford their medications. One million Canadians are having to choose between putting food on the table and getting the medications they need. Canada is the only country in the world with a universal health care system that doesn't cover prescription medication.

In 2018, the federal government appointed an advisory council led by Dr. Erik Hoskins, a former Ontario health minister, to consider the implementation of national pharmacare. After studying options and consulting widely, in June 2019 the council called for the adoption of a public, universal pharmacare program that would provide equitable access to medications for people across the country. The federal government took steps in this direction by allocating \$35 million in the 2019 budget to establish a new Canadian Drug Agency that would negotiate drug prices and develop a national formulary—a list of medications that would be covered by public insurance. But the fate of national pharmacare may ultimately hinge on the outcome of the upcoming federal election.

Although the majority of Canadians already have some form of drug coverage—most often through their employers—the current patchwork system is inefficient

and inequitable. There are over 100,000 private drug plans in Canada that provide different levels of coverage. Since these plans are usually tied to people's jobs, people risk losing their coverage if they lose or change jobs, or if they retire. Many plans have expensive deductibles (out-of-pocket payments before coverage kicks in) and copayments, and some also have monthly or yearly maximum claim amounts. Out-of-pocket expenses can therefore be significant even for people who have drug plans.

Improving access to medication would obviously lead to a healthier population. When people skip their medication because they can't afford it, they end up getting sicker and often die prematurely. There are over 300,000 extra doctor's visits every year and nearly 100,000 visits to emergency because people can't afford to take their medication as prescribed. This results in approximately \$7–\$9 billion in extra costs to the health care system annually. Universal pharmacare would therefore improve people's health and take some pressure off the health care system.

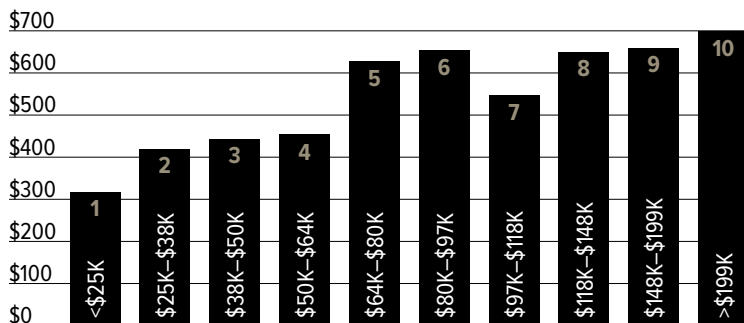
Numerous studies have also shown that universal pharmacare would be good for the economy. We could save up to \$11 billion per year by negotiating better prices for medications. Canada currently pays the third highest prices for prescription medication among OECD countries. We spend more on medication than we do on doctors. That's because all the different drug plans currently negotiate prices separately with pharmaceutical companies. By bulk buying medications for the country as a whole, we would have much stronger bargaining power.

Businesses, workers and families would also benefit from pharmacare. Employers would no longer have to pay for private drug plans for their employees. The average business owner would save over \$750 annually per employee and the average worker would save over \$100 in plan premiums. Companies would benefit from having a healthier and more productive workforce. Families would save on average \$350 per year.

These savings can only be achieved with a universal, public program. We shouldn't just "fill in the gaps" by providing coverage for those who don't currently have any, since that would simply add yet another layer to our inequitable system. It wouldn't allow us to benefit from the reduced costs achieved through bulk purchasing and it wouldn't limit the rising out-of-pocket expenses of those who currently have coverage. It would leave the majority of Canadians vulnerable to losing their coverage if their employment situation changes.

Only a universal, public pharmacare program would ensure that everyone in Canada can access the medications they need. Instead of adopting half-measures and band-aid solutions, it's time to reform our broken system. Pharmacare is a key missing piece of Canada's public health care system. This much-needed new program would save money and save lives. It should be a priority for the next government. We have all the evidence we need. **M**

MELANIE BENARD IS THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND ADVOCACY WITH THE CANADIAN HEALTH COALITION.

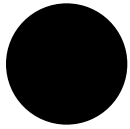


▲ AVERAGE PHARMACARE SAVINGS BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME DECILE, PRE-TAX, 2020

SOURCE: A PRESCRIPTION FOR SAVINGS, CCPA, DECEMBER 2018.

RICARDO ACUÑA

EQUALIZATION AS POLITICAL THEATER



In the budget implementation bill of 2018, the federal government renewed the existing equalization formula through to the year 2024. Not surprisingly, this elicited

an immediate outcry from conservatives in Alberta and Saskatchewan, who claim that equalization is an unfair program designed to take hard-earned dollars from their provinces and give them to an undeserving Quebec. Alberta Premier Jason Kenney went so far as to give equalization a place of prominence in his party's 2019 provincial election platform, alleging that the federal government gave Quebec "a veto over New Brunswick's effort to revive the Energy East [pipeline] project while providing Quebec a \$1.3 billion increase in equalization."

What Kenney failed to mention was that the increase in Quebec's share of equalization funding was actually a direct result of the changes to the formula that he signed off on as a cabinet minister from Alberta in the Harper government. Undaunted by the facts, Kenney's platform went on to promise that a United Conservative Party government would "hold a referendum on removing equalization from the Constitution Act on October 18, 2021 if substantial progress is not made on construction of a coastal pipeline, and if Trudeau's Bill C-69 is not repealed."

Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe also insists that equalization is fundamentally unfair to his province. Moe's government has proposed a new formula whereby half of all equalization dollars would simply be handed out on a per capita basis to every province in the country regardless of their fiscal capacity or need. When asked recently if Saskatchewan would follow Kenney's lead with a referendum of its own, Moe responded that he "would not rule it out," adding, "if there is an opportunity for that to actually force the federal government into an equalization conversation, I think we would be in favour of that."

The reality, however, is that these assertions by premiers Kenney and Moe have nothing to do with equalization itself and everything to do with political posturing designed to achieve partisan political outcomes. Equalization is a federal government program designed to fulfil the requirement, entrenched in the Constitution, that Ottawa make "payments to ensure that provincial governments have sufficient revenues to provide reasonably comparable levels of public services and reasonably comparable levels of taxation." The formula is based on each province's "fiscal capacity"—how much revenue it would raise if it taxed at the average level of all

provinces combined. Those provinces that fall below the national average receive equalization payments to bring them up to the average. Those whose capacity is above the average receives nothing. Because of their natural resource wealth, neither Alberta nor Saskatchewan currently receives equalization payments. This has always made the program an easy target for channelling anti-Ottawa anger on the prairies.

In 2007, Saskatchewan's NDP government of the day launched a lawsuit over the equalization formula. It did so with unanimous support from the Saskatchewan legislature. A few months later, after Brad Wall became premier, Saskatchewan dropped the suit. When asked why in the legislature, Wall responded that Stephen Harper, then prime minister, had asked him to. Harper was clear that even though "fixing" equalization had been part of his platform in 2006, actually making the changes that



Jason Kenney
@jkenney



Albertans have been rightfully frustrated by the unfair deal we are getting in the Federation going as far as to even express support for separation

I don't want to let @JustinTrudeau push us out of our country

I'd rather focus on separating him from the Prime Minister's office



2,072 9:11 AM - Aug 3, 2019

1,995 people are talking about this

▲ SCREEN CAPTURE OF PREMIER KENNEY'S TWITTER FEED.

Saskatchewan was looking for at the time would have been political suicide.

Current federal Conservative leader Andrew Scheer, like Moe and Kenney, knows this is still the case. Although ranting about equalization plays extremely well in Alberta and Saskatchewan, any actual change to the formula would necessarily hurt Quebec, Atlantic Canada and Manitoba—all areas where the Conservatives need to make gains if they are to have any chance of forming the next government. That means Scheer will not talk about equalization during the federal election, and both Kenney and Moe will certainly follow his lead.

If Scheer and his Conservative Party are asked to form a government in October, all talk of referendums and the unfairness of equalization from Alberta and Saskatchewan will quickly disappear. We can be certain of that, especially given that Scheer has already promised to repeal bills C-48 (the West Coast tanker ban) and C-69 (creating a new impact assessment process for major resource projects) should he win, which is what all the equalization bluster from Kenney and Moe is actually about.

If, however, Justin Trudeau's Liberal government is re-elected, Kenney will likely proceed with his referendum in 2021 as an expensive piece of political theater, since the likelihood of getting seven out of 10 provinces to sign off on taking equalization out of the Constitution is exactly zero. And with the current formula now in place until 2024, no sitting prime minister is likely to even want to talk about it, much less make moves to change it.

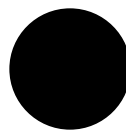
Of course Kenney and Moe know all of this. But they also know that nothing props up conservative political fortunes on the prairies like playing the victim and picking fights in Ottawa and Quebec, and that is ultimately what this is all about. **M**

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**THE
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CLARE MIAN

PUBLIC AND POLITICAL VIEWS OF ISRAEL- PALESTINE AND THE BDS MOVEMENT



THE Boycott, Divest and Sanctions (BDS) movement was founded in Palestine 11 years ago as a non-violent means to achieve equal rights for Palestinians within Israel,

the liberation of the occupied territories, and the right of Palestinians to return home. BDS calls on people and governments to boycott the economic and cultural products of Israel-based companies.

In February 2016, opposition MPs Tony Clement and Michelle Rempel introduced a motion calling on the House of Commons to "reject the [BDS] movement, which promotes the demonization and delegitimization of the State of Israel, and call upon the government to condemn any and all attempts by Canadian organizations, groups or individuals to promote the BDS movement, both here at home and abroad." After some debate in the House, on February 22 the vote passed 229-51, with almost all NDP MPs voting against and eight Conservatives, 43 Liberals, two NDP, three Bloc Québécois and the sole Green MP either abstaining or not present for the vote. All parties support the right of the State of Israel to exist and to defend itself. On all other aspects of a just and peaceful future for Jews and Muslims in Israel-Palestine, and on the degree to which any responsibility can be attributed to Israel for the plight of Palestinians, they disagree.

In 2010, then foreign minister Peter Kent famously stated that any attack on Israel was an attack on Canada. The Harper government (2006–2015) tolerated Israel's continued expansion into settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem as necessary for Israel's security, endorsed the separation wall with the West Bank, and never mentioned the blockade of Gaza initiated by the Israeli state in 2007. Conservative Party leader Andrew Scheer has stated that he would move the Canadian embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, as the U.S. did in May 2018, if he is elected prime minister in October.

Since its election in 2015, the Trudeau government has not made any substantial changes to Canada's policies on Israel-Palestine. Liberal MP Anthony Housefather, who chairs the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, stated in August 2018 that

▼ JEWISH CANADIANS' DIVERSE VIEWS ON ISRAEL-PALESTINE

SOURCE: "TWO JEWS, THREE OPINIONS," FEBRUARY 2019

Canada's record of voting for pro-Israel motions at the United Nations is as strong, if not stronger, than it has ever been. Since 1967, federal governments of all stripes have lived with the fact that their declarations and their actions are in contradiction of official Canadian policy, which calls for Israel's immediate withdrawal from the occupied territories and affirms Palestinians' right of return.

In congratulating Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on his latest electoral win in April—a victory that failed to produce a coalition government, leading to another election in September—Prime Minister Trudeau reiterated that Canada and Israel are "close friends and steadfast allies." The extent of economic, cultural and military co-operation between the two countries excludes the possibility of upholding Canada's principled, rights-based official policy, as does the current U.S. administration's uncritical support of Netanyahu.

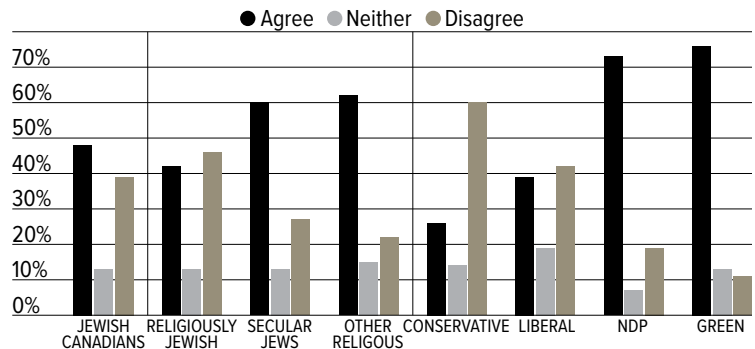
The Trudeau government criticized the appointment, in 2016, of Canadian jurist Michael Lynk to the position of UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967. Lynk's reports since then, which lucidly record the extent of human rights abuses in Israel and the occupied territories, are systematically criticized in a U.S.- and Israel-backed attempt to sabotage any attempt to limit the Israeli stranglehold on Palestinians. The one concession the Trudeau government has made to the plight of Palestinians has been to increase funding to the refugee camps run by the United Nations in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon—a response to drastic U.S. cuts in funding.

At the 2018 NDP convention, the party passed a resolution that, while steering clear of any association with the BDS movement, called for an end to Israeli occupation of the West Bank and to the blockade in Gaza, a ban on imports from occupied territories, and an end to condemnation of movements that seek to end human rights abuses in a non-violent way. The NDP platform commits to "work towards a just and lasting two-state solution between Israel and Palestine that respects human rights and international law."

At the Green Party's August 2016 convention, then shadow justice minister Dimitri Lascaris sponsored a successful resolution in support of BDS policies until such time as Israel ended its occupation and entered into good faith negotiations with Palestinians to create a viable "contiguous" Palestinian state. In opposition to Lascaris's claims that this was not an endorsement of the BDS movement, Elizabeth May argued the motion was implicitly anti-Israel and anti-Semitic and threatened to resign. Led by future MP Paul Manly, with Lascaris's co-operation, a "compromise motion," which backs the goals of BDS, was adopted in December 2016 and remains the party's official position.

Canadians are also watching the debate in the U.S. House of Representatives where, in March 2019, a bipartisan bill was introduced that opposed "efforts to delegitimize Israel." The bill opposed the BDS movement, for example, and all organizations and companies that support it. In a dramatic response, Representative Omar Ilhan (a Democrat from Minnesota) together with six Democratic co-sponsors

"Accusations of anti-Semitism are often used to silence legitimate criticism of Israeli government policies"



introduced a bill in July 2019 that, without mentioning BDS, affirms, "Americans have the right to participate in boycotts in pursuit of civil and human rights at home and abroad." The debate is raging in Congress, within political parties and civil society groups, and in the press.

Where does Canadian public opinion stand on these issues? Independent Jewish Voices and the United Jewish People's Order, in co-operation with EKOS Research, conducted a poll between June and September 2018 that for the first time separated out Jewish Canadian opinion from general public opinion. Among Jewish Canadians, 37% felt negative toward the Israeli government, 48% believed accusations of anti-Semitism were a tool to silence legitimate criticism, and 30% saw boycotts as a reasonable means of forcing Israel to change its policies. Among the non-Jewish public, the percentages were higher: 46% felt negatively toward the Israeli government, 77% did not equate legitimate criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism, and 62% saw boycotts as a reasonable tool to force change.

Israel and Palestine will likely not be major issues in the upcoming election. But 2017 and 2018 polls have shown significant divisions in Canadian public opinion on Israeli policy on Palestine. Perhaps these divisions will enable future governments to shift away from unconditional support of Israeli policies to a more critical appraisal of Israel's record on human rights.

ON MONDAY, JULY 29, Federal Court Justice Anne Mactavish made an important ruling defending the rights of Canadian citizens to be given accurate information on the country of origin of the products they buy. The judge disallowed the Canadian government position that, inasmuch as the "West Bank" is not a country, wines being produced by settlers there had to be labelled "Product of Israel." Dimitri Lascaris successfully defended the position of plaintiff David Kattenberg that this was a disingenuous attempt to implicitly annex the West Bank. Mactavish called the Canadian government position "false, misleading and deceptive." This is a clear step forward in forcing the Canadian government to uphold its own policy that the West Bank is an occupied territory. **M**

CLARE MIAN IS A RETIRED TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR. SHE IS NOW A STUDENT AND WRITER IN TORONTO.



MOLLY MCCRACKEN

A GREEN NEW DEAL FOR CANADA?

AVI LEWIS'S FIVE REASONS WHY A GLOBAL, YOUTH-LED CALL FOR RADICAL SYSTEMIC CHANGE SHOULD STIR OUR REVOLUTIONARY SOULS

The time for piecemeal reform to fossil capitalism has passed. Cities are suffocating under deadly, record-setting heat waves. Rising, warming oceans are upending traditional weather patterns, feeding cataclysmic storms and unpredictable droughts. We are stretching the resilience of Earth's ecosystems, testing their breaking point. A handful of people are getting very rich in the process, driving inequality to levels not seen since the days of the robber barons. This situation cannot be sustained.

The imperative for system-wide change has impelled thousands of Canadians to take action. This summer, as a lead up to the fall federal election, climate and social justice activists organized a sold-out seven-city tour in support of "A Green New Deal for All." The tour, which was led by The Leap, tapped into international enthusiasm for the idea of rapidly building a new economy based on green jobs, living wages, and more and better social programs. In Canada, the movement has prioritized decolonization—the return of land and autonomy stolen from Indigenous communities. A recent Abacus Data poll found that 61% of Canadians like the idea of a Green New Deal, creating the potential for a much more exciting, radical debate in Canada about how we get there.

The "Green New Deal for All" tour this spring and summer hit Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Halifax, Edmonton, Vancouver and Winnipeg, where audiences had the opportunity to hear

from Maude Barlow, El Jones, Naomi Klein, Pam Palmater, David Suzuki, Harsha Walia and other dedicated activists. The Winnipeg tour stop was organized chiefly by Our Time, a youth-led project of 350.org that is mobilizing an alliance of young people and millennial voters to push politicians to support a Green New Deal in the 2019 election. Our Time is one of 150 organizations in the Pact for a Green New Deal, which held 150 town halls across Canada, starting in May, to develop the principles and action items of a national plan.

The seven-city tour came together quickly, with national sponsorship from a wide range of progressive groups including *Briarpatch Magazine*,

the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Climate Strike Canada, the Council of Canadians, Courage, Delivering Community Power, and the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change. The Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg, where the Manitoba event was held, along with the CCPA-Manitoba, Manitoba Building Trades, Manitoba Energy Justice, and Manitoba Sustainable Building Council also sponsored the Winnipeg event.

Before things got started, I spoke to Avi Lewis, filmmaker and co-founder of The Leap, about his goals and ambitions for the co-ordinated effort. Lewis explained that the Green New Deal is a roadmap to addressing the interconnected crises of racism, inequality and climate change on a rapid timeline, essentially by transforming our society and economy. Our response to the climate crisis must be on the scale of the response to the Depression or Second World War, he told me. But that will take a social movement big enough and powerful enough to make it real in Canada.

The Green New Deal concept emerged in the United States within the youth-led Sunrise movement and is championed in Congress by the popular democratic socialist representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who "lit things on fire," in Lewis's words.

"The Green New Deal exploded our political imagination on both sides of the border and around the world," he said. "The Labour Party in the U.K. is

"EVERYWHERE THIS IDEA LANDS IT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO IGNITE WHEN THERE IS AN INTERFACE BETWEEN THE ELECTORAL CLASS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS."

“IGNORING THE CLIMATE CRISIS WILL BANKRUPT US, BUT THE GREEN NEW DEAL WILL ATTACK INEQUALITY AND CREATE A FAIRER ECONOMY THAN WE HAVE NOW,”

having a strong conversation about a Green New Deal. Yanis Varoufakis, the former finance minister under Syriza in Greece, has started a new political party called DIEM25 in the European parliament, which has a Green New Deal for Europe. Everywhere this idea lands it has the potential to ignite when there is an interface between the electoral class and social movements.”

The energy at the Green New Deal for All tour stop in Winnipeg was

electric, with cheering and audience responses the whole evening long. Nora Casson, co-director of the Prairie Climate Centre and one of the night’s excellent speakers, explained that climate change means more flooding in the springs, droughts in the summer and forest fires in Manitoba. Jenna Liicious from Aboriginal Youth Opportunities challenged the crowd to really learn about the treaties, honour them, and for everyone to get in touch with their own indigeneity. Kelly Bado, a francophone Canadian artist born in Côte d’Ivoire, sang her new bilingual song, “Hey Terre,” in which she asks us to “keep on giving it up, so we can keep on living it up.” At eight months pregnant, this was Bado’s last performance before she becomes a new mom and she sent out wishes for a better world for all children. Anishinaabe hoop dancer Shanley Spence (pictured page 26) finished off the night with an outdoor performance alongside the Assiniboine River.

Lewis told me the tour is providing an important outlet for people feeling “surging climate grief” as we watch smoke season in the west and flood season in the east. This feeling that the climate catastrophe “is real and present and happening” has created “a potent combination, both terrifying and with a huge amount of organizing potential.” If the tour has been

“incredibly intense and emotional,” he said, it is because people are fed up with the limitations our politicians have put on our options—most of them “market-based”—for moving forward with a Green New Deal.

“The narrow focus on the carbon tax has meant we’ve had an insufficient debate on climate action in Canada, which could have disastrous consequences for inaction,” said Lewis. “Even if the [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change] were to be fully fulfilled, it would only get us two-thirds of the way to the Paris [Agreement] targets, which are only half way where we need to go to cut emissions in half, which doesn’t even begin to deal with our climate debt as a rich country with historical emissions.” Lewis emphasized that the technology and financial resources are there to help Global South countries “leap over fossil fuels.”

The Green New Deal is the left’s progressive antidote to this stale debate. Lewis’s keynote at the Winnipeg stop outlined five reasons why the campaign is workable and winnable in Canada.

Firstly, a publicly funded just transition away from fossil fuels will be a massive job creator, swelling the ranks of unions and increasing workers’ rights for all, especially the most vulnerable. The idea is to double the unionization rate and extend collective bargaining rights to millions of workers. A Canadian Green New Deal can adopt the U.S. idea of a federal jobs guarantee with a minimum wage of at least \$15 an hour, and decent holidays and benefits, to “set a floor to change the dynamic between all workers and employers,” according to Lewis.

