

MONITOR



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Stuart Trew

More than a rambling man

IN LATE AUGUST, Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall told CTV Saskatoon he was the proud new owner of Waylon Jennings' 1973 Cadillac El Dorado convertible. "It's kind of an outlaw car," he said. "I think it's got a bit of an attitude." It sure does. The El Dorado makes no apologies for burning up 23 litres of gasoline per 100 km of road. For comparison, a fully loaded Ford F-350 Super Duty pickup truck (one of the most commonly stolen vehicles in the province, by the way) can go the same distance on less than 10 litres of fuel. On a trip in the new car with his daughter, Wall blew out a tire and damaged the radiator. It had to be towed back to Swift Current for repairs.

For a vintage car lover, these are the costs of turning back the years, of going back to yesterday, as Jennings and fellow country singer Hank Williams both crooned. Gas guzzling can be a fun and relatively low-impact hobby over short distances. Unfortunately, the attitude makes for dangerous public policy. The fossil fuel economy is pushing the world's ecosystems to a breaking point while offering workers and impacted communities false hopes of sustained prosperity. But as other provinces figure out ways to transition off oil and gas, to encourage the creation of more employment-intensive sectors with fewer environmental costs, Saskatchewan is entrenching the importance of extraction for job growth and public revenues.

In the legislature this spring, Premier Wall followed his throne speech promise to support innovation—for example, tax incentives to commercialize new technologies—with a list of recent investments in the province: Edgewood Forest Products (for

a new saw mill), Crescent Point Energy (the province's largest tight oil producer), Husky Energy (for heavy oil thermal projects), R.I.I. North America ("enhanced" oil recovery through steam injection), BHP Billiton (carbon capture and storage) and the K+S Potash Canada (for a new mine). "Saskatchewan supplies energy to Canada and to the world," he said. "What we do here makes Canada a better place. What we do here makes the world a better place."

At a recent CCPA retreat in Toronto, the centre's Saskatchewan director, Simon Enoch, argued convincingly that the rest of Canada should pay closer attention to "what we do" in his province, because it is probably not making Canada or the world a better place. Wall, like his El Dorado and the climate-changing oil it consumes, may be a relic in some respects, but the Saskatchewan Party's variety of conservatism—the way it has taken on labour, its exploration of new private funding options for social services, its light-touch regulatory approach to unconventional resource development, its populist appeal—is both innovative and attractive provincially and outside the Prairies. Wall's policies and the way he delivers them clearly warrant closer attention.

For example, one of the first pieces of legislation introduced by the Wall government (in 2008), the Public Service Essential Services Act, "effectively prohibited a cross-section of public sector employees and their unions from engaging in job action should employers deem the work to be 'essential,'" writes Andrew Stevens (page 17). Though the Supreme Court declared part of the bill unconstitutional in a 2015 ruling, barriers to le-

gal forms of job action persist in the "prolonged period of mediation and conciliation...required before work stoppages can commence."

Subsequent labour reforms in the 2014 Saskatchewan Employment Act satisfied "the ideological marker of the Saskatchewan Party and its political allies," yet stopped short of union busting, writes Stevens. Though the law—alongside the privatization of liquor stores and increased use of P3s for social infrastructure—further empowered capital and undermined union influence, the Wall government's consultative process and public relations strategy killed any hope labour might have had in resisting the bill or finding a better balance. "Indeed, conservatism in the province maintains a human face," Stevens argues: the Saskatchewan Party earned a good many union votes and enjoyed a nearly two-thirds public approval rating as of this spring.

Deregulation has been more blatant in the oil and gas industry than in labour legislation. Angela Carter and Emily Eaton ask whether current hydraulic fracturing regulations are truly as "comprehensive" and "robust" as the Wall government claims (page 20). They find, on the contrary, that the Saskatchewan model—absentee environmental assessments and poor inspection, industry self-service and self-regulation—is more like a "Wild West" for extractors big and small. "The province has not even implemented requirements for companies to publicly disclose the chemicals they use to frack—a minimal request in jurisdictions, including Texas, taking the most hands-off approach to regulation."

In part, we can blame the political influence of industry (which makes significant campaign contributions to the Saskatchewan Party and NDP) for the province's weak environmental rules. As Davida Bentham points out in her column (page 30), the province is "led by a premier who has rejected climate change science and the Leap Manifesto as 'misguided dogma that has no basis in reality,'" and who has "taken it upon himself to be the travelling spokesperson for TransCanada's proposed Energy East pipeline." But this support is not entirely bought or even ideological: as long as people are dependent on carbon-intensive jobs for their livelihood, they will back leaders who vow to protect them from turmoil.

"Many people in Western Canada agree with Wall's attitude toward climate policy, reflected in the renewed majority his government won in April's provincial election," writes Rachel Malena-Chan (page 31) in her article on how to better communicate the case for economic transition. "Progressives need to offer a more salient story that takes into account people's fears and insecurities and makes meaning of, rather than preys upon, their most basic desire to be OK." This becomes more urgent as commodity markets tumble, destabilizing employment in the province. BHP Billiton CEO Andrew Mackenzie suggested in mid-August his company could mothball the multi-billion-dollar Jansen mine east of Saskatoon if potash prices don't recover. Likewise, as Carter and Eaton explain, farmers are increasingly dependent on income from land leases to oil and gas companies, even if they often have grievances with the industry.

As reduced royalties and taxes on cheaper resources shrink public finances, the Wall government is pioneering new ways of delivering social services. Social impact bonds (SIBs) are used more and more frequently in the U.K. and U.S. to supply services (e.g., inmate rehabilitation and child services) normally delivered by the public sector, but Canada's first is just concluding in Saskatchewan. The bonds are a bit like public-pri-

vate partnerships, explains Taylor Bendig (page 35), in that they help governments keep spending "off the books," since the initial investment comes from the private sector, which is paid back over several years based on the success or failure of the project. There are problems with how and by whom success is evaluated, why private finance is required at all in social service delivery, and whether ultimately SIBs "will be used as an excuse to avoid restructuring government funding models toward long-term commitments." This is a development anyone concerned about social programming should be watching carefully.

Wall and the Saskatchewan Party won the 2007 election based on a list of guiding principles that begins with private sector-led growth and job creation, "smaller, less intrusive, more efficient government," and lower taxes coupled with balanced budgets. It was the trifecta of modern conservatism—in the province that brought us national public health care and pioneered the co-operative movement—sold to a weary electorate on further promises to strengthen the social safety net and make "government more responsive to the people it serves." Over nearly a decade, the premier has used his built up goodwill to undermine the progressive goals of equity and

sustainability—not only in the provincial economy but also nationally, as a spoiler in conversations toward a Canada-wide carbon tax and enhanced Canada Pension Plan.

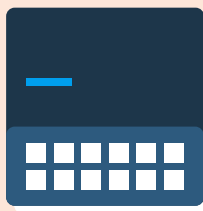
And herein lies the illusion behind Wall's "friendly" conservatism. Saskatchewan's economy is not unlike the El Dorado, both as an anachronism of the fossil fuel era and mythical treasure (the land of gold) that can never be found. The main reason the Wall government could afford tax cuts, deregulation, lavish resource incentives and big spending on infrastructure and capital projects was because of the influx of resource revenues from oil, gas and potash. With the crash in commodity prices, the government can no longer sustain this spending, but it also refuses to raise taxes and is posting large deficits.

Instead, the electorate is now being offered what the government calls "transformational change," spin for what could become large spending cuts to health, education and other social services. The fact the first and deepest cuts have been against seniors, the poor, the disabled and First Nations does not inspire optimism for the future. It does, however, present opportunities for progressives to gear up their alternatives to Saskatchewan's resource dependence. **M**

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Letters

Proud to be left

I am sorry that Patti Maurice would like the *Monitor* to censor articles and treat the term “left” as a four-letter word unsuitable for polite discourse. I’m also disappointed in your sympathetic response to her letter.