Secondly, the money that governments will spend under a Green New Deal will be spent anyway to address runaway climate change. It’s unavoidable. “Yes, this will be expensive. Like a war. Or a tax cut for the rich. Or bailing out banks and automakers,” explains a promotional video for the Green New Deal for All tour. But so

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



Avi Lewis at the Winnipeg tour stop

PHOTO BY HILLARY BEATTIE

GREEN AND RED LINES IN A GREEN NEW DEAL

The Pact for a Green New Deal, which co-ordinated 150 town halls across Canada this spring and summer, summarizes what it heard in a blog post at act.greennewdealcanada.ca.

“Participants shared an incredible 8,900 red lines and green lines,” says the group, explaining how the categories basically break down into things that should and should not be in a Green New Deal. “There were almost three times as many green lines as red lines, suggesting that participants are eager to focus on a hopeful and positive vision of the future.”

The following examples are drawn from the pact’s website.

GREEN LINES

INDIGENOUS SOVEREIGNTY

- Full recognition of Indigenous title and rights.
- Fully implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the right to free, prior and informed consent.
- Fully implementing the 94 “calls to action” of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- Fully implementing the “calls for justice” in the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

ECONOMY AND GOVERNMENT

- Setting a legally binding climate target for Canada in line with the science of keeping global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- Creating millions of good, high-wage jobs through a green jobs plan, ensuring fossil fuel industry workers and directly affected community members are guaranteed good, dignified work with the training and support needed to succeed.
- Increasing unionization and implementing workers’ rights, including at least a \$15 minimum wage, pay equity, paid emergency leave, job security, protections for migrant workers, and the right to organize and unionize.
- Personal and public subsidies for greener technology, including affordable energy-efficient housing and transportation.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Making massive public investments in the infrastructure to build a 100% renewable energy economy—including power generation, energy efficiency, public transportation, public housing, food justice, ecological and localized agriculture, and clean manufacturing.
- Ensuring sustainable, financially and physically accessible public transportation for everyone.
- Prioritizing and incentivizing local renewable energy creation, especially with public service buildings.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Promoting justice and equity by centring the communities marginalized by our current economy. This means addressing past and current harms to Indigenous

peoples, Black communities, communities of colour, LGBTQ2S people, migrants, refugees and undocumented people, rural communities, the poor, low-income workers, women, the elderly, people with disabilities, and youth.

- Ensuring free, accessible post-secondary education for all.
- Full access to quality public services including health care, education, income security, housing, child care, pharmacare, dental care, pensions and more—for all.
- Status for all: permanent resident status and family unity for all migrants and refugees here, and landed status on arrival for those that arrive in the future. No detentions, no deportations.
- Ensuring that Canada pays its fair share of the climate debt to countries in the Global South that have been impacted by practices and decisions in Canada, and ensuring that corporations based in Canada are not damaging the climate and environment elsewhere, contributing to conditions that force people to migrate (including wars, unjust mining, pollution, etc.).

RED LINES

FOSSIL FUELS

- A plan to fully phase out the fossil fuel industry and move to 100% renewable energy by 2040 (at the latest) must be developed and implemented (including a plan to fully support workers throughout this process).
- Freezing the construction and/or approval of all new fossil fuel extraction and transportation projects—we cannot solve the problem if we make it worse at the same time.

- Fossil fuel subsidies from the federal or provincial government should be immediately eliminated and redirected to support the transition to a clean economy.

PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE

- Enacting laws that grant personhood protections to our forests and bodies of water, and the creation of an environmental bill of rights.
- Stopping the dumping of waste (civic or industrial) into bodies of water.
- Ensuring greater protection for critical biodiversity and natural areas.
- Collectively ensuring the right of all people to clean air, clean water, healthy food, and a safe environment built on connection and community.
- Ensuring the protection of at least 30% of land and waters in Canada by 2030.

PLASTICS

- Developing alternatives to plastic bags, straws and other single-use plastic items to address the problem of plastic waste, while maintaining the necessary access that these items often provide.
- Ending boil water advisories in Indigenous communities.
- Legislating the curtailment of excessive packaging.

DEMOCRACY

- Honouring the promise of making Canada a Proportional Representation Democracy.

will climate change–related lawsuits, disaster response and the other effects of climate chaos.

Recent reports show Canada is warming at twice the rate of the rest of the world, and these impacts will be felt differently depending on where Canadians live and their socioeconomic status. “Ignoring the climate crisis will bankrupt us, but the Green New Deal will attack inequality and create a fairer economy than we have now,” said Lewis.

Thirdly, the Green New Deal promises to save and defend life on earth and protect Indigenous land rights. Scientists warn we are already in the

“sixth mass extinction,” and that a million species of plants and animals are at risk of going extinct as a result of human-caused environmental disruption. Lewis explained that the United Nations itself advocates for Indigenous-led development, pointing out that a quarter of land on Earth is traditionally owned, managed, used or occupied by Indigenous peoples who have been stewarding that land sustainably, in many instances for millennia.

Fourthly, the proponents of a Green New Deal believe that this plan is the way to meet the needs of everyday people, improve quality of life and

address stagnant wages. “It connects reducing pollution to the top priorities of the most vulnerable workers and the most excluded communities,” said Lewis. As a fifth point, he added, “We’re all spending Saturday night together in a church, so let me just say it straight: the Green New Deal will be good for our souls.

“It’s not just a planet’s life support system that is unraveling,” he continued, “it’s our whole social fabric, with the rise of fake news and fascism and conspiracy [and] mass loneliness and isolation of late capitalism, we are lost in algorithms of envy and anger.” The Green New Deal restores a sense of collective purpose, said Lewis.

Can the energy of the “Green New Deal for All” tour ripple out into the public conscience enough to impact this fall’s federal debate? The Green Party and the NDP are already including Green New Deal–like language in their platforms. It’s a start, according to some of the organizers of the Winnipeg tour stop, who plan to heighten efforts in the lead up to the federal election on October 21. Like the Sunrise movement in the U.S., they are calling on candidates to pledge to support a Green New Deal, and for voters to pledge their votes to Green New Deal political champions.

The Pact for the Green New Deal is synthesizing the input from the 150 town halls into a civil society vision for a Green New Deal for Canada. Our Time is calling for a federal leaders’ debate on the climate crisis and the Green New Deal. These mostly young people are part of a global movement that is organizing Friday student strikes for the climate, including a massive global student strike on Friday, September 20. A week of action and an all-out global climate strike are also planned for September 27.

These times call for urgent and radical responses, not half-measures. At the end of our interview, right before he hit the stage, Lewis wondered if we can “locate our revolutionary souls in this moment.” Youth leaders and climate activists have found theirs. They are calling on all of us to do so now. **M**



Shanley Spence

PHOTO BY HILLARY BEATTIE



Below the Fold

CYNTHIA KHOO

Trust abhors a vacuum

USING THE INTERNET to become informed about politics today may less resemble cruising an information highway than it does careening down Mario Kart's Rainbow Road. Staying on course in the popular Nintendo racing game's frictionless technicolour track takes sustained vigilance, lest carelessness or a fake Item Box (pictured) pitch your kart into the dark.

As the finish line of voting day looms, how do we ensure we get an accurate picture of the 2019 federal elections when our online feeds throw us so many fake items and distracting turns? This is a question that academics, policy experts and governments have struggled to address in recent years.

Much of the worry—expressed in an April report of the Communications Security Establishment (CSE) on foreign interference in elections; the work of the new SITE Task Force involving CSE, the RCMP, CSIS and Global Affairs Canada; and in government exhortations to social media companies—has focused on the possibility of co-ordinated disinformation campaigns disseminated through social media platforms. On Twitter, for example, troll and bot accounts have exacerbated anti-immigration sentiment, promoted conspiracy theories and artificially amplified hashtags such as #TrudeauMustGo. A false story this February about federal NDP leader Jagmeet Singh was shared thousands of times on Facebook.

While it is important to think about how online platforms enable the spread of disinformation, governments and politicians too often seem to forget their own role in creating and perpetuating demand for “alternative facts.” After all, their own public statements are often quite divorced from reality.

Homegrown examples of political disinformation include Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's disingenuous handling of the SNC-Lavalin affair; Conservative leader Andrew Scheer tolerating public promotion of the discredited “Pizzagate” conspiracy at a town hall (until receiving backlash); Alberta Premier Jason Kenney downplaying the climate change crisis; and Ontario Premier Doug Ford banning provincial ministries from mentioning climate change on social media. And who doesn't recall the Conservative party's voter suppression robocalls in the 2011 federal election? Automated disinformation before it was cool.

Canada's fourth estate also regularly fails to uphold its informational responsibility and integrity. Think of how the mainstream media derailed the national discussion on the final report of the inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Or the *Toronto Sun* publishing an untrue and incendiary story stoking anti-immigrant hatred. Or Postmedia lobbying to work with Premier Kenney's explicitly anti-environmentalist “war room.” Or Quebecor's constant airing and publishing of Islamophobic content. Or long-standing double-standards in how the media routinely treats violence from white men (domestic terrorism, sexual assault) versus their victims and racialized offenders.

Placing increasingly stringent regulations on social media platforms will not suffice to solve the long-term flaw in our democracy that the rise of disinformation exposes. What is being regulated as a technology issue is at its core political: the willingness of political leaders and legacy media outlets to consistently mislead, lie to and obscure the truth from constituents. Until that stops, bad actors will continue finding ways to exploit the lost and roving trust of disaffected voters, no matter how many platforms set up ad registries or how many times Mark Zuckerberg is summoned before a parliamentary committee.



Moreover, political discourse has increasingly migrated from open forums to closed groups and private chats over apps such as WhatsApp, WeChat and Telegram. Disinformation campaigns spread via WhatsApp played a prominent role in recent elections in India, Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria and Spain. WeChat was involved in a municipal vote-buying controversy in Vancouver. However, there is a twofold flaw in attempting to regulate away disinformation in these channels.

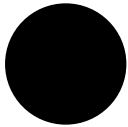
First, end-to-end encryption and ephemeral messaging (messages that are automatically deleted after a certain time or after being read) may make effective legal responses impossible in practice if they depend on being able to see the contents of messages. Second, chasing disinformation into increasingly private spheres of citizens' digital communications risks ever more invasive measures. We should not have to trade away our digital privacy rights so that politicians, third-party election advertisers and governments can continue to lie to or mislead the electorate, then rely on after-the-fact attempts to clean up the information environment they themselves polluted.

In January, the federal government established a “critical election incident public protocol” to monitor and identify threats to electoral integrity. Tellingly, as reported by CBC News, “officials say there is no plan to police the usual political spin on the campaign trail.”

The “usual political spin” is how we got here in the first place. If the government—and those who wish to form government—are serious about preventing the growth of disinformation in Canadian political discourse, then it is up to them to stop providing such fertile soil. **M**

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ARE YOU INADVERTENTLY AMPLIFYING ANTI-IMMIGRANT RACISM?



ANTI-IMMIGRANT racism underpins much of the conversation about immigration policy in this country. We must be able to identify the obvious and

subtle ways in which it is being mobilized to divide and distract us. Three interconnected ideas circulating in the media have underlying racist motivations that even us progressives find difficult to decipher.

1. MIGRANT WORKERS AND WAGES

We are told that an increase in low-wage temporary foreign workers drives down wages for all workers. This is completely unrepresentative of real world wage forces.

Over the past 40 years, median hourly earnings in Canada have remained more or less constant while productivity has increased. That is, the wages of working people, as a percentage of profit and economic growth, have stagnated. At the same time, the super rich have seen their wealth increase massively. Canada's richest have stashed away over \$353 billion in offshore tax havens, and according to a recent Canada Revenue Agency analysis, corporations don't pay up to 27% of their taxes.

Wages are not lowered by any individual or group of workers, but by the employer class that profits from their labour. The Ontario government heeded powerful economic interests, like Loblaws and TD Bank, when it chose to stop the planned increase of the minimum wage from \$14 to a \$15 an hour. Incorrectly focusing on the wages of migrant workers—instead of ensuring permanent status and full rights—distracts from the real authors of exploitation and increases racism.

2. THE MYTH OF INCREASED IMMIGRATION

All political parties in Canada talk about increasing immigration levels, some to celebrate it and others to criticize it. Newspapers are full of stories with headlines like:

- “Canada to admit nearly 1 million immigrants over next 3 years” (CBC);
- “Canada resettled more refugees than any other country in 2018, UN says” (The Canadian Press); and
- “Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has greatly expanded the country's guest worker programs, largely under the public's radar” (Postmedia columnist Douglas Todd).

All are either devoid of fact or seriously misstate what is going on.

Canada's permanent resident intake as a percentage of the population has been stable for the last decade. Today, most migrants are on temporary permits, the largest grouping being “international students,” who spent an estimated \$12.8 billion in Canada in 2015, and \$15.5 billion in 2016.

Most international students work but have limited labour rights. In this way, they are similar to temporary foreign workers who come to Canada on employer-dependent permits that limit their ability to leave bad jobs or speak out when facing exploitative bosses. Likewise, though much is made of Canada being a welcoming country for refugees, nearly half of the world's refugees are hosted in just 10 countries and Canada is not one of them.

Misrepresented or incorrect numbers in the media about Canadian immigration heighten the violent anxieties of a “demographic threat” that in part impelled the actions of the Quebec City and New Zealand mosque shooters, as well as the El Paso murderer. These myths also make it easy for politicians to frame themselves as anti-racist even as they ignore urgently needed changes to immigration and labour policies.

3. THE “BAD IMMIGRANT” MYTH

One of the dominant ideas circulating as rational debate is the distinction between “good” immigrants and “rule breakers.” The recent political and media focus on “illegal border crossers” offers a good example.

Crossing the border on foot to apply for refugee status is legal, even under Canada's very exclusionary laws. There is no “queue” to jump, but pitting migrants against others has proven to be a successful tactic of distraction and division. Canada actually has an obligation to asylum seekers because of this country's complicity—through law, policy and profit—in the economic crises, wars, and climate change-related disruptions that are forcing people, painfully and reluctantly, away from their homes.

While migrants are being incorrectly framed as rule breakers, people who break the rules at large-scale public cost face few consequences. Loblaws, one of the country's most profitable corporations, was caught illegally fixing the price of bread over 14 years and continues to receive government handouts. It was also just let off the hook for the Rana Plaza fire in Bangladesh, in which 1,130 people were killed and 2,520 injured while producing clothes for Loblaws and other companies.

UNDERSTANDING RACISM AND UNITING AGAINST IT

A recent poll showed that 72% of people in Canada are anxious about jobs, climate and quality of life. This very real anxiety is being exploited in the election, with an easy villain—the immigrant—pushed into the spotlight.

We must reject the politics of scarcity and austerity and focus instead on the redistribution of wealth that is necessary, urgent and possible. Rather than fighting each other for scraps, we must assert a unified set of demands

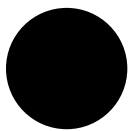
for decent work, universal services, and full rights for everyone regardless of immigration status.

We deserve a world without displacement and discrimination. This is a vision of migrant justice that lifts us all up. **M**

SYED HUSSAN IS THE CO-ORDINATOR OF THE MIGRANT WORKERS ALLIANCE FOR CHANGE AND A MEMBER OF THE MIGRANT RIGHTS NETWORK. READERS CAN TAKE A PLEDGE TO #UNITEAGAINSTRACISM AT WWW.MIGRANTRIGHTS.CA, AND GET TOOLS TO IDENTIFY AND PUSH BACK AGAINST ANTI-IMMIGRANT RACISM DURING THE ELECTIONS.

ARUSHANA SUNDERAESON

WILL MILLENNIAL VOTERS STEP UP AGAIN?



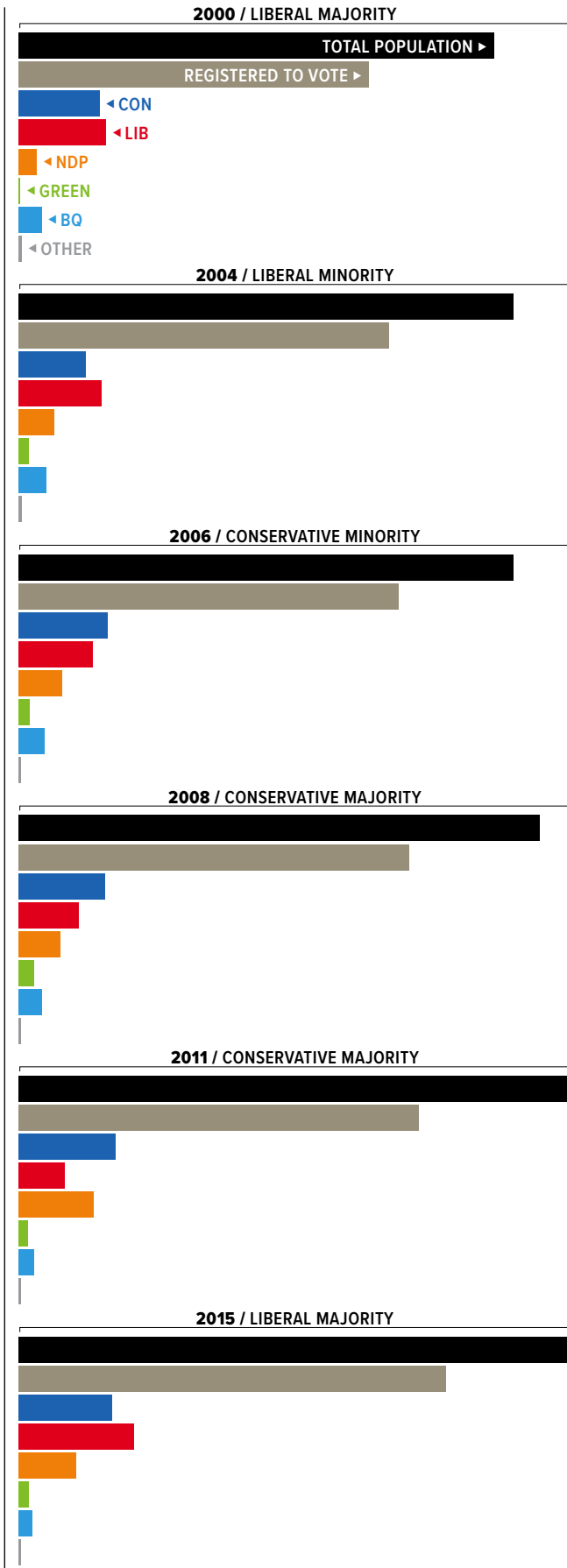
In the 2015 federal election, voter turnout among people aged 18–24 was estimated to be 57.1%—18 percentage points above the 2011 level of 38.8%. A 2016 Abacus Data/

Canadian Alliance of Student Associations study found that 45% of this age group voted Liberal, 25% NDP, 20% Conservative and 4% Green. Millennials and gen-Xers (born between 1964 and the early 2000s) make up two-thirds of the electorate heading toward the October 2019 vote.

According to David Coletto, CEO of Abacus Data, we shouldn't expect younger voters to come out in the same high numbers as they did four years ago. "My instincts suggest they're not that excited, and that they've been let down in some way; that there's not an overriding issue that's motivating them," he told CBC Radio recently. Statistically, it wouldn't be surprising: the 25–29 vote peaked in 1980 and the 18–24 vote in 1974; by 2004–2011 they were flatlining around 50% and 40% respectively.

But the part about young people not being that excited? Let's put aside the fact that pollsters have been getting a lot wrong lately (think of this year's Australian election, Brexit, and the 2016 Trump win). A ground-level scan proves young people are still getting involved in politics—and in large numbers. Whether or not they are disillusioned by federal politics, they have been leading anti-austerity actions in Ontario, and continue to run for political office at all levels across the country.

Ashley Noble, a 20-year-old Durham District School Board trustee—the youngest female trustee ever elected in Canada—told me recently that she ran to give voice to a younger generation. "The decisions being made today directly affect us today, and our tomorrows," she said. "The decision to defund education [in Ontario] means that more young people will not be getting a quality education, which likely means a drop in post-secondary applications, which mean so much for the job field in 15 years."



▲ IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH TO WIN: FIRST-PAST-THE-POST IN ACTION SINCE 2000

SOURCE: ELECTIONS CANADA

Besides this “obvious” issue directly affecting young people, Noble emphasized the importance of fighting climate change—something even pollsters agree will dominate the 2019 vote—as a cause drawing young people into politics.

“Denying climate change while our globe is literally falling apart is dangerous. The majority of people making these decisions won’t be alive to really see the effects of climate change. Everything happening now in our climate is from actions taking place in the 1970s to ‘90s. Only now are we seeing what we did. We need a change! We need a revolution! Youth need to get involved because their lives are on the line!”

A much higher percentage of voters over 55 vote and tend to vote for conservative politicians, at least federally. In 2019, right-wing parties are proposing to reverse some modest climate policies—to promote more carbon-based mining and energy production—and openly flirting with anti-immigrant sentiment among some voters.

“Without young people entering formal spheres of power—who is left?”, asked Jasmine Rezaee, manager of advocacy at YWCA Toronto, when I interviewed her for this article. “We need the energy, exuberance and progressive values embodied by the new generation to move the dial on the myriad issues facing our country.”

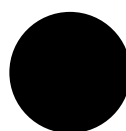
In the United States, younger politicians and activists have been inspired by the principled politics of Ilhan Abdullahi Omar (aged 37) and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (the latter only 29 when she took New York’s 14th congressional district in 2018), elders like Bernie Sanders, and other progressives who are not afraid to call out the corporate elite and “billionaire class” in their demands for a fairer, more sustainable economy. In Ontario, home of the electorally important 905 area codes around Toronto, young people from all backgrounds are coming together to fight cuts to their social services, education and tuition supports, environmental regulations, libraries and other public goods.

Polls in Canada may be predicting youth apathy ahead of the election. The leadership that young people are showing in local and global movements for progressive change suggest the pollsters will be wrong—again. **M**

ARUSHANA SUNDERAESON IS DEVELOPMENT AND DATABASE OFFICER AT THE CCPA'S NATIONAL OFFICE.