As someone who has proudly identified as left-wing ever since I learned the term in high school history (over 50 years ago) I do not accept it as a pejorative. Dictionaries give various definitions but the one I hold in my head is that the left is egalitarian and the right is elitist (never mind how creatures like Stalin may have perverted the term). Why should any of us be ashamed to identify with the left?

Evidently our politicians are. The NDP has been scrambling, for years, to distance itself from its radical (nothing wrong with that term either) roots and to become a centrist party when the perceived centre keeps moving rightward. The “party of the people” can’t manage to stick up for the poor and disenfranchised anymore or even, as another letter writer points out, object strongly to Stephen

Harper’s militarism. All the parties have drunk the neoliberal Kool-Aid. The left needs to voice its concerns strongly just to restore balance!

What happened to the sixties concept of “tell it like it is”? We need to reclaim words like “left” and “socialist,” educating the populace as to their true meaning rather than letting the right and the corporate media define these terms for us.

Anne Miles, Gibsons, B.C.

Get history right

I agree with Christopher Schultz and Jonathan Weier that we should have a more realistic discussion about Canadian history (“Putting the past to use,” May-June 2016). Unfortunately, we are at war right now (the propaganda term is “mission,” but you will not have a war without propaganda) and the glorification of past wars is usually part of the promotion and justification of present wars for political and economic reasons. Profit and politics are two of the essential P’s of war, along with power, property and the aforementioned propaganda.

The First World War of the 20th century was not fought for the defence of Canada; no one declared war on Canada, no one attacked Canada first and we were in no danger of being invaded. It was not fought for the rights and freedoms of Canadians. In fact, civil rights took a beating during wartime, and you cannot fight for social and economic

justice in Canada outside of Canada. It was another European power struggle, and Europe is soaked in blood. The Europeans have fought each other in hundreds of wars, including six world wars. This war was a futile meat grinder of a conflict, a war that solved nothing, proved nothing, meant nothing and ended, as Field Marshal Foch declared, with “a 20-year peace treaty,” setting the world up with another horrific bloodbath in 1939. The British Empire did gain a million square miles of new territory (the p-word “property”), in particular the oil fields of Iraq, and we are still paying for that. The war should be studied but not celebrated.

The fact that Canadians got off the farm, came together and saw the world was undoubtedly a good thing for the growth of a nation, but so were the building of the railway, the labour movement, the women’s movement, enfranchisement and inclusion of minorities, industrialization, our own flag, our own constitution, the Blue Berets. Our history is our shared heritage. We should be honest about it.

Vern Huffman,
Port Coquitlam, B.C.

More support for a GAI

The unnamed authors of the attack on a basic income guarantee (BIG) in the May-June 2016 issue of the *Monitor* (“Against a basic income guarantee,” by What’s Left) claim the Ontario government’s proposal for a pilot project is ultimately aimed at

reducing or eliminating public services, yet they cite no evidence to support that claim. In fact, there is evidence to the contrary.

Retired senator Hugh Segal, now Master of Massey College, has supported the idea of a BIG for decades, and has been consulting with the Ontario government on how best to implement such a plan. In a recent speech at St. George’s Cathedral in Kingston, Ontario, Segal made it clear that a BIG would be but one component of a broad social support system. A BIG would not reduce the need for affordable housing, publicly provided addiction and mental health counselling, services for the elderly and affordable, accessible, high-quality child care.

Segal reminded his audience that we already have a BIG for seniors, and noted that within two years of the Ontario government introducing a guaranteed income supplement (GIS) the poverty rate among seniors dropped from 30% to 2%. Your anti-BIG article reflects the paranoia of welfare administrators rather than the preferences of welfare recipients.

A sidebar to the article cites seven reasons for the popular appeal of a BIG, but omits an important consideration. Based, as it would be, on income reported to the Canada Revenue Agency, a BIG would eliminate the expensive and demeaning requirement for means testing and intrusive monitoring. Are those “policing” jobs what

the article's authors are anxious to preserve?