RICARDO TRANJAN

HOW TO DISARM ANTI-IMMIGRATION RHETORIC



FOR centuries, the political right has opportunistically blamed immigrants for everything from economic slowdowns to lousy weather. The ferocity of these baseless

attacks in the 20th century produced tragic results. Yet we are letting it happen again—in the United States, Brazil, Australia, different parts of Europe, and here in Canada.

We must confront this vile political discourse wherever we come across it on social media, in classrooms, at public events, and in daily conversations with family and friends. But how can we do it?

One way—my favourite way—is to reject the “othering” of people outright and instead focus on our shared humanity. We are humans before being of any nationality. The contours of our place of birth and our physical appearances vary, but underneath these superficial differences we are the same. Forget that, and we endorse the worst crimes humans are capable of perpetrating. History tells us as much.

Open your family chest (physical or virtual) and you shall find stories of people relocating, enduring hardship and distress, while helping and being helped by others who didn’t share the same background. That’s what we do. Share these stories of likeliness, kindness and human fortitude: they are an antidote to hateful anti-immigrant rhetoric.

But sometimes it’s necessary to have hard data, too. That’s particularly the case when the focus of debate is the economy. Fortunately, we have lots of it—and all the data disproves the anti-immigrant rhetoric from today’s right-wing populists.

EMPLOYMENT RATES

Employment rates measure the share of the population who are employed. According to 2018 Statistics Canada data, Canadian-born and immigrant workers (aged 15 and over) have very similar employment rates: 62% and 60%, respectively. This means the split of people working and not

	2011 ESTIMATE	2015 ESTIMATE	DIFFERENCE
FIRST TIME	40.5	58.3	17.7
NOT FIRST TIME	37.8	55.1	17.3
18–24 YEARS	38.8	57.1	18.3
25–34 YEARS	45.1	57.4	12.3
35–44 YEARS	54.5	61.9	7.4
45–54 YEARS	64.5	66.6	2.1
55–64 YEARS	71.5	73.7	2.3
65–74 YEARS	75.1	78.8	3.7
75 YEARS+	60.3	67.4	7.1
CANADA	58.5	66.1	7.6

▲ VOTER TURNOUT BY AGE GROUP, 2011 AND 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS

SOURCE: ELECTIONS CANADA

working (e.g., full-time students, stay-at-home parents) is nearly the same for immigrants and people born in Canada.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Census data from 2016 shows that immigrants and people born in Canada (aged 25–64) have similar levels of educational attainment: 21% of immigrants and 25% of people born in Canada ended their schooling with a high school diploma; 51% of immigrants and 56% of people born in Canada have a trade, college, or bachelor's diploma or degree. The only large difference is at the post-graduate level: 15% of immigrants and 7% of people born in Canada have a master's degree or doctorate.

These are the averages for all immigrants, but it is important to note that the educational attainment of sponsored immigrants and refugees—often deemed to be less apt to work—is also comparable with that of people born in Canada: 28% of refugees and of 27% sponsored immigrants ended their schooling with a high school diploma; 42% of refugees and 45% of sponsored immigrants have a trade, college, or bachelor's diploma or degree; and 6% of refugees and 9% of sponsored immigrants have a post-graduate degree.

In sum, those who were born here and those who came to Canada more recently are similarly equipped to find work in the Canadian job market.

GOVERNMENT TRANSFERS

Government transfers refer to income support programs funded through tax revenues to ensure our collective welfare. They include work-related benefits, child benefits, pensions, disability benefits, social assistance and other income transfers.

According to census data, in 2015, people born in Canada (aged 15 and older) received, on average, \$7,858 in government transfers while immigrants received an average transfer of \$7,765. The average for government-assisted refugees—who are at times accused of collecting large amounts of government support—was a bit lower at \$7,412.

Immigrants work as much as people born in Canada and receive the same in terms of government transfers.

KNOWLEDGE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Census data show that fewer than 5% of all immigrants aged 25–64 speak neither English nor French. Yet in 2016, 51% of these immigrants were active in the labour market: 45% had a job, and 6% were out there looking for one.

TEMPORARY FOREIGNER WORKERS

Today, it's become too common to hear politicians and pundits claiming that Canada's temporary foreign workers are "stealing" good jobs from Canadians. The reality is quite different.

We should be welcoming immigrants as fully enfranchised citizens who can study, work, and build a stable life with their families. Instead, Canada's policy ensures many migrants are brought into a form of indentured work, with a temporary work permit tied to a single employer on whom their well-being depends entirely.

Some employers of temporary foreign workers are law abiding, others are not. And some laws are exclusionary. For example, farmworkers are largely excluded from minimum wages, overtime pay or health and safety protections.

These stories must be told, too. Data on this front is scarce.

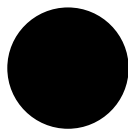
SPEAK OUT

While the *otherness* of immigrants is artificially manufactured, our shared humanity is a lived experience corroborated by hard data. We have the upper hand on this fight so long as we speak out. **M**

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CHUKA EJECKAM

RACIAL INEQUITY IN THE CANADIAN CANNABIS INDUSTRY



THE Canadian cannabis industry is booming. From giant industrial operations such as Canopy Growth to smaller "luxury" cannabis retailers, to an array of cannabis "lifestyle" brands and "cannabis brand consultancy" firms, the industry is a lucrative frontier for those seeking wealth in a rapidly growing market.

Canadians spent \$1.6 billion on legal weed in 2018—double the total spent on medical cannabis the year before—despite the fact that non-medical cannabis was legally available only after October 17. Statistics Canada's National Cannabis Survey from the first quarter of 2019 reported that 646,000 people tried cannabis for the first time in the months after it was legalized, with use increasing among men and people aged 45 to 64.

As non-medical cannabis shifts from a criminal offence to a legal commercial product, revenue from legal weed should be used to fund meaningful reparations for communities targeted for decades by racist drug laws and enforcement. However, even a surface-level analysis of the rapidly growing Canadian cannabis industry reveals a troubling trend: the profits and wealth being generated are overwhelmingly landing in the pockets of white Canadians.

According to a *Montreal Gazette* investigation in 2018, only 3% of management positions at the top five producers and distributors of cannabis in Canada (combined market value: roughly \$16 billion) were people of colour. This mimics disparities in the United States, where in 2017, 81% cannabis companies were owned by

white people, and overwhelmingly white men. Women have been making advances in the industry, especially with cannabidiol (CBD) products, but this has been primarily true of white women.

“Equity permit” programs are being pursued in some jurisdictions. In California, for example, some cities grant first access to the legal cannabis market to individuals who are low-income, have past cannabis arrests or convictions or live in “disproportionately impacted areas.” But, thus far, that strategy has failed to address the domination of the legal market by people who are generally most privileged and least affected by cannabis’s previous illegality.

Drug prohibition laws target Black and Indigenous people in Canada, and these groups make up an outsize share of the hundreds of thousands of Canadians bearing cannabis-related criminal records. They also account for a disproportionate number of street stops and arrests, including when those interactions don’t ultimately lead to criminal charges, prosecution or conviction.

Research by criminologist and University of Toronto professor Akwasi Owusu-Bempah shows that cannabis has in fact been a “gateway drug,” but not in the sense that using cannabis leads to use of other drugs. Rather, cannabis prohibition has disproportionately been a gateway to criminal status for Black and Indigenous people, even though cannabis use (and use of other drugs) is effectively equal among different racial groups. Some research has found that whites are more likely to use and sell drugs but less likely to be arrested, charged or incarcerated for those offences.

In her book *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present*, activist, author and educator Robyn Maynard demonstrates the deep-rooted systemic racism that animates the hyper-policing of Black Canadians. Maynard draws a line through Canadian history, connecting the violent control and regulation of Black people through enslavement and colonization to the disproportionate police attention, violence and criminal

WHILE BLACK AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN CANADA MAY INCUR SOCIAL OR PROFESSIONAL CONSEQUENCES, WHITE POLITICIANS FLOCK TO THE BOARDS OF CANNABIS COMPANIES WITHOUT FEAR FOR THEIR REPUTATION.

penalties applied to Black (and Indigenous) communities in Canada today. This contrasts with the lenient treatment of wealthy, white Canadians at the hands of law enforcement. The same racial inequities rampant in U.S. drug-law enforcement are alive and well here. So, too, is the reproduction of racial inequities so evident in the American legal cannabis industries.

Writing in the *Monitor* in advance of legalization (“Prometheus re-bound,” March/April 2018), John Akpata noted the dimensions of racial inequity and capitalist monopolization already visible in the non-medical cannabis market. Akpata argued it would cost potential “licensed producers” between \$5 million and \$10 million to meet the standards set by the Trudeau government’s regulations, prohibiting anyone other than large corporate entities—or those who could access high-dollar corporate financial backing—from seeking legal licensing. Given Canada’s entrenched racial inequities in wealth and income, this high cost of entry has only given an enormous advantage to white Canadians.

Studies have shown that racialized Ontarians experience higher rates of poverty and unemployment and are paid less when they are employed. Toronto vividly illustrates these inequities, with racialized residents concentrated in low-income neighbourhoods while affluent neighbourhoods are disproportionately white. Conversely, white Canadians make up an overwhelming 73% of residents in affluent neighbourhoods—much higher than their share of the city’s population.

These inequities are reproduced in police attention and criminal penalties. Analysis of cannabis possession arrests for people without prior criminal records in Toronto between 2003 and 2013 found that Black people were arrested at a rate nearly triple their share of the city’s population. Human rights lawyer Anthony Morgan has noted how this targeting, and popular associations between Black people and drugs, increases the risk of stigmatization that Black people face in even speaking to the issue, let alone whether they actively participate in the legal cannabis market.

ILLUSTRATION BY KARA SIEVEWRIGHT



While Black and Indigenous people in Canada may incur social or professional consequences, white politicians (including a former police chief of Canada's largest city) flock to the boards of cannabis companies without fear for their reputation. There is perhaps no higher profile example of this racial and class-based inequity than Justin Trudeau himself. A white man born into a wealthy and well-connected family, the prime minister has both admitted to illegally smoking cannabis while a sitting member of Parliament and spoken about how his father's connections helped his brother Michel avoid charges for drug offences.

These inequities fly in the face of the fact that it was communities of colour that introduced cannabis to popular culture in the United States and Canada. At least since the Jazz Age, a collection of prominent Black and Brown artists have incorporated the drug into their artistic and cultural expressions. Law enforcement would later exploit this fact to weaponize drug laws against communities of colour—again, even though drug use across racial groups is essentially equal.

With cannabis now legal in Canada, society primarily celebrates white Canadians and wealthy "entrepreneurs" for their involvement with the drug, while communities of colour remain disproportionately policed, arrested, prosecuted, incarcerated and burdened with criminal records.

Affected Canadians may finally apply for pardons by undergoing a complicated process involving having their fingerprints taken, attaining a copy of their criminal record and contacting police. However, critics of the legalization regime and process, including Cannabis Amnesty, an advocacy group led by lawyer, author and educator Annamaria Enenajor, have argued that proactive expungement of cannabis-related criminal records is necessary, as pardons don't erase records. Publicly funded reparations programs for loans, education and employment are also needed, as they could begin to repair the restricted opportunities that result from a criminal record. Equity permits, along the lines of those introduced in California, would still restrict applicants to working in the cannabis industry.

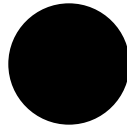
The government must also address the racial inequities in wealth and profit being accumulated in the legal non-medical cannabis market. Legal cannabis has rapidly become just another enterprise of international capitalism, with wealthy investors and profiteers exploiting what should be an equity-seeking policy, to amass profit and further entrench racial and class disparities.

We can choose not to let the racial inequities so prevalent in our society be reproduced, once more, in the legal cannabis market. We can choose to rigorously pursue equity and reparations for decades of disproportionate criminalization and economic impairment. We can choose not to ignore the continued disproportionate accumulation of wealth in privileged quarters. But we must choose. **M**

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DAVID MACDONALD

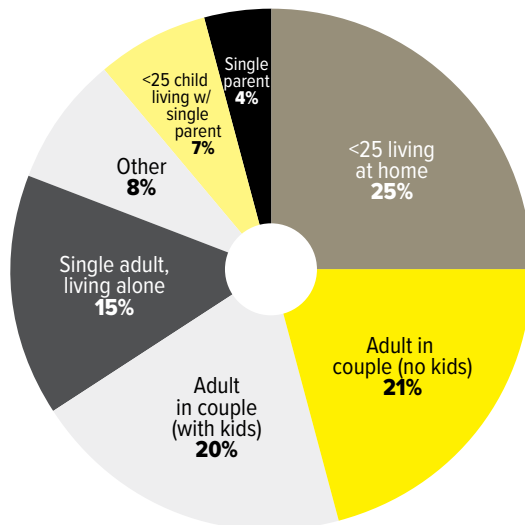
CANADA HAS A RENTAL HOUSING CRISIS. LET'S BUILD OUR WAY OUT OF IT.



WHEN we talk about housing affordability (as the media and politicians will, quite a bit, during this election) the focus is usually on home ownership and high

housing costs. Less discussed is the affordability crisis faced by the third of Canadian households (4.7 million families) who rent their homes. A paper I released in July, *Unaccommodating: Rental Housing Wages in Canada*, looks at the extent of the problem by determining the hourly wage that a full-time worker must make to be able to rent an average two-bedroom apartment using no more than 30% of their income. I call this the rental wage, and my findings clearly struck a nerve.

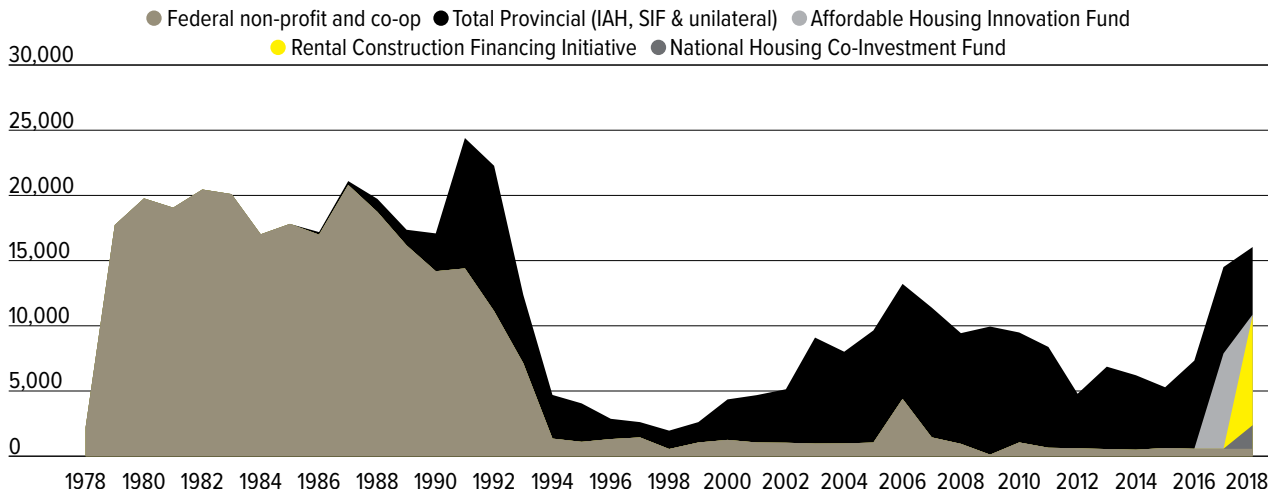
As reported widely in the media in July, my report finds that the average rental wage across all of Canada is \$22.40/hr. Again, this is the income you would need to bring home to be able to afford an average-priced two-bedroom apartment. For an average-priced one-bedroom apartment, the national average rental wage is \$20.20/hr. Of course, if a worker doesn't have a full-time job the rental wage will be higher no matter where they live. Importantly, because all provincial minimum wages are far lower than these average rental wages, it is not possible for many



▲ BREAKDOWN OF THE ONE-QUARTER OF CANADIANS WHO EARN WITHIN \$3 OF THE PROVINCIAL MINIMUM WAGE SOURCE: UNACCOMMODATING, CCPA, JULY 2019.

**NEW ►
AFFORDABLE
HOUSING**

SOURCE:
UNACCOMMODATING,
CCPA, JULY 2019.



full-time workers to afford to live anywhere without spending more than 30% of their income on rent.

In some cities the rental wage is much higher than the Canadian average. For example, a full-time worker in Vancouver would need to make \$35.43/hr to afford an average-priced two-bedroom apartment. A minimum-wage worker in Vancouver would have to work 84 hours a week to afford the average-priced one-bedroom apartment, or 112 hours a week for a two-bedroom apartment. The next highest average rental wages are found in Toronto (\$33.70/hr), Victoria (\$28.47/hr), Calgary (\$26.97/hr) and Ottawa (\$26.08/hr). A detailed, searchable map of rental wages across Canada is available on the CCPA website here: www.policyalternatives.ca/rentalwages.

For my report, I determined the rental wage in 795 Canadian neighbourhoods based on two-bedroom rental costs, as two-bedroom apartments are the most common type, making up 50% of all units. One-bedroom rentals make up 36% of apartments, with the bachelor and three-bedroom (or more) categories each making up less than 10% of units. With two-bedroom units being more common, it is easier to determine the rental wage in more neighbourhoods outside of Canada's biggest cities.

Everyone deserves a decent place to live. The two-bedroom apartment therefore serves as a proxy for

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various family types in Canada, since it offers a modest amount of room for multiple living arrangements. Many households rely on only one income but contain more than one person—single-parent families, for example, or an adult caring for a senior. A sole income earner working full time should be able to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment for their family in a country as rich as Canada. But in most Canadian cities, including Canada's largest metropolitan areas of Toronto and Vancouver, there are no neighbourhoods where it is possible to afford a one- or two-bedroom unit on a single minimum wage.

In fact, it is possible for a minimum-wage worker (e.g., a single parent) to comfortably afford the average two-bedroom rental rate in only 3% of the 795 neighbourhoods where rental and income data are available. In only 9% of neighbourhoods can a minimum-wage worker afford the average-priced one-bedroom apartment without spending more than 30% of their income on rent. Remarkably, of the 36 metro areas in Canada, 23 have no neighbourhoods where the average-priced one-bedroom is affordable to a minimum-wage worker, and 31 have no neighbourhoods where a two-bedroom apartment is affordable.

The rental wage neighbourhood maps in my report and the accompanying online database show a common reality known to all renters, which is that it is more expensive to live downtown—close to most jobs—than in outlying areas that necessitate longer commutes and often the purchase of a car. The notable exception is Montreal where more affordable neighbourhoods continue to exist on the island itself and public transit is abundant. The highest two-bedroom rental wages are found in Toronto's downtown Bay Street corridor (\$73.17/hr), Vancouver's North False Creek neighbourhood (\$60.93/hr) and the Toronto waterfront and island area (\$53.01/hr).

If we exclude condominium rentals, the two-bedroom rental wage was a fairly constant \$17/hr prior to 2001 when it started to go up, hitting close to \$20/hour by 2018. Though the increase is a result of many factors, some of which differ from province to province, one of the most important contributors was the collapse of new purpose-built rental construction (apartment buildings).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, over 100,000 new rental apartments were being built a year. That number dropped to 10,000 in the 1990s due in part to federal cuts to affordable housing funding. Between 1983 and 1993, 49% of all new rental builds were affordable housing units paid for with public money. In the 1970s and 1980s, substantial federal tax incentives also encouraged many market rental units to be built.

In the past three years, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has introduced four long-term programs devoted to new affordable units: the National Housing Co-investment Fund, the Rental Construction Financing Initiative, the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund, and the Federal Lands Initiative. These programs jointly promise to deliver more than 110,500 new units by 2027-28. Combined with other provincial and federal programs, 15,100 and 16,600 new affordable units received commitments in 2017-18 and 2018-19 respectively—three-quarters of the 20,000 affordable units built each year between 1970 and the early 1990s.

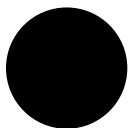
Direct rental supports like the new Canada Housing Benefit—a cash supplement to low-income renters—could take the edge off housing cost increases for some renters while we wait for federally funded construction programs to kick into gear. But the benefit's tight budget cap will necessitate the application of strict eligibility requirements that will push most low-income renters from the queue.

In the long term, rental subsidies are no substitute for the construction of new affordable housing, which would increase vacancy rates, cool rental prices and allow more people to live closer to where they work. This election, let's make sure politicians are putting housing—all housing—high on their agendas. **M**

DAVID MACDONALD IS A SENIOR ECONOMIST WITH THE CCPA.

RICHARD NIMIJEAN

IT'S 2015 ALL OVER AGAIN. OR IS THAT 2004?



ANALYZING the 2015 federal election results for *The Monitor* (Jan/Feb 2016), I cautioned Canadians about reading too much into Justin Trudeau's "sunny ways" narrative, noting how we could end up with a Jean Chrétien-like government post 1993. The reasons behind that prediction were straightforward, and I think recent history bears me out.

In the era of brand politics, ideological homogeneity between the major parties means that differences are laid

out in terms of values, as embodied by their leaders, not detailed policy platforms that represent different views of how governments should manage the economy. Charisma and personality seek to build bonds of trust between politicians and citizens as the key way to build support. Chrétien was a master in this respect.

As the 2019 election nears, it is important to recall these parallels to today's government, and how Trudeau's first three years in office might influence how Canadians vote. While Canadians celebrated Chrétien's "Vive le Canada" approach, hopeful that more optimistic times were ahead, his government's policy agenda resulted in an entrenched neoliberalism in Canada along with a deepening of Mulroney government-initiated continental integration. In a similar way, the Trudeau government, far from distancing itself from the Harper legacy, has in many ways reinforced it.

Interventionist rhetoric has confused pundits into reading federal deficits as an indicator of activist government, all the proof you need we are living under a progressive, redistributive state. However, the Trudeau government readily signed, virtually untouched, the Harper-negotiated, patently neoliberal CETA trade deal with the European Union and Trans-Pacific Partnership with Asia-Pacific nations, along with a NAFTA 2.0 based largely on U.S. President Donald Trump's corporatist terms.

Likewise, where the Harper government made federal funding for municipal infrastructure contingent on cities considering the public-private partnership model, the Trudeau government established a Canada Infrastructure Bank with a mandate to only fund public services and construction projects in partnership with big private investors (and where private shareholders could be guaranteed high returns).

In foreign affairs, Trudeau declared "Canada is back," leading many to hope for a return to the liberal internationalism of Lester Pearson (prime minister from 1963–1968). Instead, the election of Trump and the ascendancy of Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland has led to a return to hard power. Multilateral diplomacy is missing in action. Peacekeeping is much talked about, but not practised as much. The Trudeau government has continued a hard line toward Russia and has been very involved in the efforts for regime change in Venezuela.

Meanwhile, the government's much touted feminist foreign policy, while admirable, has suffered from a lack of resources and a lack of focus. Indeed, development experts point out that in terms of foreign aid, the Trudeau government has been perhaps more miserly than the Harper government.

Importantly, my 2015 *Monitor* article failed to note one important legacy of the Chrétien government that we should remember in the current context: the federal sponsorship scandal, in which, as the Gomery report carefully outlined, the interests of the Liberal party were blurred with interests of state. Chrétien's successor, Paul Martin, tried to change the channel.

With SNC-Lavalin, so is Trudeau. Just as Martin distanced himself from the Chrétien government (of which he and his austerity were so central a part), stoking fears

THE TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT, FAR FROM DISTANCING ITSELF FROM THE HARPER LEGACY, HAS IN MANY WAYS CONTINUED AND REINFORCED IT.

of a Harper-led Americanization of Canada, Trudeau is again now raising the spectre of Harper to warn voters away from Andrew Scheer's Conservatives. Will it work? Remember that Martin, once the most popular politician in Canada, stumbled to a minority government in 2004 before crashing out of federal politics in the 2006 election.

Today, the situation is much the same. In power, the Trudeau government speaks a progressive game that is sometimes backed up in policy (think child care, a gender-balanced cabinet, or new housing dollars), but often masks half-measures attached to a profit motive. As the discrepancy is exposed, alternatives become much more palatable for swing voters. These flexible or non-partisan voters can have a huge impact on election results and will be the focus of intense wooing in the next two months.

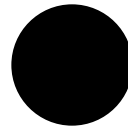
The Conservatives and the new People's Party of Canada will argue they are the real conservatives. The NDP will ask voters to choose the real progressives. Meanwhile, the Green Party's surging support in pre-election polls demonstrates that Canadians, like citizens in many European countries, are turning against "politics as usual."

Like 2004, the anticipated election outcome has moved far away from certain Liberal victory. Like 2015, values and branding are taking centre stage. All party leaders are trying desperately to connect with voters. Canadians will soon have their chance to weigh in. **M**

RICHARD NIMJEAN TEACHES IN THE SCHOOL OF INDIGENOUS AND CANADIAN STUDIES AT CARLETON UNIVERSITY. HIS NEW BOOK WITH DAVID CARMENT (EDITORS), CANADA, NATION BRANDING AND DOMESTIC POLITICS, IS OUT NOW FROM ROUTLEDGE.

SARAH KENNEL

A GLOBAL LEADER ON ABORTION RIGHTS TOLERATES BARRIERS AT HOME



NEARLY 25 years ago, Canada participated in the 4th World Conference on Women, which resulted in global adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The conference set a new course for feminist activism by recognizing women's rights as human rights. Bodily autonomy—the ability to decide freely over our bodies—was declared critical to realizing those rights.

Since then, and particularly in the past couple of years, Canada has been a leader on the world stage in defending sexual and reproductive rights, including the right to safe abortion care. The federal government has held the line in tense intergovernmental negotiations and committed to becoming the largest donor to comprehensively address sexual and reproductive rights in its development assistance.

This has all been in the face of extreme backlash against sexual and reproductive rights, including in the U.S. where a 2017 Trump administration order reinstated and expanded the "Global Gag Rule—a prohibition on foreign NGOs who receive U.S. assistance related to global health from using non-U.S. funding to provide abortion services, information, counseling or referrals, and from engaging in advocacy for access to safe abortion services. At the U.S. state level, governments are also enacting extreme legislation to roll back abortion care.

Despite the strong positions taken by Canada on the global stage in the face of U.S. backlash, access to abortion in Canada remains a significant challenge for many. Most abortion providers are located within 150 km of the U.S. border and only one in six hospitals provide the service. That leaves many people travelling large distances to access abortion, sometimes across provincial lines, at their own expense. Because no hospital or clinic in Canada provides abortion after 23 weeks, those in need must find it in the U.S. where abortion care is increasingly threatened.

Access is further hindered by medically unnecessary rules and regulations at provincial and territorial levels or within regional health systems and hospital settings. Regulation 84-20 in New Brunswick, for example, denies coverage of the cost of surgical abortion services outside of hospitals, leaving those seeking abortion services at the only freestanding clinic to pay hundreds of dollars out of pocket.

In Alberta, the provincial Telehealth phone line is currently referring individuals who are seeking support

to crisis pregnancy centres, anti-choice agencies that claim to offer unbiased medical counselling. Throughout Canada, there are also countless reports of harassment, threats, violence and intimidation from anti-choice protesters outside of sexual health clinics and hospitals.

Interference and intimidation from anti-choice organizations and activists often misleads, obfuscates, and delays individuals from seeking abortion care. These groups are incredibly well-resourced and well-mobilized, with allies in political spheres that are committed to not only blocking increased access to abortion care in Canada, but also restricting access through legislation, paid advertisements and media, and grassroots mobilization. The Canadian “premiere” of the anti-choice “made-for-TV” propaganda film, *Unplanned*, was screened on Parliament Hill and some provincial political parties and candidates are campaigning on commitments to restrict abortion, sex-ed, and gay-straight alliances in schools.

The politicization of abortion is unlike any other health care service in Canada. Decision-makers at all levels of government use abortion as a wedge issue to gain political points rather than recognize abortion as another health service they are responsible to provide and support. This politicization stands in the way of access by perpetuating myths and stigma and leaving the service frustratingly outside of primary health care, inaccessible to far too many people in Canada.

As countries, including Canada, reflect on their implementation of the 25-year-old Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the federal government and provinces need to address the lingering barriers to what is considered a medically necessary procedure under the Canada Health Act. The solutions aren't out of reach. It is a matter of political will.

Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights (formerly Planned Parenthood Canada) and our allies across the

DECISION-MAKERS AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT USE ABORTION AS A WEDGE ISSUE TO GAIN POLITICAL POINTS RATHER THAN RECOGNIZE ABORTION AS ANOTHER HEALTH SERVICE THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE TO PROVIDE AND SUPPORT.

country are looking to the federal government to play a leadership role in levelling the playing field. Especially in Canada, a country that prides itself on its national health care, access to abortion shouldn't depend on your postal code or how much you have in your bank account.

Our vision is for everyone to receive the care they need, where they live. The federal government can do so by:

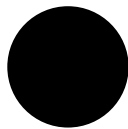
- withholding cash transfers to provinces and territories that fail to meet obligations under the Canada Health Act;
- dispelling the misinformation that anti-choice groups, including crisis pregnancy centres, disseminate—by mandating that Health Canada publish accurate, evidence-based information about abortion care and where to access it;
- providing free access to comprehensive contraceptive care in advance of the rollout of a national pharmacare strategy; and
- investing in the training of professional sexual health educators to better deliver comprehensive sexuality education in schools.

As Canadians head to the polls in October, and Canada prepares to present what steps it has taken toward realizing commitments agreed to during the 1995 Beijing conference, this is what needs to be on the table. **M**

SARAH KENNEL IS DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AT ACTION CANADA FOR SEXUAL HEALTH AND RIGHTS.

SHEILA BLOCK

DON'T FRET OVER DEFICITS AND DEBT



In the 2015 federal election, Canada's political parties saw advocating for deficit spending as a risky political move. The Conservative Party ran on balanced budgets

and reducing the role of the state. The NDP promised four years of balanced budgets. Of the major parties, only the Liberal Party advocated for deficit spending. Even then, the deficits they proposed were small—less than \$10 billion a year for the first three years, and a balanced budget by the fourth.

It was hardly a departure from political orthodoxy. And while fiscal timidity on the campaign trail may have been effective, in government it has hampered federal investment in physical and social infrastructure. Federal program spending as a share of GDP remains at historic lows.

In 2019, the combined impact of a climate crisis, a crisis in affordable housing in major centres, and an increase

in precarious work means that governments need to make historic investments now: in green infrastructure, in expanding the social safety net, and in increasing the supply of affordable housing. A debate about who can spend less in government is the last thing we need.

Government debt rose sharply globally after the 2008 financial crash as employment fell and stimulus spending became all the rage, even for conservative governments. But that same deficit spending, which staved off a more serious economic collapse, soon became, to many of those same governments, an opportunity to leverage public support for a sharp policy turn toward austerity.

As a result, many governments magnified the human costs of the Great Recession and extended, by several years, the suffering it had caused. Research shows that austerity programs in both Greece and the U.K., which cut benefits for pensioners and incomes and services for marginalized populations, resulted in premature deaths. In the debate and subsequent acknowledgement of the

failure of these austerity policies, these human costs received far too little attention.

Much of the public support for austerity policies depends on framing public debt as equivalent to household debt. Yet this is a gross mischaracterization. Families manage debt over a lifecycle. It is prudent early in that cycle for families or individuals to take on debt, perhaps to pay for education or purchase a home. Later on, ideally, individuals or families will move from borrowing to saving for retirement.

Governments do not face the same lifecycle constraints. They have a responsibility to continue borrowing and investing for future generations. Each generation of taxpayers takes on some of the costs for providing services to previous generations as well as their own and future generations. When it comes to debt, we are all always paying it off—and paying it forward.

Furthermore, higher levels of borrowing that might be risky for individuals or families are prudent for governments, since risk is spread across the whole population. Financial markets find governments to be extremely reliable borrowers for this reason and due to their ability to tax. That is why governments can borrow at much lower interest rates than households.

The experience of the last eight years shows there is a continued appetite in bond markets for government debt. Interest rates remain at historic lows. And despite the predictions from the mainstream economic policy community, the Greek crisis did not spread like wildfire to other national economies.

The experience since 2010 has also shown that government retrenchment has not led to increased economic activity but higher unemployment and slower economic growth. U.S. economist Paul Krugman's research has shown that austerity programs and slower growth go together, and the worse the austerity, the worse the economic performance will be.

International Monetary Fund research published in 2016 rejected the notion that austerity could be good for growth by boosting the confidence of the private sector to invest. It concluded instead that such austerity programs increased inequality, which "in turn hurts the level and sustainability of growth."

These debates, and the intellectual energy that they take from progressives, move us further away from more fundamental questions we should be addressing. In an era of climate crisis, for example, why are we debating economic growth divorced from whether the form and type of growth brings us closer to, or further away from, climate sustainability?

There are currently no credible reasons to doubt the solvency of the federal government, or any of the provinces for that matter. Federally in particular we have the fiscal room to be spending much more ambitiously on housing, education, long-term care, pharmacare and other social programs, and to protect the natural environment. In fact, it would be bad for the economy not to. **M**

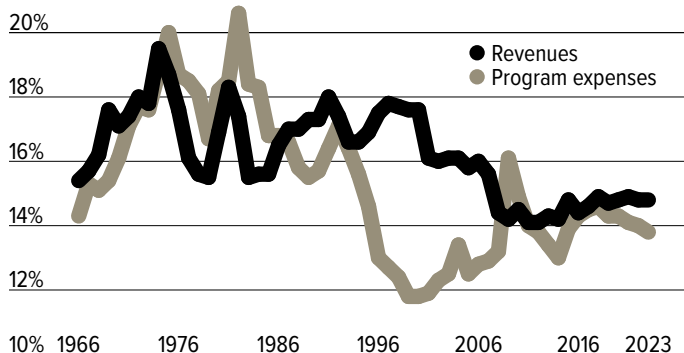
SHEILA BLOCK IS A SENIOR ECONOMIST IN THE CCPA'S ONTARIO OFFICE.

CANADA'S REVENUE PROBLEM

The direction and scale of recent federal program spending hasn't turned the tide on decades of neoliberal economic policy and the damaging rise of inequality that has followed in its wake. In 2017-18, federal program spending was 14.5% of GDP—an increase of 1.6 percentage points from 2015, but still shy of postwar levels—and slated to fall to 13.8% by 2023-24. On the other side of the ledger, federal revenues are also near all-time lows relative to GDP. Revenues as a share of GDP, at 14.5%, are two percentage points lower than the 50-year average of 16.4%, representing an annual loss of more than \$40 billion. Canada, in other words, doesn't have a spending problem, it has a revenue problem.

—Katherine Scott, senior economist, CCPA

Federal government revenues and program expenses as % of GDP, 1966–2024



ASHLEY COURCHENE

MOVING BEYOND “TO VOTE OR NOT TO VOTE”

Should we, as citizens of Indigenous nations, be voting in settler elections? It is the question many Indigenous people contend with whenever a federal election draws near. The debate can be tense given Canada's colonial history, and because many Indigenous people do not identify as “Canadian.”

On one hand, Canadian politics is a foreign, colonial system built to exclude Indigenous peoples. Historically this is the case, as Indigenous peoples were not able to vote until the 1960s unless they gave up their status as Indians. Therefore, we as Indigenous peoples should be rebuilding our political and legal systems fractured by settler-colonialism.

On the other hand, voting in settler elections is a form of interference. Indigenous sovereignty is not violated by participation. Rather, voting is a strategy used to create favourable outcomes that may further the interests of Indigenous peoples.

Except the choice to vote or not is rarely ever clear cut. Framing the discussion as an either-or issue glosses over considerations regarding the political acts of Indigenous resurgence. For Indigenous peoples, voting is just one of many tools to be used, not the end objective of a political act, as it is otherwise conceptualized within a liberal democratic state.

SO WHY VOTE AT ALL?

Approximately 56% of Indigenous people live in urban areas, according to the 2016 census, an increase from just over 50% in 2006. As more Indigenous people become urbanized they are directly affected by the decisions of Parliament. Clayton Thomas-Muller, senior campaign specialist at 350.org, notes the shift in power for urbanized Indigenous folk.

“We have more graduates coming out of high school and postsecondary than ever,” he tells me. “These young people are homeowners and professionals. They are buying property, paying taxes... and they deserve representation in the settler-colonial state government.” For Thomas-Muller, who believes Indigenous youth should be voting, the transfer of economic power results in the need to participate in settler elections.

Indigenous peoples are indeed participating. In the 2015 federal election we voted in record numbers. According to Statistics Canada, the on-reserve turnout increased 14 percentage points between 2011 and 2015. The overall voter turnout for self-identified Indigenous people was over 490,000. A recent study published in the *Canadian Journal of Political Science* suggests that the rise of the Indigenous vote is also attributable to an increase in the number of Indigenous candidates. Political parties

that present Indigenous candidates receive more votes, especially in ridings with a high proportion of Indigenous voters, according to this research.

In short, representation matters. However, as writer and artist Aylan Couchie from Nipissing First Nation points out, representation only matters if the candidates are accountable to their community. “I have a really hard time when people who are in politics turn around and say things that are opposite of what the general Indigenous community is saying,” she says. Our conversation turns to Winnipeg-Centre MP Robert-Falcon Ouellette and Manitoba MLA and NDP leader Wab Kinew as examples.

Ouellette was criticized by Indigenous communities in 2017 for sympathizing with the family of Gerald Stanley, a Saskatchewan farmer found not guilty in the murder of Red Pheasant First Nation citizen Colten Boushie. Meanwhile, Kinew's statement concerning his sons being labelled victims of genocide instead of focusing on the recent conclusions of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2-Spirit People draws ire from Couchie. “It's the most you can turn your back on your community,” she asserts.

Still, these issues do not deter Indigenous people from voting. In fact, participating in settler elections is a form of “harm-reduction,” according to the artist. All political parties cause harm to Indigenous people, but for Couchie the rise of white supremacy on the political right is reason enough to try and mitigate the threat through voter participation. Others who may never have voted before, but who are alarmed at the global issues directly affecting them, are likewise reconsidering their positions.

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RJ Mitchell, a Carleton University student from Akwesasne First Nation who has never voted, says he realizes the urgent need of global leaders to address the climate crisis. “Stay in your own canoe, that’s what I used to believe,” Mitchell tells me, referencing the two-row wampum—a 17th century treaty between the Haudenosaunee and Dutch wherein neither side would ever interfere in the affairs of the other. Yet through his studies in geomatics, Mitchell says he now understands how dangerously close the climate crisis is to our doorstep, and how badly we need to see rapid systemic change.

“Realistically, what it comes down to is changing the leadership and changing the system. Those are the two biggest things that can be done.” In order for both to take place, Mitchell says the electoral system needs to move beyond the two-party regime that has been characteristic of Canadian politics.

Although third-parties like the NDP, Greens, Bloc Québécois and the short-lived Reform Party have been influential in Canadian politics, only Liberal or Conservative parties have ever held power on the federal level. For Mitchell, alternative choices in the electoral system might increase voter turnout overall. If not, “our only option might have to be revolution, since it has been the only thing that has created change.”

Yet there are still people who choose not to vote at all.

Brad Evoy, a community organizer from Qalipu First Nation, says that voting only reinforces the settler-state.

Rather than voting, Evoy dedicates his time to other political actions like land defence. “Being able to focus on those aspects feels like a fuller way of reaching our goal of [resurgence] than sinking a bunch of time in an electoral process that, ultimately, is not accountable to our traditions or peoples,” he says.

Dara Wawatè-Chabot, a 22-year old Anishinaabe-kwe living in Gatineau, Quebec, proposes that the limitations of the democratic system outweigh the progressive changes that do happen. “The essence of the Canadian political economy is based on the resource extraction and the disempowerment of Indigenous peoples,” states Wawatè-Chabot. “There is only so much change we can do within the system itself.”

It should come as no surprise, then, that there are a multitude of reasons why Indigenous people choose to vote or not. Regardless of their position, there are common themes occurring in this debate.

SELF-DETERMINATION AND THE FEAR OF ASSIMILATION

The right to self-determination was popularized after the First World War, in negotiations toward the Treaty of Versailles, based on then-U.S. president Woodrow Wilson’s declaration that it was an “imperative principle of action” that “peoples may now be dominated and governed only by their own consent.” But this left open the question of who would be afforded the right to self-govern, and to what extent?

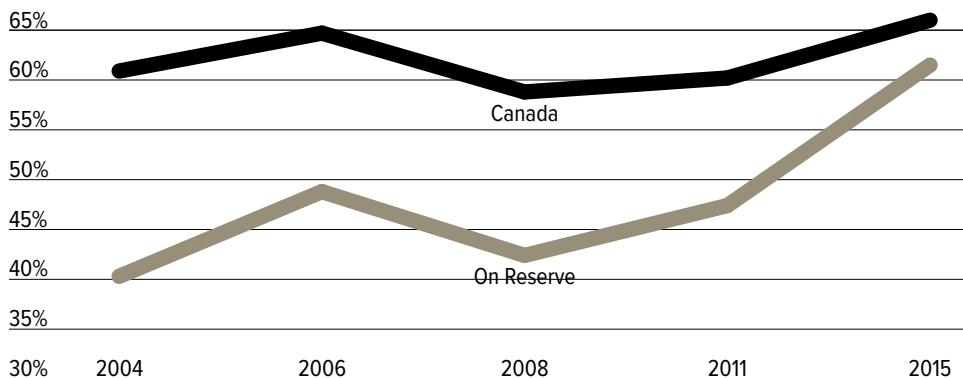
While the right to self-determination is recognized internationally

via the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), in substance it is very limited, since Indigenous peoples can only govern in local, internal matters. Further, the “blue water thesis,” which asserts that decolonization is only applicable in colonies separated from their colonizers by a distinct geographical boundary such as an ocean, has not fully been challenged within the UN. This makes decolonial efforts harder for Indigenous peoples affected by settler-colonialism, since the state already surrounds them.

Canada is a settler-colonial state but recognizes Aboriginal and treaty rights in Section 35 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Those rights have been ambiguous since the Constitution’s entrenchment in 1982. Parliamentarians have claimed Section 35 as a “treasure chest” full of rights, but Indigenous people see only an “empty box.” In 2016, MP Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou) introduced Bill C-262 that would have aligned Canadian laws including Section 35 rights with the principles of UNDRIP. However, resistance in the House of Commons, and filibustering tactics in the Senate from Conservative government-appointed members, eventually squashed the bill in 2019.

This is a main reason why Ryan McMahon, Anishinaabe comedian and writer, says he no longer votes. While going to the polls may be a good strategy for Indigenous people attempting to be rid of a party that actively harms them, the main objective for McMahon is to realize full Indigenous liberation. “We have to be really critical of what exists in front of us and be very purposeful in building alternatives,” he says, in reference to the foreign styles of governance imposed on Indigenous peoples through the Indian Act.

Fortunately, alternative forms of governance are taking place. “There are plenty of young people who are engaged in traditional forms of governance, whether it means helping out at ceremonies, or helping out on the traplines,” says McMahon. Sweeping change won’t come all at once, he adds, but will take place through “everyday acts of resurgence.” The phrase was first coined by Cherokee scholar Jeff



▲ TREND IN VOTER TURNOUT ON RESERVES, 2004–2015, EXCLUDES VOTES CAST BY SPECIAL BALLOT
SOURCE: ELECTIONS CANADA

Cornassel, who focuses on the often unseen, unacknowledged actions of Indigenous peoples to promote health and well-being on individual and communal levels.

Everyday acts of resurgence are very political in a society that attaches a price to every little thing. Living off the land and learning from it certainly challenges the very notions of capitalism. In Indigenous governance systems the natural world is not to be exploited for profit but is meant to coexist with humans. Ian Campeau, human being from Nipissing First Nation, explains this relationship through the principles of the honourable harvest.