The authors accuse BIG supporters of not thinking "big" enough, but surely it's those authors whose assumptions are excessively pinched and pessimistic. Political will depends on public support; and the better informed and outspoken the public, the better designed the program is likely to be. Instead of wringing their hands and arguing to maintain an inadequate status quo, the authors should be actively campaigning for a comprehensive plan that better meets people's needs.

Pamela Cornell,
Kingston, Ont.

Correction

On page 17 of the July-August issue, the date of the Royal Commission on Newspapers (1981) was incorrectly identified as 1982. The *Monitor* apologizes for the mistake, which has been corrected in the PDF on the CCPA website.

Send us your feedback and thoughts: monitor@policyalternatives.ca

Indecision

A prose poem by Valerie Hunnius,
Bancroft, Ont.

Swimming in May
After late thaw
Snow storms in April
In the warmest decade.

Fort McMurray fire burns
Out of control
As drought turns
Forests to kindling.

Elizabeth May reminds us:
Climate change is the source
Of this havoc.
Is shunned for lack of empathy.

What is a city of 100,000
Doing in the boreal forest anyway?
Will rebuilding houses
Bring back jobs?

Investors flee the oil patch
Long before the fire
As prices plunge: will fifty dollar oil
Entice them back?

Alberta's dream dies hard:
Getting dilbit to tide water
Is only reasonable.
Surely Canada can see this.

The hard truth: a pipeline
Planned today and built tomorrow
For a declining industry will be
A stranded asset the next day.

Paris in December: another reality
A hopeful time, a time to aspire
To limit global warming
To 1.5 per cent.

When will our aspirations
Match our goals?
When will we see a carbon budget
Addressing
The urgency of the situation?

Every year a few more species die.
Monarch butterflies and bees
Are threatened and
I wonder:

Are there fewer loons this year?

The quest in Ottawa for real change
Reduces gears: Assisted dying
Charter rights for some
But not for all,
As a first step.

Does anyone remember when
The Canada Health Act
Left pharma and dental care
Out of its provisions,
As a first step?

The Leap Manifesto is scorned, its
Authors vilified: A call to action,
It scares the vested interests more
Than predictions
Of climate scientists.

The last thing they want is recognition
That inequality, climate change, and
Aboriginal injustice
Have anything to do
With each other.

The power brokers are comfortable
With the thought that technology
Will solve the problem,
Mitigate the worst impacts
And leave them in control.

Swimming in May,
Swarming in my mind,
These thoughts
Make me uncomfortable
As we all should be.

Behind the numbers

DAVID HUGHES

Fraser Institute fudges case for new export pipelines



The Fraser Institute's new report, *The Costs of Pipeline Obstructionism*, claims that lack of new export pipelines to tidewater is costing Canada \$2.02–\$6.4 billion dollars per year (depending on the assumed oil price). But they make several flawed assumptions to “prove” their point.

1. They incorrectly assume the world Brent oil price in Montreal will be on par with the North American WTI oil price in Cushing, Oklahoma, against which Western Canadian crude (the WCS benchmark) is now sold. The final destination of the Energy East pipeline is St. John, New Brunswick — not Montreal. (Montreal-area refineries are already well served with Western Canadian crude thanks to the recent reversal of Line 9 between Sarnia and Montreal.) At St. John most of the oil will be loaded on tankers and sold overseas. Hence the price received in Montreal is very likely to be considerably below the WTI price at Cushing, given the additional transportation costs to St. John to access international markets.

2. They assume it will be cheaper to move oil to Montreal than to Cushing despite the fact the toll for moving oil through pipelines is a function of distance. The distance from Hardisty, Alberta to Cushing, Oklahoma (2,600

km) is considerably shorter than Hardisty to Montreal (3,400 km). The toll to Cushing in May 2015 was US\$5.75 per barrel, yet the authors assume the per-barrel toll to Montreal would be US\$5.25. The correct toll to Montreal based on distance is US\$7.52 per barrel. Moving the oil to St. John to access international markets and the Brent price (a distance of 4,500 km from Hardisty) would cost US\$9.95 per barrel.