“Don’t take the first plant you see, it might be the only one; don’t take the last plant you see, might be the last one; only take half of what is available, and take only what you need,” says Campeau. The honourable harvest ensures the sustainability of a plant, and that we stay in good relation to it.

Yet even when practising everyday acts of resurgence, the fear of assimilation permeates through the minds of Indigenous people. McMahon admits to often balancing what we have to gain with what we have to lose by giving in and saying, half-jokingly, “You’re right, Great White Daddy, we are Indigenous Canadians.” He wonders, “Would we go further, faster, if we assimilated in that way?” Almost every person I spoke to for this article relates to the same fear of assimilation in one way or another.

Of course, views on assimilation vary as much as the views on voting in settler elections. Wawatè-Chabot says she is not afraid of assimilation, because in choosing to become politically active one can reclaim their voice. In a settler-state, Wawatè-Chabot says, “you got to do what you got to do to survive in this world when it goes against every aspect of your being.”

Others, like Campeau, suggest we are already assimilated. “We don’t speak our languages fluently,” he notes. Still, he claims there are ways out. Language reclamation is one way since it re-establishes a certain way of thinking. According to Campeau, Anishinaabemowin is action-based and is grounded in the knowledge of the land. “It is what gives us our power



MP Romeo Saganash, seen here in the House of Commons on Sept. 25, 2018, introduced a bill in 2016 that would have aligned Canadian laws with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The bill was defeated in the Senate.

PHOTO BY SEAN KILPATRICK/CP

as political beings,” Campeau claims as he tells me the story of Bigonegiizhig, or Hole-In-The-Day.

In the 19th century, Bigonegiizhig, feeling the pressure from an influx of settlers, threatened to attack a nearby fort. The U.S. government responded by sending a large cavalry unit to the area where Bigonegiizhig was located. After hearing the news, Bigonegiizhig mobilized other Anishinaabe in the surrounding area to also gather at the fort where he instructed everyone to hide in the bush. When the cavalry arrived, all the Anishinaabeg rose up in unison as ordered by Bigonegiizhig. The act alone was enough to force the Americans into negotiations.

The lessons I take from Campeau’s story of Bigonegiizhig is of the non-violent political power we hold as Anishinaabeg. In order to harness that power, we need to separate ourselves from the Canadian state and return to our legal principles, Campeau says. “Learn everything you can. Learn your heritage. Learn your language.”

For me, no amount of voting in settler elections will teach me to reclaim what settler-colonialism has stolen.

WE ARE OUR OWN

On first glance, the voting debate reflects the issue that Audre Lorde brought to feminist theory almost 35 years ago. In asking whether the Master’s tools could dismantle the Master’s house, Lorde was challenging the white, heterosexual biases of feminist academics. In other words, the tools that reinforced and relied on a racist patriarchy could not be used to dismantle a racist patriarchal system. Lorde’s assertion has been used in many contexts where oppressive dynamics are at play.

Yet the issue goes deeper. Political action that seeks out Indigenous self-determination does not end at the voting booth. Acts to reinstate Indigenous ways of knowing, being and governing are continuous processes. The debate that frames the question of whether citizens of Indigenous nations should vote as two mutually exclusive categories erases the political actions that Indigenous peoples are undergoing to reassert their nationhood.

That is not to say we don’t see value in influencing settler elections. In fact, the vast majority of Indigenous folk see it that way; voting is an important aspect in not only reasserting our national aspirations but also stemming the tide of forces that would harm those objectives.

That is also not to say we value settler elections either. Generally, we don’t. Campeau equates voting to watching hockey. “I love Canadian politics,” he exclaims. “If people want to go and vote, I’m all for that, but I know it’s not going to change anything.”

The conversation as to whether Indigenous people should vote needs to be reframed, otherwise those invested in dismantling colonial structures will only assist in reinforcing them. Despite our differences in opinions, we agree on one thing: We, as Indigenous peoples, are our own peoples, and whether or not we decide to vote in settler elections, we will remain our own peoples. **M**

FOLLOWING UP ON THE TELEPHONE TOWN HALL

CCPA RESEARCHER ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CLIMATE CRISIS



THE CCPA'S ANNUAL Telephone Town Hall gives the centre's research team a unique opportunity to hear from CCPA supporters across the country. The 2019 town hall, which took place in April, was a great success, but there were a lot of important questions that our panel didn't get the chance to answer. Since many of those questions were focused on climate change and climate policy, the *Monitor* asked climate policy researcher **Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood** to answer some of them here.

Is it possible for consumers to drive the transition to green energy for transportation? Can rebates play a role?

*Barbara Balshaw,
Winnipeg, Manitoba*

Consumers play an important role in the energy market and have some power to drive changes. If households switch to zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs), replace natural gas heating with electricity, and improve their energy efficiency, to name just a few examples, that will reduce overall demand for fossil fuels and increase demand for cleaner electricity.

The problem is that consumers can only choose from the limited options presented to them. Electric vehicles are still generally more expensive than their gas-powered equivalents and Canada lacks adequate vehicle charging infrastructure, so for many consumers it simply makes sense to opt for the traditional vehicle. Government rebates for new ZEV purchases can help, but they're an expensive policy that disproportionately benefits high-income families that can usually afford

ZEVs without the incentive. Waiting for consumers alone to transform the personal transportation system will take too long given the urgency of the climate crisis.

When we consider broader issues of greener transportation, such as the need for more and better public transit and more walkable cities, it becomes even clearer that consumers cannot be the key driver of change. Once again, the public sector needs to take the lead on projects that may have high upfront costs but significant long-term environmental and social benefits.

Have you done any research on greenhouse gas emissions from the production of Canada's petroleum resources?

David Laughton, Edmonton, Alberta

Yes! Check out the 2017 report *Extracted Carbon* by my CCPA-BC colleague Marc Lee. He finds that Canada exports as many greenhouse gas emissions (in the form of exported oil, gas and coal) as we produce domestically. Because of the way greenhouse gas emissions are tracked internationally, Canada is not held responsible for all of the emissions that should be associated with our fossil fuel industry.

What are the economic implications of climate change?

Dalton McCarthy, Toronto, Ontario

In Canada, while the loss of homes and businesses to floods and wildfires represent the most obvious cost of climate change, the indirect costs are also significant. For example, warmer and less predictable weather, such as more frequent droughts, is already

disrupting agriculture and resource industries like forestry. The costs associated with the rising health impacts of more polluted air are also dramatic. A 2011 study from the federal government concluded that the total economic costs to Canada of climate change would range from \$21–\$43 billion by 2050. Based on the latest climate science (and the lack of policy action since 2011), I expect the costs will be even higher without preventative measures.

Why don't the wealthy pool their resources and bring in new industries to deal with climate change?

*Doug Gibson,
Kelowna, British Columbia*

By and large, wealthy individuals and corporations today are the beneficiaries of an economic system predicated on the individualistic exploitation of fossil fuels. They are heavily invested, financially and ideologically, in the status quo, which means they have more to gain by ignoring the unfolding climate breakdown (or even trying to profit off it) than they do by contributing to a solution that involves decarbonization and broader systemic change.

The solution is greater collectivism. If the private sector is unwilling or unable to pool its resources to scale up alternative industries like renewable energy, then the public sector needs to take the lead. Closing tax loopholes, cracking down on tax havens and introducing policies like a wealth tax can free up private capital to be mobilized in the public interest. **M**

THE CCPA LOOKS FORWARD TO NEXT YEAR'S TELEPHONE TOWN HALL. BUT WE ARE HAPPY TO RECEIVE COMMENTS ON OUR WORK, AND ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS, AT ANY TIME. PLEASE WRITE US AT CCPA@POLICYALTERNATIVES.CA.



The good news page

Compiled by Elaine Hughes

Russell Mirasty, a former RCMP division commander, has been named Saskatchewan's Lieutenant-Governor, becoming the first Indigenous person to occupy the position in the province. Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations Chief Bobby Cameron called it "a proud day for First Nations people in Saskatchewan," while AFN Chief Perry Bellegarde said the appointment presented an opportunity to repair relations "harmed through systems, through ignorance and through hate." / In early August, for the first time in its 73-year history, Saskatchewan's air ambulance service responded to an emergency call with an all-woman flight crew. / There are now 100 new sign language terms for scientific words thanks to Liam Mcmulkin, a life sciences student at the University of Dundee (Scotland) who is Deaf. "I feel really happy because I know from my own experience how difficult it is to learn during my lectures," he told BBC Scotland. "Now the new signs have spread, I feel it will be much better for future students." / CBC News / Thomson Reuters Foundation News / BBC News

A new report from the Pembina Institute, an Edmonton-based think-tank focused on energy and climate policy, gives Yukon high marks for the territorial government's progress in transitioning from diesel to cleaner fuels. A government spokesperson said most of the credit should go to Indigenous communities, "who worked to develop their own clean energy projects." / During the first half of this year, Texas generated a greater share of its energy from wind (22%) than coal (21%) and now ranks 1st in U.S. installed wind capacity. In the same period, coal-fired electricity generation dropped by nearly 20% across Europe, according to a report from the nonprofit Sandbag, which said Ireland's coal generation dropped by 79%, the U.K.'s by 65% and Spain's by 44%. / Yukon News / Good News Network / Earth.com

InterContinental Hotels Group, one of the world's largest hotel chains (including the Holiday Inn and Crowne Plaza brands), said it will replace some 200 million plastic bottles (for shampoo, soap, etc.) with bulk-sized containers in its 843,000 rooms. Last year, the company agreed to remove single-use plastic straws from all its hotels. / Sainsbury's, the third-largest supermarket chain in the U.K., will begin phasing out the more than 10,000 tonnes of plastic bags, trays and cutlery it discards annually from its stores, replacing it with reusables and paper bags (for the bakery). / And Panama has become the first Central American

nation to ban plastic bags, while the small pacific nation of Vanuatu will ban disposable diapers. / Dutch airline KLM has asked passengers to fly less, use trains for shorter distances, and consider video calls rather than face-to-face meetings. / Guardian (U.K.) / NPR / Reuters

According to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, Ethiopians planted 353 million trees on July 30. The "Green Legacy" tree-planting campaign is designed to fight land degradation, soil erosion, drought and flooding as a result of largescale agriculture and climate change. / Austria has become the first European country to ban all uses of the chemical glyphosate, a key ingredient in Monsanto's Roundup and other pesticides blamed for declining pollinator health. / CNN / Reuters /

The University of Utah announced that its LUKE Arm (pictured), named after the robotic hand Luke Skywalker received in *The Empire Strikes Back*, can mimic the way a human hand feels objects by sending appropriate signals to the brain. Testing the prosthetic hand, Keven Walgamott was able to pluck grapes without crushing them, pick up an egg without cracking it, and feel the sensation of holding his wife's hand. / After moving back to Charlottetown last summer, Canadian prosthetic technician Alyson Clow, who has built hundreds of legs for amputees, finally got a chance to make her mum a "perfect" leg. / CNN / CBC News



PHOTO FROM DARPA

ASAD ISMI

Fear and loathing under Modi's second term

Experts debate whether India is being Pakistanized, while protest against the BJP's corporate and religious pandering spreads

THE PAKISTANI FEMINIST poet Fahmida Riaz, who moved to India from Pakistan in the 1980s to escape that country's Islamic fundamentalist military dictatorship, only to encounter growing Hindu fundamentalism in her new home, captured the experience in a poem (translated and abridged) that has become more prescient over time:

*You turned out to be just like us,
Equally stupid, wallowing in the past...
Your demon of religion dances like a clown,
Whatever you do will be upside down
You too will sit deep in thought
Who is Hindu, who is not...*

Pakistan was carved out of India in 1947 as a state for Muslims while India remained secular. But since 2014, under the rule of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Hindu supremacist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the country has become increasingly dominated by religious fundamentalism that is tolerated and openly encouraged by the government. Mob lynching of Muslims and other minorities (80% of Indians are Hindu and 14% are Muslim) is common.

An election in the spring, which many expected to chip away at Modi's support, in the end produced an even stronger second majority for the BJP, giving the extreme nationalist party 302 out of 542 seats in parliament compared to 282 seats in the 2014 election. The main opposition Congress Party got only 53 seats.

Modi won at the polls in May despite a weakening economy marked by plummeting investment, record unemployment, a crisis in agriculture

and a looming environmental disaster, which will see 21 Indian cities run out of water in 2020, affecting 600 million people. Modi's two main fiscal initiatives in his first term—demonetization and the introduction of a goods and services tax (GST)—were also badly received. Taking 86% of banknotes out of circulation caused massive losses to poor people, damaged economic growth and failed to remove illicit money from the economy as planned. The complexity of the GST led many small businesses to lay off staff.

But such problems were likely far from the minds of hundreds of millions of Modi's supporters, who are attracted "not through concrete economic policies but through the politics of emotion—negative emotion such as fear, anger, hatred for the neighbour, for minorities and women," according to Nikita Sud, associate professor of development studies at Oxford University and author of the 2012 book

Liberalisation, Hindu Nationalism and the State (Oxford University Press). "During the campaign, the economy was barely mentioned, nor was the agricultural crisis. Modi's campaign focused mainly on the threat of terrorism and national security and promoted the fear that if you do not elect us, terrorism will increase."

Modi's election campaign was helped greatly by the February 14 suicide attack in Kashmir. The Pakistan-based Islamist militant group Jaish-e-Mohammed Isa claimed responsibility for the incident, which killed 40 soldiers and shocked India. The BJP had lost elections in three key states in November 2018 and was leaking support to the Congress Party. The killing of Indian soldiers and India's retaliatory airstrikes into Pakistan reversed this political situation and ensured the BJP a majority.

As I've written in the *Monitor* before ("Modi and the criminalization of Indian politics," September/October 2014), Modi's hostility toward India's Muslim population is well-known. In a sworn statement to India's Supreme Court in 2011, a former senior police chief alleged Modi had "allowed" a bloody religious riot in Gujarat in 2002 when he was chief minister of the state, to let Hindus "vent their anger," an accusation Modi denies. At least 1,000 people were killed in the mob violence, most of them Muslims.

Sud tells me that Modi and the BJP's subversion of the media would have played a role in their second election victory. "[P]articular corporate houses close to the Modi government control large parts of the media, which ensures that economic matters that the

"India is still a democracy, but a democracy can also see violations, massive violations, which is what we are witnessing."

government has failed at, such as demonetization, are not brought up," she says.

"There is a similarity in the politics of India and Pakistan now," she continues, echoing the poet Riaz. "[T]his othering of minorities, blasphemy accusations, sedition charges, and patriotism constantly being stressed. These are the similarities, but the big difference is that the Indian army does not have the kind of power that the Pakistan army does to totally dominate the country." Sud says it's ironic how Modi is using hatred of Pakistan to make India more like Pakistan.

Mujibur Rehman, author of the 2018 book *Saffron Power: Reflections on Indian Politics* (Routledge) and an assistant professor of politics at Jamia Millia Islamia University in India's capital city of New Delhi, explains that "the majority of Indian media appears to be compromised and work as the Modi government's wing of information and broadcasting." If Indian voters gave Modi one more chance, he adds, it was "because they did not find his opponents credible."

Modi's main opponent was and is Rahul Gandhi, scion of the Gandhi family that has dominated Indian politics and the Congress Party since India's independence in 1947. Gandhi's electoral strategy was to attack Modi for being corrupt, but this had little effect coming from a party with its own history of graft in power. The election result has reduced Congress to its weakest point ever; the party is close to being wiped out in northern India.

"There are some similarities in the ways things are unfolding in India and Pakistan," says Rehman. "But I would not say India is becoming like Pakistan. Similarities are in the domain of minority rights, religious freedom; we do see lots of violations in India in recent years, which resembles Pakistan's state of affairs.

"But India still has its constitution and there are dissenting voices and political forces. Also, India is nowhere close to a situation where we could see [as in Pakistan] the overthrow of its democratically elected regime. I do not see any possibility of a military or dictator takeover of the Pakistan kind in India. India is still a democracy, but a democracy can also see violations, massive violations, which is what we are witnessing."

The dramatic rise in mob lynching of Muslims, Dalits (also known as "untouchables," the lowest caste in the Hindu caste system) and other non-Hindus are an example of the violations Rehman is talking about. Alarmed and in response to the violence, 49 Indian celebrities sent an open letter to Prime Minister Modi on July 23 condemning "a definite decline in the percentage of convictions" against hate crimes since his government first took office.

The letter points out that 254 religious identity-based hate crimes were reported between January 1, 2009 and October 29, 2018 "where at least 91 persons were killed and 579 were injured." Muslims were the victims in 62% of cases and Christians in 2%, according to the Citizen's Religious Hate-Crime Watch. "About 90 per cent of these attacks were reported after May 2014 when your government assumed power nationally," the celebrities write.

Kapil Komireddi, author of the 2019 book *Malevolent Republic: A Short History of the New India* (Hurst), has

written that Modi's second term "will take India to a dark place," and that his party "has unleashed forces that are irreversibly transforming the country," with Indian democracy "now the chief enabler of Hindu extremism." In the *Guardian* (U.K.), Komireddi claimed shortly before the May elections that the normally incorruptible India election commission "functioned during this vote as an arm of Modi's BJP, too timid even to issue perfunctory censures of the prime minister's egregious use of religious sloganeering." According to the writer, India's military has been politicized, "and the judiciary plunged into the most existential threat to its independence since 1975, when Indira Gandhi suspended the constitution and ruled as a dictator for 21 months."

Indian and foreign corporations have praised the BJP's economic and state reforms, which are redistributing wealth upwards. At a cost of 500 billion rupees (about \$9.5 billion), the Indian election this year was the most expensive in the country's—and world—history, topping the 2016 U.S. election by half a billion dollars. Much of this was financed by electoral bonds bought by corporations, with 84% of the money going to the BJP. "The entire election process has been corporatized and the corporate sector is very much funding political parties," says Sud, a sign of fascism "which is very worrying."

Indian activist Xavier Dias, who has worked in support of the rights of Adivasi [Indigenous] communities in Jharkhand state for 45 years, tells me that the "fascist new liberalization" of India is being resisted on a significant scale.

"Despite a very heavy powerful state, in every corner of India the resistance movements are growing. The working class through their unions are on strike all over the country, resisting privatization and regressive changes in labour laws. Farmers are resisting also and demanding more help from the government. Women in villages are up in arms and Adivasis now too are better organized," he says.

"But the damage to the country is so deep and widespread that even if the BJP is defeated, India will take at least 20 years to recover from the damage. The soul of India is drenched in blood." **M**

DECLAN INGHAM

How public procurement can spur economic development

Another tool in the inclusive growth toolkit

A **POLICY AGENDA** OF inclusive growth has emerged from the failure of contemporary policy-makers to reconcile economic growth and social inclusion. Yet, the implications for municipal and urban policy-makers remain unclear. City leaders must meet the rising expectations of urbanized Canadians while facing a dearth of policy instruments at their disposal. Traditional “tax and spend” redistribution in an era of increased capital mobility is difficult; the municipal reliance on blunt revenue tools such as property taxes, user fees and provincial transfers only make it more so.

Yet to be a policy-maker at any level and not confront the glaring problems of inequality, growing precarity, and financial and social distress is to be politically negligent. In order to tackle the big policy issues of the day, the urban policy-maker needs to take an innovative approach that does not require significant new resources or new legislative powers.

Community wealth-building policies through public procurement may offer one simple solution. The English city of Preston and the U.S. city of Cleveland have made strides to transform this simple process of logistics into a socially conscious local industrial policy that activates and redirects economic flows toward underinvested communities, multiplying in the process the impact of already existing expenditures.

Drivers and catalysts

Both Cleveland, planted firmly in the U.S. Midwest, and Preston, nestled away in the United Kingdom’s North West, are rust belt cities. Their acute socioeconomic challenges are felt within the confines of deindustrialization, government austerity, declining revenue, limited private investment,

and in the American case especially, pernicious racial inequality.

From 1950 to 2015, Cleveland shrunk by 58%. Today the city boasts some of the worst poverty in the country, with rates 20% higher than the national average of 14%. Similarly, Preston is in the bottom 20th percentile as the 45th most deprived local authority in the 2010 U.K. Indices of Deprivation. Some Preston neighbourhoods record a life expectancy of 66 while in others it is 82. One in three children in the city are poor.

The story of the “Cleveland Model” begins in 2005 when the Cleveland Foundation’s new CEO began to conceive of a “geography of collaboration” between the “almost one-square mile of world class educational, cultural, and health institutions” in University Circle and the poorer surrounding neighbourhoods. During the same time, a planned \$3 billion in capital projects acted as a catalyst to convene the leading institutions of University Circle and address Cleveland’s reputational decline.

The success of social procurement is a reminder to policy-makers that there is immense wealth in public institutions that can be re-invested for the social good.

Preston’s history with local wealth-building starts in 2011, when a decades-long plan for a £700m (\$1.15 billion) redevelopment project of the city centre fell through. The collapse of the megaproject left the city council without direction, and the austerity of the 2010–15 U.K. coalition government left them with little fiscal maneuverability (local authorities lost 27% of their spending power on average). This vacuum allowed Matthew Brown, a long-time outsider on city council, space to advocate for unorthodox policy deviations

Anchor institutions

Social procurement begins with the concept of anchor institutions. These are organizations of considerable scale (in terms of employment, spending or asset base) defined by their significant attachment to the communities they are rooted in. Anchor institutions are exempt from the basic assumptions of capital mobility and profit maximization. Instead they are fixed to specific locations and places as well as operating in a model not fixated on profit maximization.

In our Cleveland case, the Cleveland Foundation played the central role of co-ordinating the Greater University Circle Initiative (GUCI), which was anchored by the Cleveland Clinic, the University Hospital, the Case Western Reserve University, the City of Cleveland, the Democracy Collaborative, and other regional stakeholders. In Preston, city council with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies convened the anchor institutions. By August 2013, work had begun to re-create the Cleveland Model, anchored by Preston City Council, the regional county council, the Lancashire police force, Preston’s

largest social housing association, two colleges, and later the Lancashire Pension Fund.