3. They underestimate the price that can be obtained at Cushing as oil prices rise. The authors assume the discount for WCS at Cushing will be 30%, even at higher oil prices. (The Canadian WCS benchmark always sells at a discount to WTI or Brent as its heavy, high-sulphur characteristics make it less valuable to refiners; this discount also includes transport costs from Hardisty to Cushing.) Although a discount of 30% is reasonable at \$40 per barrel, at \$60 and \$80 per barrel the discount is about 18% (based on data from January 2009 to April 2016). Furthermore, refineries at which WCS is sold must be set up to handle heavy oil, and U.S. Gulf Coast refineries are the largest market in the world for heavy oil. Thus, there is no guarantee that WCS sold overseas would not be even more deeply discounted than

WCS at Cushing, as there are a limited number of refineries outside the U.S. to handle it.

4. The Brent-to-WTI differential, which caused the enthusiasm for tidewater access, has almost disappeared due to the construction of pipelines in the U.S. to relieve the bottleneck between Cushing and the Gulf Coast. The differential averaged just 75 cents per barrel from January to June 2016. Hence WCS oil that is exported from St. John is unlikely to command any premium to WTI when the cost of tanker shipment to international markets is included.

Correcting the authors' errors we can see the Energy East pipeline is a money-losing proposition, particularly considering the capacity is not needed given the cap on Alberta oil sands emissions and Canada's commitments under the Paris Agreement. Losses at \$60 per barrel will total \$1.41 billion per year from Energy East. And losses could be even higher given the limited availability of overseas refineries that can handle heavy Canadian crude, necessitating even steeper discounts.

The authors do, however, correctly point out that royalties from oil in Alberta and Saskatchewan have plummeted as a result of the collapse in oil prices, even as production rises. They then go on to say that new tidewater-access pipelines would increase the royalty take based on their calculations of increased prices. In fact, the opposite is true, given there is a net decrease in the oil price received through tidewater exports via Energy East if realistic assumptions are used.

The Fraser Institute report is a flawed analysis and should not be taken seriously in deliberations on the need for new export pipelines to tidewater or in the development of Canada's climate plan to meet its Paris Agreement commitments.

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ERIKA SHAKER

Canada Post's reality check is in the mail



Whether it's retirement security, the gender pay gap or intergenerational solidarity, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers has raised several important issues in its current bargaining dispute with Canada Post that have gained traction with the public and the media. So, what has changed since 2011 to allow the CUPW's progressive narrative to successfully refute corporate talking points and refocus the debate?

For one thing, to paraphrase and update our prime minister, "Because it's 2016." While the principle of gender equity isn't exactly new, it's enjoying a parliamentary revival, thanks in large part to the tireless work of women's rights organizations and catalyzed by the Up For Debate initiative during the 2015 election campaign. As a result, when CUPW points out that rural letter carriers (RSMCs), 70% of them women, make on average 28% less than their mostly male urban counterparts, the pay equity implications resonate.

As CCPA economist Armine Yalnizyan pointed out in a recent interview, "you can't call pay equity unreasonable or unaffordable: it's 2016!" It's also the law—something the Public Service Alliance of Canada successfully fought for with a complaint dating to 1983 under a previous Trudeau government.

The pension debate has also shifted significantly. Canada Post's insistence that defined benefit pension plans are so yesterday is questionable given recently announced enhancements to the Canada Pension Plan—which is all about defined benefits—to ensure its viability for future generations. Apparently, Canadians have a declining appetite for people retiring in abject poverty, and some governments are listening. The question is, will Canada Post?

Incidentally, while defined benefit pension plans create some extra work for employers, they are not a dying breed: though the majority of Canadian workers do not have a workplace pension plan, of those who do almost ¾ have a defined benefit pension plan. Lest we imagine all of these are "gold plated," consider that a letter carrier with 35 consecutive years at Canada Post is entitled to \$24,500 a year upon retiring at the age of 65—a modest sum for a lifetime of work in a job that has among the highest rate of injuries in the federal sector.