New ideas in Cleveland

In Cleveland, work on a host of social procurement projects was formalized by an Economic Inclusion Management Committee to achieve four goals: Buy Local, Hire Local, Live Local, and Connect. Local expenditure was promoted through joint procurement by anchor institutions, and by working with partners to re-source formally outsourced goods and services.

One flagship program involved setting up a worker co-operative network, the Evergreen Cooperatives, to capture a portion of the expected \$3 billion in procurement spending. Cleveland firms were encouraged to adopt voluntary community benefit agreements with social objectives such as hiring local residents, and training programs were instituted to grow the skills base of local residents both for labour market entry and upskilling.

Initially, municipal policy-makers acted as early adopters, aiding the project by lending it legitimacy and credibility as a partner. But the City of Cleveland soon joined as an anchor, leveraging both its public funds (often to provide pilot funding) and its planning functions for zoning. The lesson from this experience is the need for buy-in at a senior level from a variety of core anchor institutions convened by a trusted and well-resourced organization. This commitment should spread out to the technical staff who begin to see social value not as a charitable effort but part of the core business function.

From ink to action in Preston

Preston councillor Matthew Brown set out explicitly to recreate a local version of the Cleveland Model. Preston city council became accredited as a Living Wage Employer, identified key anchor institutions and worked to embed, within local executives, ideas of localism, community and social procurement. In short order, a common statement was drafted that committed these institutions to harnessing their procurement to greater social value and, crucially, to share their data.

Using this data, the Centre for Local Economic Strategies analyzed each institution's top 300 suppliers to understand the socio-geographic structure of their spending. If expenditure "leaked" out of the community it was scrutinized to determine if local firms could meet that need. Results showed that the anchors procured £750 million worth of goods and services a year (\$1.23 billion), but only 5% of that spending took place in Preston and only 39% in the broader Lancashire area. In response, The Preston Procurement Practitioners Group was established to allow experts in each institution to co-ordinate social procurement and share good practices.

A local business database helped prepare pre-procurement engagement, and procurement requests were soon broken down into smaller, more manageable contracts. These shifts had local carpenters manufacturing school furniture, new construction sites requiring greater numbers of local workers and apprentices, a local construction

company building a new market hall, and the printing contracts of the police force and food contracts of the city council going to local firms. These small interventions increased local expenditure from 5% to 18.2% over five years, putting *£70 million (\$115 million) back into the Preston economy and £200 million (\$327 million) back into the region—a 40% increase.*

Preston is continuing other initiatives to spur this economic innovation. A Social Value Procurement Framework is being developed to assess procurement as an economic activity contributing to social objectives. Local firms are encouraged to adopt the idea of "business citizenship," which asks them to consider their contribution to the local economy as well as their social and environmental impacts. Lancashire's pension funds are also being used to finance local development projects. Anchor institutions are discussing an Anchor Jobs Strategy to cultivate a worker co-operative network. These efforts have contributed to Preston being named the best city to live and work in North West England.

Lessons and parting thoughts

For aspiring urban leaders and policy-makers, there are simple lessons for duplicating this strategy of local development through collaboration and social procurement.

A leading institution must co-ordinate a partnership between anchor institutions to address the social and spatial disadvantages faced in the communities they are connected to. Once commitment has been established, a research institution should map the newly opened supply chain data of the anchor institutions to identify procurement expenditure. This review should consider the leakage of inefficient, corporate, low-social-impact or non-local expenditure and assess whether local firms could capture this influenceable spending.

This data should be leveraged to encourage the anchor institutions to shift their expenditures toward local or social enterprises so that public wealth flows back through the community. The Institute for Local Self-Reliance highlights how local businesses recirculate a greater share of every dollar in the local economy. This shift should be attached to improving key social indicators and be continually monitored both to assess progress but also to continue building on behavioural change by the institutions, local firms, and the staff involved in procurement and human resources.

The problem of embedding increasingly stateless capital to a place with incumbent responsibilities and obligations is a massive policy undertaking. However, the success of social procurement is a reminder to policy-makers that there remains immense wealth in existing public institutions that can be re-invested for the social good. It may require re-examining existing economic arrangements, but if the inclusive growth policy agenda is going to truly reconcile economic policy with social gain, economic orthodoxy will need to be revisited. **M**

THE AUTHOR GIVES THANKS TO THE WORK DONE BY DEMOCRACY COLLABORATIVE'S WALTER WRIGHT, KATHRYN W. HEXTER AND NICK DOWNER FOR THEIR REPORT, CLEVELAND'S GREATER UNIVERSITY CIRCLE INITIATIVE, THE CENTRE FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC STRATEGIES' MATTHEW JOHN AND NEIL MCINROY FOR THEIR REPORT, COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING THROUGH ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS, AND THE NEXT SYSTEM PROJECT'S PIECE ON THE PRESTON MODEL BY CLIFFORD SINGER.

Meet John Miller

Every now and then, the *Monitor* gets to know know one of the CCPA's incredible supporters. In this issue, we speak to award-winning novelist and non-profit consultant John Miller, whose third book, *Wild and Beautiful is the Night*, was published by Cormorant Books last October.

Hi John, read any good books lately?

I recently read the remarkable novel *The Marrow Thieves*, by Cherie Dimaline. As a novelist myself, I read for pleasure, like everyone else, but also with an eye for how and why other novelists tell a story. This supposedly young adult novel is great storytelling, but it's also important in that it cautions us not to be self-congratulatory about this historical moment of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada. Its dystopian tale reminds us of other moments in history—the Holocaust comes to mind—in which apparent social progress was so easily undone and atrocities followed. These atrocities become possible when prejudices lie dormant and are encouraged to resurface, but also when we as a society fail to teach a sense of empathy and responsibility, to ally ourselves with people who don't look like us.

Tell us about someone who has been a big influence on you.

When my brothers and I were very young, my grandmother taught us that we were not here on this Earth to merely take, or even to only look after those closest to us, those in our family and inner circle. We were also on this earth, she taught us, to give back to society and to our community. This was a formative lesson that I wish everyone was

given. It fundamentally rejects the individualism, the insularity, the nationalism or populism that fuels conservative policy. Her lesson is one that is at the heart of the CCPA's work to create a fairer and more community-minded Canada.

Why did you decide to become a supporter of the CCPA?

I decided to support the CCPA because we need people with expertise—economists, political and social scientists—to produce digestible evidence-based reports to counter the claptrap produced by well-funded conservative institutes and foundations. The right is always claiming that the policies of conservative governments lead to sounder fiscal management—part of a propaganda war that they are unfortunately still winning, but which is in fact an utter lie. The research they hold up is self-interested and often seriously flawed. I'm always impressed by the calm and factual way that CCPA researchers are able to refute these arguments.

I decided to become a monthly donor because this way of giving is painless and easy to budget for. Moreover, I know from my experience in running and advising non-profit organizations that monthly giving creates a more predictable revenue stream for the organization, allowing it to better plan its annual work.



Name one policy we should adopt today that would make people's lives better.

One policy in particular that I'm waiting for is an expansion of our socialized medical system to include currently unfunded or underfunded items that are costly or out of reach for lower and middle income people: medications, mental health supports, dental care, home care, and the services of allied health professionals such as physiotherapists. Of course, the other policy initiatives that are crucial are a massive national investment and emphasis on affordable housing and on child care.





Who's who in big oil?

A new Corporate Mapping Project database makes the connections between the fossil fuel industry's major producers, enablers and legitimators

OUR YEARS AGO, the Corporate Mapping Project (CMP) set out to investigate the power and influence of Canada's oil, gas and coal industries. This summer, the CMP, which is jointly led by the University of Victoria, the CCPA's B.C. and Saskatchewan offices and the Alberta-based Parkland Institute, launched a centrepiece of the project's efforts: a comprehensive database of who's who in the fossil fuel sector and beyond.

In addition to the larger CMP database, which maps more than 230 Canada-based fossil fuel corporations (*emitters*), the new *Fossil-Power Top 50* listing also includes the industry's lesser-known *enablers* and *legitimators*. Enablers are organizations that directly support fossil fuel production, while legitimators are influential organizations that facilitate or promote continued expansion and dependence on fossil fuel extraction.

The database project maps out how each of these entities—emitters, enablers and legitimators—are connected to the larger corporate sector in Canada and globally, as well as their business strategies within the fossil fuel sector. The CMP made the database public (www.corporatemapping.ca/database) so that anyone who wants to investigate and monitor

corporate power can do so. The site allows users to explore each entity's connections and create network maps showing different kinds of relationships—such as how companies are linked through common board members and ownership relations.

For example, the entry for the Royal Bank of Canada (abridged here on page 52) shows how closely connected Canada's big banks are to the fossil fuel sector in their role as *enablers*. Two further abridged entries—from the emitter (Teck Resources) and legitimator (Canada West Foundation) categories—show how the CMP database can help us see the network of fossil fuel industry influence, track the close connections between this industry and other economic sectors, and uncover the links between government, powerful corporations and the advocacy groups that support them.

While reading through these sample entries, please note that the data in the *Fossil-Power Top 50* and the full database are current for 2017 and are now being updated. Sources for all data are included for each entry in the database. This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).



Teck Resources

KEY STATS



Head office

Vancouver, B.C.



Countries of operation

Canada, Chile, Peru, U.S.



Revenue

\$12 billion



Assets

C\$37 billion



Reserves

922 million tonnes
steelmaking coal;
3.8 billion barrels
of oil sands reserves



Production

26.6 million tonnes
steelmaking coal;
287 tonnes copper;
61,969 tonnes zinc



Employees

10,109



Memberships

Canada's Oil Sands Innovation Alliance, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition, Council for Clean Capitalism, International Council on Mining and Metals, Mining Association of BC, Mining Association of Canada, Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada

About

Teck Resources is Canada's largest diversified mining company and the world's second-biggest exporter of steelmaking coal (metallurgical coal). The company also holds large extraction operations for zinc, copper and oil.

Teck positions itself as a "green" mining company that is leading the pack on climate responsibility. Unfortunately, its actions don't match its stated intentions: its coal-heavy portfolio is now diversifying into oil production. Teck has a large stake in the Fort Hills oil sands mine and is advancing its proposed Frontier oil sands mine, which if approved would become one of the largest open-pit oil sands mines ever developed in Alberta.

Strategy

In B.C., Teck actively participates in public policy development on climate change. In 2017, Marcia Smith, senior vice-president of sustainability and external affairs for Teck, was named co-chair of the B.C. government's Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council. Since its inception in 2008, Teck representatives have sat on the advisory board for the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions—a government-funded research institute that informs provincial climate policy. Teck has publicly acknowledged the threat of climate change, advocating for a state-imposed carbon tax to address the issue through market mechanisms.

Measuring its progress with the yardstick of emissions intensity rather than absolute emissions, Teck boasts substantial accomplishments in emissions reduction, claiming to be one of the "lowest GHG [greenhouse gas] emission intensity miners in the world." However, these reductions only account for the GHGs produced in Teck's operations and ignore the "downstream" impacts of the products the company produces; in the case of coal, emissions from use of the final product far outweigh operational outputs.

Controversies

Along with elevated selenium levels at its Elk Valley, B.C. coal mining operation, and

incidents of environmental infractions at international mines, Teck's Frontier oil sands project threatens to violate Indigenous rights for communities whose territories would be impacted, two of which—the Athabasca Chipewyan and the Mikisew Cree First Nations—have publicly opposed the project. Teck's lease covers tributaries of Lake Claire, which feeds the largest inland freshwater delta in the world, a part of Wood Buffalo National Park. In 2015, the Mikisew Cree First Nation appealed to have the park protected, citing its critical importance to the continuation of their traditional culture.

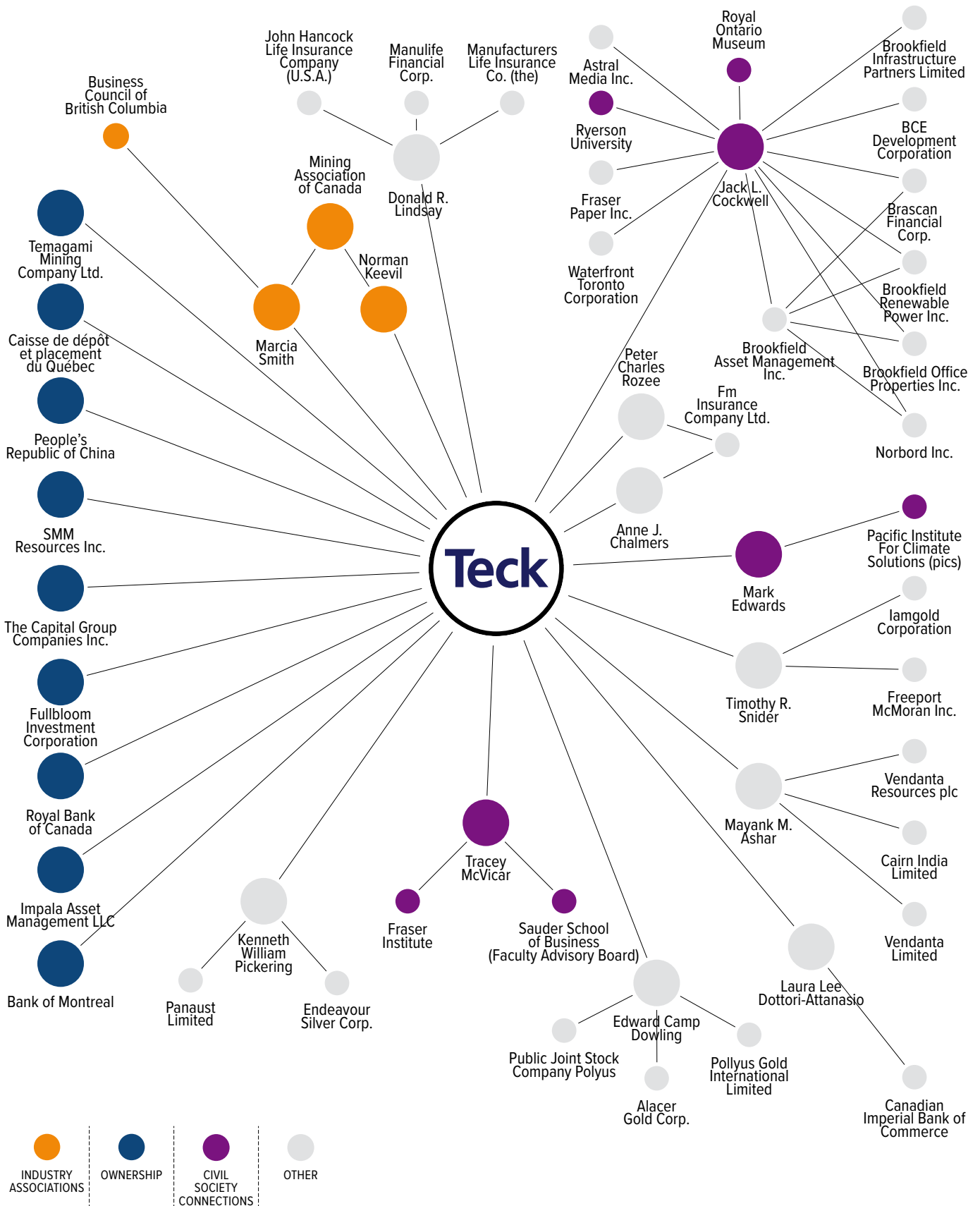
Oil from the Frontier site would be shipped through the Trans Mountain pipeline, which would cut through the traditional territories of many First Nations communities who oppose it. A number of those First Nations have launched court actions against the federal government for approving the project. Finally, Frontier could make Canada's GHG emissions targets impossible to reach. Current approvals already in place for oil sands operations would, if operational, increase Alberta's emissions to above 130 megatonnes a year—30,000 MT higher than the province's annual GHG cap.

Network Connections

Tracey McVicar, Teck's board tie to the Sauder School of Business at UBC, also links up with the Fraser Institute, a right-wing think-tank that advocates against substantive climate policies and has funding ties to some of the most influential climate-denying foundations, such as the Charles Koch Foundation. Jack L Cockwell, one of Teck's former directors, is a member of the Board of Governors at Ryerson University in Toronto, as well as the Royal Ontario Museum.

Ownership

Teck's largest shareholder, Temagami Mining Company Ltd., owns over 32% of the company. Other major shareholders include Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (11%) and the People's Republic of China (10%).





Royal Bank of Canada

KEY STATS



Head office

Toronto, Ontario



Revenue

\$40.7 billion



Employees

84,000+



Memberships

United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative, Conference Board of Canada, Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada, Smart Prosperity, Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition

About

RBC is the largest bank in Canada and one of the largest in the world, with total assets of over \$1.2 trillion. The bank offers a variety of services including personal and commercial banking, insurance and asset management. RBC is the world's largest financier of the oil sands, the second largest investor in "extreme" fossil fuels (over US\$26 billion since 2015) and the second largest direct owner of the fossil fuel industry in Canada. RBC provides one of the industry's main arteries of capital, supporting the ramp-up of oil and gas production despite the climate crisis.

Strategy

With the other big Canadian banks, RBC is a signatory to the Equator Principles, a framework for determining whether potential business activities such as financing impinge on the protection of natural habitats or Indigenous rights. Yet it gets a poor grade (C in 2018) from the Carbon Disclosure Project, a global disclosure program for corporations that tracks their environment impact. RBC has formally acknowledged the Paris Agreement goal to maintain global warming to two degrees Celsius, stating that the bank has "an important role to play in supporting an orderly and socially inclusive transition to a low carbon economy."

Yet RBC is one of the world's largest funders of "extreme oil"—a term referencing oil that is particularly energy intensive to extract, such as oil sands, Arctic or ultra-deepwater oil. The Fossil Fuel Finance Report Card, produced by Rainforest Action Network in collaboration with over 25 other organizations, found that RBC has the largest single stake in oil sands operations among the world's banks, with over US\$11 billion (\$14.65 billion) invested in 2017 alone. The bank also holds just over \$2 billion in both coal (mining and power generation) and LNG export financial assets.

During a speech to the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce in 2016, RBC CEO David McKay commented on the importance of getting fossil fuels to market through new bitumen pipelines, stating that when it comes to regulatory approvals for pipelines, "RBC has a big stake in Canada getting this right." McKay added that RBC should be viewed as "Canada's leading energy bank."

Controversies

RBC received widespread criticism for its investments in the Dakota Access pipeline running from the Alberta oil sands to the U.S., which violates the rights and title of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. In 2016, RBC was accused of conflict of interest when it upgraded its assessment of Enbridge, an investor in the Dakota Access pipeline, while the bank encouraged its investors to buy Enbridge stock. At the time, RBC held \$350 million worth of interests in Energy Transfer Partners, a company that pools funding for the Dakota Access project with Enbridge, Phillips 66 and Marathon Oil.

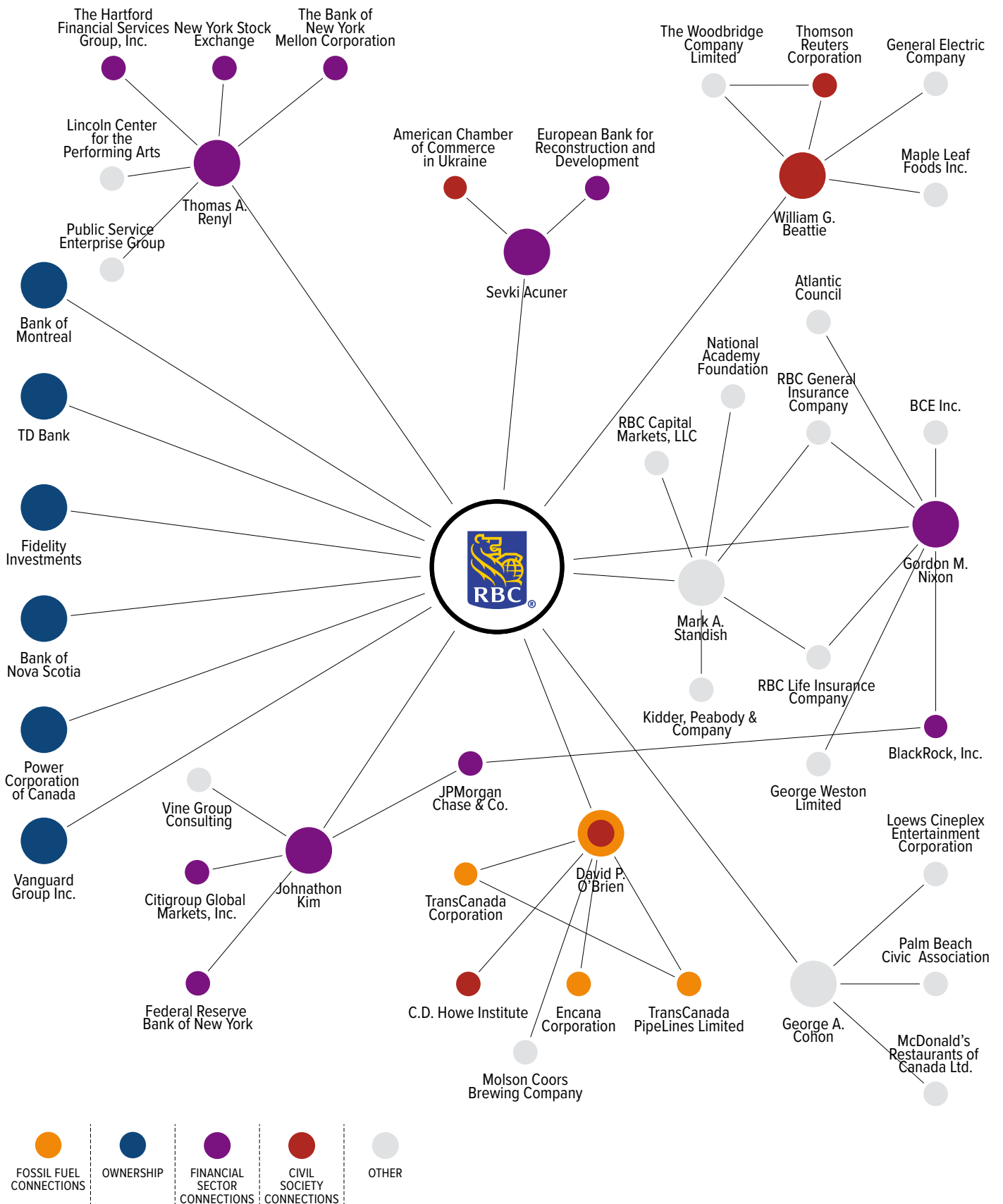
RBC was one of the largest funders of the Trans Mountain pipeline while it was still owned by Kinder Morgan Canada, having helped grant the company a \$5.5 billion line of credit. After the pipeline was sold to the Canadian government, RBC continued to be one of two major banks providing financial security to the project through Export Development Canada—the Crown corporation tasked with helping manage the project's financing agreements. The expanded pipeline, which promises to ship 590,000 barrels of crude oil from the Alberta oil sands each day, has sparked unprecedented opposition from Indigenous nations, municipal and provincial governments, and environmental groups.

Network Connections

David O'Brien, former chairman and director of the Royal Bank, is also the former chair of Encana Corporation. He also has a long history of directorship for TransCanada—the pipeline proponent for the controversial Coastal Gaslink pipeline that would feed fracked gas to the LNG Canada project in Kitimat, B.C. In addition to his fossil fuel connections, O'Brien is a senior fellow at the C.D. Howe Institute, one of Canada's largest and most influential think-tanks. William G. Beattie, former director at RBC, also held a position at the multinational mass media corporation Thomson Reuters.

Ownership

RBC's largest share (4.7%) is self-owned. Other shareholders include major Canadian banks such as the Bank of Montreal (3.7%) and the Toronto-Dominion Bank (3.7%).





Canada West Foundation

KEY STATS



Head office

Calgary, Alberta



Countries of operation

Canada



Revenue

\$1.48 million



Assets

\$8.85 million

About

Canada West is a think-tank focused on public policy issues in Western Canada. It was established in 1970 following a conservative political summit in Lethbridge, Alberta and eventually became the ideological testing ground for Canada's Reform Party—the right-wing populist party led by Preston Manning until 2000. Aided by financial support from some of Canada's largest corporations, Canada West has grown into a prominent source of regional economic policy ideas specializing in transborder trade and economic liberalization. Pipelines, coastal shipping and a critique of environmentalism all factor into the foundation's purview as an unwavering supporter of Canada's fossil fuel industries.

Funding

Like other Canadian think-tanks, the Canada West Foundation relies on donations and sponsorships to operate. Supporters who gifted at least \$50,000 or more include Enbridge and the Alberta and Manitoba governments. Oil companies Cenovus, Encana, Suncor and Shell Canada donated over \$25,000 each.

Strategy

Canada West identifies itself as a "non-partisan public policy think-tank that focuses on the policies that shape the West, and by extension, Canada." Private economic growth is the key determinant in shaping the West's success, according to the foundation. In 2018, Canada West CEO Martha Hall Findlay (a former federal Liberal MP) told CBC's *Power and Politics*, "we want to make sure that in terms of public policy we have public policies that are...the best possible for all of our natural resources." For 2018, Canada West's Natural Resources Centre work plan featured research on how to get energy

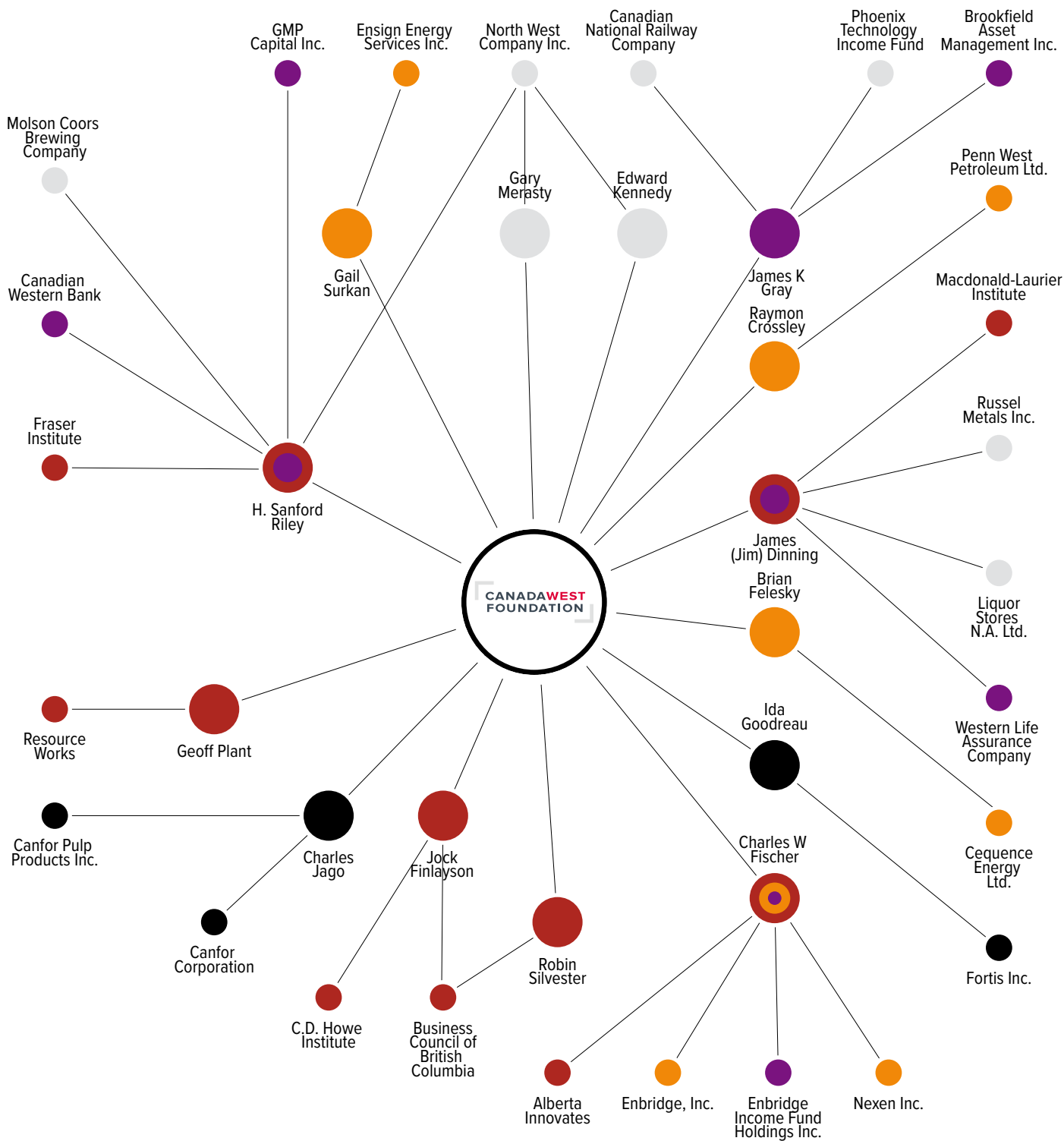
infrastructure built quickly and how to reduce the regulatory "burden" for industry. The centre's "patrons" include Cenovus, Enbridge, Encana and Suncor, all of which provided substantial funding for research initiatives.

Along with traditional media, podcasts and other ways to disseminate its views, the foundation takes part in conferences for elite groups of industry and government officials. Calgary's Energy Roundtable is one recent example. The 2017 event brought leaders of many of the fossil fuel sector's most influential firms, such as Encana, Suncor, TransAlta and LNG Canada, together with members of government and representatives of organized labour to discuss Canada's energy future. Canada West was a key "knowledge and network" partner of the conference.

Network Connections

A variety of financial institutions connect to Canada West by way of shared directors. Director James Gray is also a board member for Brookfield Asset Management. Director H. Sanford Riley connects with two financial companies: Canada Western Bank and GMP Capital. Director and former Nexen Energy CEO Charles Fischer is also a director of Enbridge Income Fund, and James Dinning also directs Western Life Insurance Company.

Looking beyond fossil fuels, there are links between Canada West and resource and energy firms in Canada. Vice-Chair Charles Jago, who led the University of Northern British Columbia from 1995–2006, also sits on the board of Canfor, the holdings company for Canadian Forest Products Ltd. Ida Goodreau connects Canada West to Fortis Inc., a Canadian natural gas and electricity company with operations across North and South America.



MAUDE BARLOW

Going Blue, one community at a time

"All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was." —Toni Morrison

THIS IS A book about hope. It is a story about everyday people defending the water resources of their communities and protecting the broader human right to water by ensuring it is now and forever a public trust, one that must not be allowed to fall under private, for-profit control.

It is a story about a grassroots campaign to address the water crisis the world is facing, which counters the argument that the best way to address this crisis is to commodify water and let the market decide who gets access to it and how.

But it is not a story about naïveté. It faces head-on some deeply disturbing realities we must acknowledge if we are to move forward.

In May 2016, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) released the most comprehensive environmental study the United Nations has ever undertaken. Reporting on its study's findings, UNEP called water scarcity the scourge of the Earth and linked it directly to humanity's continued degradation of the lands and forests that replenish the world's freshwater sources. In March 2018, UN Water released its annual World Water Development Report with a dire warning: if we do not change our ways, more than five billion people could suffer serious to severe water shortages in 30 years. Even today 3.6 billion people live in areas that are water scarce for at least a month per year. This could increase to as many as 5.7 billion people by 2050.

On top of these water shortages, there are many parts of the world where accessible, clean water is

simply unavailable. An April 2017 report by the World Health Organization warned that at least two billion people worldwide drink water contaminated with feces every day, killing more than half a million people per year. The UN reports that 80% of wastewater from human activity is still discharged into waterways around the world without any pollution removal at all.

Some lay the blame for this at the feet of climate change. While it is true that human-generated greenhouse gas emissions have affected the water cycle and natural water storage systems, it is equally true that our active, collective abuse of water is another major cause of the world's growing water crisis. Not only are we changing the climate around us as we heat up the world, we are polluting, depleting, damming, over-extracting and diverting the planet's water systems.

Communities already living without clean water because of poverty, inequality and discrimination now find themselves in further danger as local water sources dry up or are claimed for profit-related purposes.

Two populations are particularly affected by the global water crisis. In many places, women have the primary responsibility to provide water for their families and they must walk hours every day in their search. Often they bring along their girl children, who then miss school. Girls may also refuse to attend school if there are no proper and safe sanitation conditions. In a world where more people have access to cell phones than toilets, women and girls living without a toilet collectively spend 266 million hours each day finding a place to go to the bathroom.

Indigenous peoples around the world are also at extra risk from the water crisis. Often living in smaller and more remote communities, they have less collective power to stand up to large extractive industrial operations in their territories that damage their local water supplies. This injustice is not confined to the Global South. Twice as many Native Americans live in poverty as the rest of the American population, and 75% of their homes do not have basic sanitation or safe drinking water. First Nations communities in Canada are 90% more likely not to have running water or toilets in their homes than the Canadian population in general.

In my previous books, I have asserted that to deal with this crisis, we need to work together to address both the ecological threat of a planet running out



Barlow

of accessible clean water and the deep injustice that these statistics reveal. Many industrialized countries are also experiencing severe water shortages, and the deep inequality that exists in the Global South is increasingly being experienced in the wealthier countries of the Global North.

This means that we can and must create a truly international movement to fight for water justice for all.

In my 2013 book, *Blue Future: Protecting Water for People and the Planet Forever*, I argued that a water-secure and water-just future depends on our adoption of four principles:

1. that water is a human right and is an issue of justice, not charity;
2. that water is a common heritage and public trust and therefore access to water must not be allowed to be decided by private, for-profit interests;
3. that water has rights beyond its service to humans and must be respected and protected for the ecosystem and other living beings; and
4. that, rather than being a source of conflict and division, water can be nature's gift to teach us how we might learn to live more lightly on the planet and in harmony with one another.

In some real ways, we have seen advances on some of the principles. After a long and gruelling fight, the majority of the countries that comprise the United Nations recognized that water and sanitation are fundamental human rights. Opposition to the takeover of municipal water services by private transnational water companies has grown, and there are many successful cases where municipalities have returned their water services to public management. Opposition to bottled water has also increased in the last few years, especially among the young, as people understand the heavy environmental footprint of this industry. And movements such as the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature promote the adoption of legal systems that recognize and enforce nature's own rights.

These are the benchmarks of progress on the macro scale, but there has been equivalent progress on a smaller

and more local scale—the rise of the Blue Communities movement. In the last decade, an ever-growing number of municipalities and civil society institutions have designated themselves Blue Communities, committing to defend the human right to water and to help curb plastic contamination in their communities. It is an exciting and hopeful development, a crucial piece of the multi-faceted water-protection movement that is having real and positive results.

A Blue Community adopts three fundamental principles.

1. A Blue Community promises to protect and promote water and sanitation as human rights. This is in keeping with the United Nations' 2010 resolution declaring that water and sanitation are fundamental human rights and that no one should be denied these services because of an inability to pay.
2. A Blue Community promises to protect water as a public trust by promoting publicly-financed, owned and operated water and wastewater services. All decisions about access to water and sanitation must be made by people and their elected officials, not by a for-profit investor.
3. Where there are accessible clean public water sources available, a Blue Community bans or phases out the sale of bottled water in municipal facilities and at municipal events and promotes its tap water as a safe and reliable source of drinking water. While this step alone will not solve the planet's plastics crisis, it plays an important role in diminishing the devastating environmental footprint of the bottled water industry.

The Blue Communities project started in Canada in 2009 in reaction to the policies of the Conservative government then in power. Claiming that municipalities could save money, the federal government was promoting the privatization of Canadian water services by withholding federal funding to those towns and cities that refused to turn to a public-private partnership (P3) for water infrastructure upgrading. The Council of Canadians partnered with the Canadian Union

of Public Employees and Eau Secours in Quebec to establish the Blue Communities project as a way of helping municipalities ward off unwanted privatization. To date, 27 Canadian municipalities have taken the Blue Communities pledge.

But the concept didn't stay in Canada. Surprising us initially, it started to catch on in other parts of the world: cities such as Bern, Paris, Thessaloniki and Berlin chose to become Blue Communities in highly visible, public ceremonies. Then it spread further. Institutions such as universities, unions and faith-based organizations adopted our principles and have also become Blue Communities, vowing to protect water and the human right to water in a variety of ways. Many find the concept empowering as it is a positive step forward in the face of the many environmental and human rights threats we now face.

For me, fighting for water justice has been a powerful personal journey. It has taken me from the United Nations and international conferences to the world's most terrible slums in search of the solution to the twin ecological and human water crises that threaten the planet and all living beings.

While I deeply believe that we need good and strong law at all levels of government to protect both ecosystems and humans from the coming global water crisis, the most powerful actions we can take personally are at the local level.

This book reflects a dream of a world going Blue, one community at a time. **M**



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The sincere self and the children's book

I HATE EVERYONE

NAOMI DANIS (AUTHOR)
AND CINTA ARRIBAS (ILLUSTRATOR)

POW! Books, 2018

JEROME BY HEART

THOMAS SCOTTO (AUTHOR)
AND OLIVIER TALLEC (ILLUSTRATOR)

Enchanted Lion Books, 2018

CHILDREN'S STORIES ARE filled with parables on the importance of being "true to yourself." From *The Ugly Duckling* to *The Paper Bag Princess*, children's literature skillfully narrates the dangers of developing what psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott called the "compliant false self." But attentiveness to what other people might think of us is not a simple individual predilection: it is a systemic response to culture. The desire to assimilate as a survival tactic in a white supremacist, homophobic and patriarchal capitalist culture that allows difference to persist so long as it can be made profitable.

In contrast, children's literature, speaking "a language of absolute sincerity," as author and journalist Maria Popova put it to the *New York Times* in February, provides us with imaginary alternatives that are miniaturized, earnest and capable of standing up to even the most brutal cynicism. Thomas Scotto's 2018 masterpiece, *Jerome By Heart*, is one such example of how children's literature can teach us to be true to ourselves despite the homogenizing forces weighing down on us.

With illustrations by Olivier Tallec, Scotto presents an ode to both queerness and the passionate nature of friendship as embodied in the

pure and all-consuming love that one little boy, Raphael, feels for another, Jerome. Raphael's father feels sorry for his son's friend, Jerome, because he does not like to play soccer, a sport portrayed as stereotypically masculine. Yet Jerome bravely withstands bullies and toxic masculinity as he defends those who tease Raphael, and he disdains the culture that ridicules the open expression of feelings among boys.

Though neither Jerome's nor Raphael's parents understand the boys' relationship, Raphael persists in his love for his friend. When Raphael tells his parents that his dream is good in a "Jerome kind of way," the depth of their discomfort is revealed. They cannot understand that, for Raphael, Jerome is synonymous with happiness. Luckily for the boy there is still Jerome, who near the end of the book poignantly refuses to rebuke his self: "And I can say—yes. Raphael loves Jerome. I can say it. It's easy."

Naomi Danis's groundbreaking book *I Hate Everyone*, illustrated by Cinta Arribas, equally refuses the development of a compliant false self in childhood. Though young girls are too often socialized under patriarchy to deny their feelings of rage, the protagonist of this feminist children's book refuses to do so.

We meet that little girl at her own birthday party, in the throes of rage: "It's my birthday. So Boo! I hate all of you!" Anger subsumes, making one want to express it with every gesture, just as everything a person does becomes intolerable. "I hate when the balloons pop," says the girl. "And I hate when you say stop popping the balloons." Eschewing the "hate lecture" so characteristic of childhood, Danis's

book takes the emotion seriously. The girl refuses adult niceties: "You say I am perfect. I am just right. But I am not. I feel like a fight." Arribas's illustration shows the girl physically "coming apart," as we all do when in the grips of a strong emotion.

As the little girl expresses the depth of her rage she also touches on the startling relationship between hate and love—how even at the moment we are most consumed with anger and hate, we may still want the target of our hatred to love us. Danis's book encourages readers to grasp this complex truth, and how anger is also so often accompanied by unbearable feelings of vulnerability.

In her 2010 Ted Talk (and since then), scholar Brené Brown popularized the idea that vulnerability is at the core of being human. When we realize the complex relationship between hate and love, and grasp how vulnerable it feels to express our need of someone at precisely the moment where we are feeling undone, we can live fuller, richer emotional lives as our true selves, she argues convincingly.

"Great children's books speak to the most elemental truths of existence, and speak in the language of children—a language of absolute sincerity, so deliciously countercultural in our age of cynicism," Popova said in her *NYTimes* interview. These essential emotional truths are at the core of "feeling real." Isn't this the heart of what parents long for in their children's lives? Rather than compliant false selves, children should feel free to feel real, to remain open to all their emotions. From this vulnerable place of realness, may we move forward. **M**

REVIEWED BY GAVIN FRIDELL

Measure(s) of progress

POLITICS RULES: POWER, GLOBALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

ADAM SNEYD

Fernwood, April 2019, \$20 (paperback)

FOR THOSE OF us tired with obsessive mantras over “hard” data and unquestioned devotion to quantitative metrics, Adam Sneyd’s new book will come as a breath of fresh air. Long-standing debates over the effectiveness of qualitative versus quantitative research have been overrun in the era of the triumph of numbers and formulas. The goal has become to measure and re-measure anything that can be measured, however superficial or irrelevant, and ignore anything that can’t (even when it is central to human experiences).

Neoclassical economists have led this charge, but its political and ideological weight extends widely. The new NAFTA 2.0, for instance, contains a chapter on regulatory co-operation that will, in essence, pressure policy-makers to abandon precautionary approaches to social and environmental policies in favour of “cost-benefit” and “science-based” assessments. While this might sound strictly technical at first, the political effect could well be to clog up policy-making, shifting it toward the endless accumulation of data and tireless corporate consultations, thwarting the ability of governments to act at the very time when the world needs bold action to avoid climate catastrophe.

It is the neglect of politics in government and mainstream development circles, compared to unwavering devotion to neoclassical economics, that Sneyd sets out to confront in



Politics Rules—named in opposition to Dani Rodrik’s 2015 book, *Economics Rules*. Informed by years of research in Africa on cotton and food, Sneyd offers an inventive and wide-ranging book, accessible for students and an engaged public, designed to assert the significance of the politics of development, which he argues is what “development” is always about. Drawing on classic themes in political science, Sneyd asserts that “development is not a condition that is realized when quantitative economic growth targets or other metrics are deemed to have been met.” Instead, it involves “qualitative changes in the lives of regular people,” emerging out of conflict and contestation to define, protect or challenge the dominant consensus.

While covering a range of themes—from colonialism, nationalism and inequality to the politics of order, the

developmental state, patronage and participation—Sneyd’s overarching goal is to convince the reader of the importance of careful, “disinterested” political analysis. Despite the “celebrity-like status” conferred on famous neoclassical economists and their pretence of rational objectivity, Sneyd argues their arguments are often politically and ideologically motivated in ways that extend well beyond the limits of macroeconomic models. Famous economist Dambisa Moyo, for instance, has argued that free market policies should be facilitated by allowing more educated people more highly weighted votes in elections, an idea which Sneyd observes has “zero empirical basis.” He has more affinity with social-democratic economists like Joseph Stiglitz and Jeffrey Sachs, although they fail to understand the ways in which their proposals “butt up against entrenched vested interests.” Only a return to classic and contemporary themes in political science can get us to a more rigorous appraisal of development, its dynamics and its limitations.

To make political analysis accessible to an undergraduate audience, in Chapter Two of the book Sneyd lays out a methodological map, envisioned as “a page filled with terms, names, issues, arrows and other scribbles.” He draws on the example of Canadian students travelling to Kenya to build rural schools and its political consequences, including constructing a “helping” narrative around outside intervention and entrenching politics that have historically held back widespread school construction in the country. The map, however, is designed to be applied to any case study. It involves charting out, first, the ideas that have mattered in the past and present around the case

study; second, the prominent stakeholders, from the powerful to the least powerful; and third, the main controversies in the past or present that have surrounded the theme. Then, one looks for links between them. The outcome “may not be as aesthetically elegant as the calculations that astrophysicists generate,” Sneyd writes, but, in a soberer way, it offers the most accurate assessment that we can hope for.