The impact of an uncertain job market has resulted in tremendous public concern for the next generation. By resoundingly rejecting Canada Post's insistence that future hires should be entitled to a less secure retirement than current workers, CUPW has made intergenerational solidarity an ongoing priority at a time when young workers are being told they may have to lower their standards, work for less (or even for nothing), somehow

The impact of an uncertain job market has resulted in tremendous concern for the next generation.

manage to pay off any student debts they have accumulated in the process, and—if there's anything left over—save for an uncertain retirement.

Postal workers also have a new court victory behind them in the current struggle. Remember when the Harper government's back-to-work legislation in 2011 forced an arbitrated settlement on workers Canada Post had locked out just days earlier? This spring, the Ontario Superior Court decided that legislation violated CUPW's freedom of expression.

It was an important and timely reminder of the legal rights of unions and workers in the current political climate—one that seems to have resonated even with some mainstream media. (I don't recall another time *Canadian Business* magazine bothered to explain the difference between a lockout and a strike in case readers were confused about which party had actually threatened to stop the mail.)

And what about that decision to cancel door-to-door delivery? The current labour dispute, coupled with Canada Post's threats to lock out its workers, comes less than two years after the Crown corporation announced it would replace door-to-door delivery with the slightly less personable superboxes ("community mail boxes"). Not surprisingly, the public rebelled. Hundreds of municipalities called for a moratorium or an outright reversal of the decision. Both the Liberals and the NDP made door-to-door delivery an election issue, and when the Liberals were elected they announced a public review of the postal system that is currently ongoing.

Media outlets are now reporting much more consistently and accurately that Canada Post is a profitable Crown corporation. In fact, over the past two decades, the only years where a profit has not been posted were during work stoppages (i.e., only two of the past 21 years were not profitable).

Canada Post is not taxpayer supported. It's taxpayer supporting. Letter mail may be down, but there are more points of call than ever before, and e-commerce has resulted in record-setting profits for package delivery. Rather than crying poor and cut-

ting services, Canada Post could follow the suggestion of its own (heavily redacted) report and reinstate postal banking—a “win-win,” according to the corporation, and a welcome alternative to cheque-cashing businesses and payday lenders that prey on low-income communities.

The public mood has shifted. Not only do people remember Canada Post’s last ill-considered cost-cutting

stunt, they’re recognizing the deep disconnect between the priorities of the Crown corporation’s Conservative-appointed CEO and the recent debates taking place in the broader arena. Retirement security, community enhancement, pay equity, intergenerational support and the protection of our rights—including the right for unions to bargain freely—aren’t just important for CUPW and its members,

they’re resonating with the broader public too.

It’s not the public post office that’s out of date. But given the current political climate and public sentiment, it seems Canada Post’s management needs a serious reality check.

ERIKA SHAKER IS DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND OUT-REACH AT THE CCPA (AND MARRIED TO A GUY WHO WORKS FOR THE POSTIES). FOLLOW ERIKA ON TWITTER @ERIKASHAKER.

**JULIA POSCA AND
SIMON TREMBLAY-PEPIN**

Should we end the alcohol monopoly in Quebec?



In the eyes of fans of the free market, the fact that Crown corporations are granted exclusivity over certain sectors of the economy comes across as one of the most scandalous of aberrations. For this reason, the idea that the *Société des alcools du Québec* (SAQ) should be privatized pops up periodically in public debate. The project is motivated by a desire to free consumers from the grip of the “*Soviet des alcools du Québec*,” as some of its critics call it.

The short-lived *Commission de révision permanente des programmes* (CRPP), tasked with reviewing government programs and headed by Lucienne Robillard, was swayed by the argument. In its summer 2015 report, the commission recommended “the government liberalize the trade in wines and spirits while taking the necessary means to protect current dividends payments to the government.” At the moment, only beer and certain wines and coolers are open to the private sector.

The commission defended its position by claiming, as many have argued before, that allowing private retailers to compete with the SAQ would force it to drive down both its administration expenses and the price of its products. The commissioners pointed to the example of British Columbia, a

province that liberalized trade in alcohol in 2002.