On this basis, Sneyd draws on numerous cases, teasing out the politics behind them. One of the most interesting examples is in Chapter Five, where Sneyd systematically critiques the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for reproducing the status quo, allowing all stakeholders, in particular corporations, to selectively showcase their connections to the goals while avoiding political discussions of disempowerment, social exclusion, emancipation and justice. While the outcomes of the SDGs, Sneyd argues, are not foreordained, without careful analysis to uncover the politics at play, “we cede the ground to the masters of the universe and their narrow visions of sustainable development.”

Sneyd’s assessments throughout are flexible and open-ended, reflecting a central thrust of the book that ideas are always contested from a range of perspectives that must be taken seriously. Political consumerism, for

example, Sneyd depicts as a form of consumer power that promotes relational thinking and offers “new opportunities for young people to apply their talents” through corporate social responsibility. At the same time, he cautions against “the darker ramifications of individualism linked to globally pervasive individual choices [which] have not stimulated much international and global action and attention.” While some readers might find Sneyd difficult to pin down, others might appreciate his tentative nature, especially for classroom use.

Perhaps the greatest challenge in the book is the imperative to advance disinterested knowledge free from ideology. While Sneyd views this as a central goal of political analysis, he is not always clear on how to do it. Economist Sachs, for instance, is criticized in the book, correctly in my view, for imposing a standard development model on all countries, driven more by the ideology of modernization than careful analysis. Sachs himself, however, advances the claim that his “clinical economics” is in fact flexible, rational and beyond ideology. How do we determine whose claims toward unbiased analysis are true?

While Sneyd recognizes that all ideas, including his own, are open to ideological critique, he suggests a fairly straightforward “analytical choice”

between research that is ideological/biased and disinterested/objective. In contrast, other works on the ideology of development, such as that of Ilan Kapoor, argue that our commitments to development are deeply embedded with unconscious desires that deny some traumas (the persistence of global inequality, racism, imperialism) while upholding fantasies that give us pleasure (performing the role of development “expert,” lording bureaucratic power over the poor). This perspective, I think, convincingly makes the case that there is no easy way out of the trap of ideology; only careful attention to unconscious gaps and slippages can uncover biases, even if they can never be fully avoided.

In the end, Sneyd offers a thought-provoking and engaging guide that would be of great use in the classroom, and would also be highly instructive for specialists and development practitioners, themselves so often caught up in the politics of development without fully acknowledging it. *Politics Rules* offers a framework for understanding the politics of development, recognizing its significance and plotting conceptual and practical ways to go beyond the narrow vision of development imposed by “the masters of the universe.” **M**

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REVIEWED BY FRANK BAYERL

A handbook for housing struggle

VILLAGES IN CITIES: COMMUNITY LAND OWNERSHIP, CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING, AND THE MILTON PARC STORY

JOSHUA HAWLEY
AND DIMITRIOS ROUSSOPOULOS, EDS.

Black Rose Books, 2018, \$22.99

In 1968, a six-block area of working class homes in Montreal just east of McGill University and north of Sherbrooke St. was slated for development by Concordia Estates into a high-rent highrise building complex. That this did not happen was due to organized opposition from the community and the determined leadership of people like Lucia Kowaluk and Dimitrios Roussopoulos. *Villages in Cities* is an account of how they succeeded in stopping a corporate behemoth.

Told through a collection of essays by various activists and urbanists, the book includes original contemporaneous documentary materials, such as press releases and excerpts from community newspapers, as well as an overview of various visions for co-operative housing dating back to 18th century England. There are also interviews with participants in the struggle and comparisons with similar developments in Boston, Massachusetts and Burlington, Vermont, the latter assisted by current Democratic presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders when he was mayor.

The economics of land ownership in a capitalist society make it impossible to preserve centrally located housing that is well-maintained and affordable, without subsidy, to those of modest means. This central fact underlies the push to develop such land and turn it into profit-making upscale housing or offices. Such was the rationale behind Concordia Estates' plans for Milton Parc, which had the enthusiastic

support of Montreal's mayor at the time, Jean Drapeau, and the provincial government.

First, a citizens' committee was formed to oppose the development. From 1968 to 1972, its members along with people from the university settlement knocked on doors, signed petitions, demonstrated in the streets, marched to city hall, worked with McGill University architecture students to present alternatives to highrises, and held street festivals and endless meetings, all the while struggling with lengthy discussions and a commitment to democratic functioning.

Meanwhile, Concordia Estates proceeded with phase one of its project, forcing the tenants in about one-third of the area to move out. In May 1972, the Milton-Parc Citizens' Committee occupied some of the empty dwellings, while at the same time a dozen individuals occupied the offices of Concordia Estates. On May 26, 1972, 59 people were arrested and charged with public mischief. Eight were tried and acquitted. People were exhausted, they felt they had failed.

But things were not going so well for the developers either. The oil crisis of the early '70s caused inflation and financial insecurity, the Ford Foundation pulled out, and the possibility of buying the property and forming a housing co-operative was raised. Now the political will existed, and in May 1979 the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) bought the property for \$5.5 million using a federal program created by the Pierre Trudeau government to help tenants form co-operatives.

It took a number of further legal steps and the involvement of Seagram heir and heritage advocate Phyllis Lambert before the *Communauté Milton-Parc* (CMP) was created. A

condominium would be established in which each co-op and non-profit would own their own buildings and the land under them. The land adjacent to the buildings would be held as common property by all co-op and other non-profit owners in Milton-Parc. Only the occupants who lived in the buildings could use those adjacent pieces of land. Community institutions were also developed, including a daycare, a newspaper, health clubs, a food co-op, legal clinic and credit union.

The CMP is unique in all of North America. It is the only land trust in which co-ops or non-profits are governed by a declaration of co-ownership. It is also unique in that it attaches social responsibility and non-speculative restraints to the collective ownership of the property. When land, whether privately, co-operatively or publicly owned, is valued in this way—primarily for its use value versus its exchange value—everyone benefits. When its use value is disregarded and land or housing becomes merely a profit-making commodity, everyone loses—in the short run, the users, and in the long run, society as a whole.

The content of *Villages in Cities* remains highly relevant today, as evidenced in the recent urban battle in Ottawa over the Herongate community, the largest eviction campaign currently underway in Canada. Herongate was a working class neighbourhood of mainly racialized families where Timbercreek Asset Management is constructing "resort-style apartments" after evicting the current tenants. The Herongate Tenant Coalition was inspired by the precedent set by the Milton-Parc Community in 1968. *Villages in Cities* may thus have value as a handbook for the conduct of future struggles as well as being a record of what some determined Montrealers accomplished in the last century. **M**

REVIEWED BY MARC EDGE

Starving Canadian media giants — a case of real fake news

THE TANGLED GARDEN: A CANADIAN CULTURAL MANIFESTO FOR THE DIGITAL AGE

RICHARD STURSBURG
(WITH STEPHEN ARMSTRONG)

James Lorimer & Co., April 2019, \$24.95

WHEN U.S. TELEVISION stations set up transmitters just across the border in the 1970s to beam their signals into Canadian homes, and then began selling ads here, it started a trade war that lasted a dozen years. To keep the ad dollars at home, Ottawa passed a law that disallowed as an income tax deduction the expense of advertising on a foreign station. The U.S. retaliated by declaring non-deductible the expense of attending conventions in Canada, which put a serious crimp in our hospitality industry. The dispute was only settled with the 1988 Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

History is now repeating itself, as many in Canada want to extend our treatment of broadcast advertising to digital media, to stem the flow of ad dollars to foreign giants like Google and Facebook, which have been siphoning off revenue from newspapers and television networks worldwide. These same voices also advocate taxing foreign streaming services like Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Netflix, and Google (the FAANGs) and forcing them to both transmit and fund Canadian content. The billions of dollars available to be clawed back from the foreign digital giants, they argue, would help finance government subsidies to Canadian media, such as the \$595 million promised in the 2019 budget to boost journalism.

Richard Stursberg is one of those voices, and he sets out this argument

simply enough for the average Canadian to understand in his new book, *The Tangled Garden*. In doing so, however, he plays fast and loose with the facts and inflates the threat to Canadian media of the foreign digital giants. Stursberg notes that these U.S. companies have so far avoided paying tax in Canada on their services to Canadians due to Ottawa's reluctance to regulate the internet as it has broadcasting. (The FAANGs presumably pay income tax in their own countries, however, which in the case of Facebook is very low in Ireland.) That will soon change if Stursberg has anything to say about it.

As a consultant, Stursberg seems to specialize in coming up with ways for Big Media in Canada to wheedle money out of Ottawa. For this he was no doubt prepared by his 25 years in Canadian broadcasting, including six years as head of the CBC's English

services. His book tells how he was hired by Rogers, our second-largest media company after Bell, to write a "paper" a few years ago that floated the idea of using tax credits to aid our country's supposedly ailing media companies—a direct subsidy without the need for any application process. "If the costs qualified," notes Stursberg, "the payment was automatic."

That got the attention of Paul Godfrey, at the time CEO of Postmedia Network, Canada's largest newspaper chain. (Postmedia publishes 15 of our 22 largest dailies but is somehow 98% owned by U.S. hedge funds.) Godfrey liked Stursberg's idea about tax credits so much that he invited him to dinner with Postmedia's board. Together with the likes of David Pecker, then publisher of the *National Inquirer*, who represented the American vulture capitalists, they decided to pitch the idea to other newspaper publishers and "finance a study on how tax credits might work for them." In this effort Stursberg enlisted the aid of "media economics expert" Stephen Armstrong, a long-time Ontario civil servant who is also now a consultant.

Stursberg tells a fascinating tale about how our news media ended up with the \$595 million they are currently deciding how to divvy up. At the height of their disagreement over how the money should be paid out, he recalls that one publisher told him: "At the end of the day, if the money has to be delivered in a brown paper bag late on Sunday nights in the alley, we'll take it." But a few hundred million is chump change in Canada's cultural economy, which Stursberg estimates is worth \$54 billion and employs 650,000. The big bailout bucks will of course go to television because it's the backbone of Canadian culture.



The Tangled Garden is an unabashed exhortation for the “sleepy” Liberal government (a word Stursberg actually uses in a chapter title) to fire up the tax collection machine to pump more money into Cancon. He counts up all the dollars that would flow back to Ottawa and Canadian media companies by taxing the FAANGs and it comes to billions annually. Making them pay (and charge) HST on their sales to Canadians would bring in \$100 million a year just for starters.

But making digital ads on foreign digital media not tax-deductible should repatriate about \$1.3 billion in revenues to domestic media annually. Taxes on ads that don't migrate back north (to Canadian firms) would run an estimated \$590 million a year. Making Netflix and other foreign streaming services contribute 30% of their Canadian revenues to fund Cancon, as the national networks are required to do, would bring in an estimated \$438 million next year alone. Stursberg does a very good job of shaking money from trees. No wonder Godfrey likes him.

Aside from the wisdom of trying to repatriate tax and ad revenues from the U.S., with a trade hawk like Donald Trump in the White House, the only problem with Stursberg's argument is its premise. “If the federal government does not wake from its torpor, the major Canadian media companies are likely to collapse,” he warns. “If this happens, English Canada will be effectively annexed by the United States.”

Stursberg claims that big media companies in Canada have suffered “losses as far as the eye can see” due to declining ad sales. Their financial failure would bring about “the utter collapse of Canadian culture,” he colourfully predicts, leaving us with the “arid and lifeless landscape of an abandoned culture.” The closure of Postmedia, which he claims has lost money every year since 2011, “would mean that there would no longer be any local papers in many of Canada's largest cities.” It and Torstar, Canada's second-largest newspaper chain, are losing at least \$35 million a year, he claims.

This is so much nonsense, to use a polite word. It is the Big Lie of Canadian media.

The big media companies in Canada are corpulent cash cows that grow fatter by the year.

The big media companies in Canada are corpulent cash cows that grow fatter by the year, as a glance at the financial statements posted by law on their websites will confirm. Bell made \$9.5 billion in profit last year (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization) on revenues of \$23.5 billion, for a profit margin of 40%. Its media division, which includes the CTV network, made \$693 million on revenues of \$2.68 billion, which were up slightly from 2017. That's a profit margin of 26%. (Bell made 42.5% profit margin on its \$12.4 billion in landline revenues last year and 42.6% on its \$8.4 billion in cell phone revenues.)

Rogers made \$6 billion in profit last year, up 9% from 2017, on revenues of \$15.1 billion, for a profit margin of almost 40%. Its media division, which includes the Citytv network, made a profit of \$196 million last year, up by more than half from 2017, on revenues of \$2.2 billion, for a profit margin of 9%. (Rogers made almost 48% on its \$3.9 billion in cable revenues last year and almost 45% on its \$7.1 billion in cell phone revenues.) Making money at that rate, Rogers can afford to hire a lot more media consultants like Stursberg to sing the blues for them. Come to think of it, a small share of its lush cable revenues, which come largely from monopoly internet service provision, would go a long way toward funding Cancon, but that's the last thing Rogers wants to hear.

Even the newspaper companies are hardly losing money, as my research

has shown. While their revenues have gone down precipitously in recent years, they have been able to keep their heads well above water through painful cost cutting, which is admittedly not good for Canadian journalism. Postmedia made \$65.4 million in profit last year, up 18% from 2017, on revenues of \$676 million, for a profit margin of 9.7%. Of that amount, however, more than \$25 million went to paying down its massive debt, which is held mostly by its hedge fund owners. They kept it on the company's books strategically as an income source after acquiring the former Southam newspaper chain for pennies on the dollar out of the 2010 bankruptcy of Canwest Global Communications.

Even if Postmedia went bankrupt due to debt, however, its profitable dailies would continue to publish under new ownership. You don't just close down a business that makes \$65 million a year. Torstar made \$60.7 million in profit last year on revenues of \$615 million, for a profit margin of 9.8%. Its profits went down \$13.5 million from 2017, however, perhaps due to the estimated \$20 million Torstar spent in developing its failed tablet app.

The chains regularly report enormous net losses, but these are only achieved after deducting huge “paper” losses that estimate the reduced value of their businesses. Postmedia is often cited as losing \$352 million in its 2015-16 fiscal year, but that was only after deducting \$367 million in asset impairment and the extraordinary \$42 million expense of severing staff. On an operating basis, it actually earned \$82 million that year, of which \$72 million went to paying down its debt.

One thing you won't find referenced in *The Tangled Garden* is critical research done by real media economists, such as Dwayne Winseck of Carleton University, whose Canadian Media Concentration Research Project tracks the ever-increasing consolidation of our media and the enormous profits they make. When you examine the facts and ignore the corporate propaganda, Stursberg's garden turns out to be not just tangled, but overgrown with weeds. **M**

Give up hope, but not the fight

THE UNINHABITABLE EARTH: LIFE AFTER WARMING

DAVID WALLACE-WELLS

Tim Duggan Books, February 2019, \$36

THE CLIMATE CRISIS is unfolding around us in the form of more frequent droughts, heatwaves, floods and other extreme weather events. Looking ahead, the most conservative climate science tells us these events will cause trillions of dollars in damage and displace hundreds of millions of people in the coming decades. But those are only the known, predictable consequences of accelerating climate breakdown. From the collapse of agriculture to the sinking of coastal cities to the depletion of fresh water to the toxification of the planet's breathable air, the lesser-known impacts of a warming world are among the scariest.

Will all of these apocalyptic predictions come to pass in the next few decades? Probably not. But if any of them do, we are in an awful lot of trouble. American journalist David Wallace-Wells implores us to consider that possibility in *The Uninhabitable Earth*, a book as grim and expansive as its title suggests. There is no preparing for a world that is two, three or five degrees warmer than today because we simply cannot know or appreciate how bad things are going to get. Wallace-Wells is not a climate scientist or a political activist or even—by his own admission—much of an environmentalist. His interest in the climate crisis stems more from a panicked pragmatism over a simple question: how can we preserve our way of life? Because it is clear from decades of warnings from the scientific community that the way we live

is not only bad for the environment, it is also seriously at risk.

In the 12 chapters that make up the first half of the book (“Elements of Chaos”), Wallace-Wells explores the various ways that the planet may be made unlivable by climate breakdown: heat death, dying oceans, economic collapse, and so on. He draws on a wide variety of scientific literature to describe in practical terms how these changes might impact us as individuals and societies. He also lays bare, with sometimes excruciating clarity, the social and psychological hoops we jump through to convince ourselves that these cascading crises are merely isolated climate problems and to absolve ourselves of any responsibility to address the root causes. The reality is that the planet will not be as good to us in the future as it is today.

As the book's focus shifts in the second half to the social, cultural and economic dimensions of the climate crisis, it starts to lose its thread. There are valuable insights here—like a dissection of our cultural tendency to hope for future technological solutions rather than solve problems today—but the discussion is less organized and not as compelling as the presentation of the physical science that precedes it. Wallace-Wells's conclusion, that enough collective fear will inevitably lead us to pull together on the climate crisis, also feels disconnected from the book's core argument. Admittedly, his best-case scenario for the planet is “a state we would today regard as merely grim, rather than apocalyptic,” so he is hardly idealistic. But after laying out the myriad ways in which we will destroy ourselves, including the psychological and cultural feedback loops that have prevented us from

saving ourselves so far, even that much optimism feels misplaced.

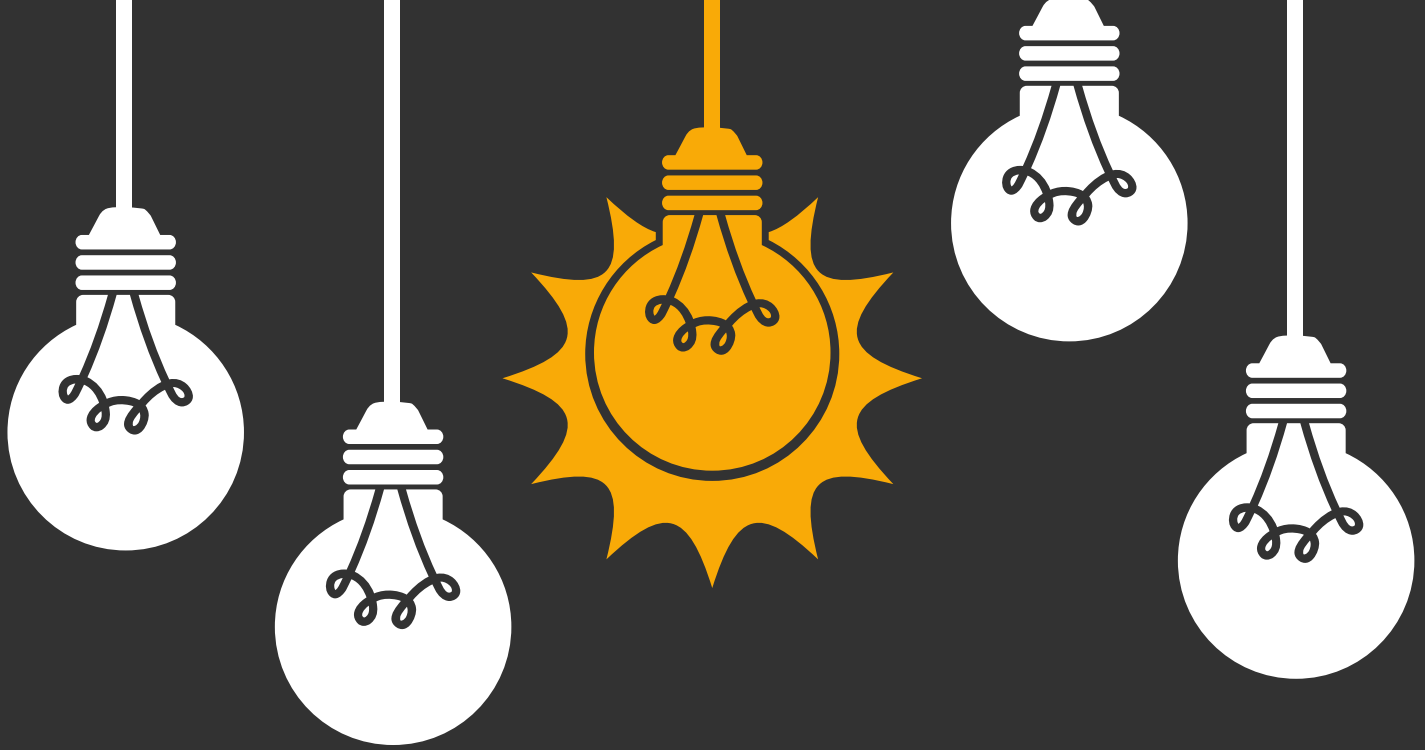
Shortly before reading this book I attended a private oil sands industry conference where I met a number of fossil fuel executives. I was surprised to learn that, unlike the mostly conservative politicians who go to bat for them, these oil execs take the science of climate change seriously.

What they do not take seriously is any kind of responsibility to stop producing fossil fuels. Instead, they are committed to capturing as large a share as possible of a global oil market that they acknowledge is in inevitable decline. As long as there is profit to be made, they will do everything in their extensive power to extract as much oil, gas and coal as they can. As I wallowed in despair reading *The Uninhabitable Earth*, I couldn't help but wonder how a book like this is supposed to change a world run by men like that. The challenge is profoundly overwhelming.

But if there is any hope to be gleaned from what is otherwise an exceptionally incisive and bleak analysis, it is Wallace-Wells's vital recognition that “a state of half-ignorance and half-indifference is a much more pervasive climate sickness than true denial or true fatalism.” The greatest obstacle to climate action is our own cultural and political complacency. And that means the power to change the world ultimately lies with us—as citizens of the world—as well.

“Eating organic is nice,” argues Wallace-Wells, “but if your goal is to save the climate your vote is much more important.”

Those of us fighting for a better future would do well to keep that message in mind. **M**



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