To verify these arguments, and to respond to the CRPP’s recommendations, IRIS conducted a comparative study of the trade in wines and spirits in Quebec and British Columbia. It looked into how alcohol prices and consumption have evolved, as well as administrative expenses in Crown corporations, and government revenues from the sale of these products.

The authors also conducted a pricing study, travelling to the West Coast to compare 584 bottles sold at the SAQ, at BC Liquor Stores (the provincial government retailer) and in privately owned stores there.

The study found that the SAQ is able to offer prices that match those in British Columbia. We also found that B.C.’s publicly owned stores display the best prices. Private retailers are 9.6% more expensive than their public sector competitor: the average cost of a bottle of alcohol at BC Liquor Stores is \$17.24 compared to \$18.89 for private retailers.

The SAQ is able to offer prices similar to those at BC Liquor Stores, even without private competition. According to the data gathered in our pricing study, the average cost of a bottle of alcohol was \$17.24 in BC Liquor Stores and \$17.71 at the SAQ in Que-

bec. BC Liquor Store prices are therefore 2.6% lower than those at the SAQ. BC Liquor Stores have the edge for the average price of wines (\$14.68), 5.7% cheaper than at the SAQ (\$15.57), but Quebec wins out when it comes to a bottle of spirits: \$24.72 vs. \$25.64.

Our analysis of the macroeconomic data also shows that the SAQ is a well-managed business. Its administrative expenses have decreased in relation to sales in the last 10 years while the ratio at BC Liquor Stores has not changed significantly. Moreover, dividends paid by SAQ to the government have increased. The revenue that the government of Quebec collects from each litre of alcohol sold increased 65% between 1997 and 2013, while in British Columbia it only went up 14%.

Finally, wine and spirit consumption in Quebec has increased over the period studied, which shows that SAQ prices are not discouraging consumers. The number of litres of alcohol consumed per capita went up 84% for wine and 72% for spirits, both higher amounts than in British Columbia.

Alcohol is not just another product. The public sector’s presence in the sale of alcohol stems from the desire to restrict its trade because, when abused, this commodity can lead to health problems and public security issues that are far from negligible. The comparative data on the price of wines and spirits does not allow us to conclude that consumers in Quebec would be better served by a market in which the private sector competes with the public sector.

JULIA POSCA AND SIMON TREMBLAY-PEPIN ARE RESEARCHERS WITH IRIS, A MONTREAL-BASED PROGRESSIVE THINK TANK.



New from the CCPA

Nova Scotia's P3 schools

A CCPA-Nova Scotia evaluation has found the province's public-private partnership (P3) schools program to be a failure in terms of cost, risk management and evidence-based decision-making. The report, *Private Profit at a Public Price: Deciding the Future of P3 Schools in Nova Scotia*, finds no cost-benefit analysis was done prior to the initiation of the projects, or at any time since. There were also several examples of mismanagement of the program, ranging from a lack of oversight by the province to safety violations that placed students at risk. Over the next few years, the province must decide whether to purchase the schools, renew the leases or surrender the buildings back to the developers. The CCPA study finds purchasing the schools is the best option.

Energy East and Manitoba

Industry insiders claim the Energy East pipeline will create tens of thousands of jobs across Canada and add tens of billions of dollars to GDP. In *Energy*

East: Taking Manitoba in the Wrong Direction, Lynne Fernandez, Mark Hudson and James Magnus-Johnston put these claims into question, highlighting important considerations such as the social cost of carbon, Canada's commitment to fight climate change and the economic viability of heavy crude production under current pricing regimes. The report explains how Manitoba's ability to develop and expand renewable energy sources offers more potential to create decent jobs and a more sustainable economy.

Working poverty

We are often told the solution to poverty is for the poor to "get a job" or for various sectors to create more jobs. CCPA-BC economist Iglia Ivanova finds that a job is not a guaranteed path out of poverty. Her study, *Working Poverty in Metro Vancouver*, examines the region's working poverty trends by neighbourhood before and after the 2008 recession and finds over 100,000 working-age people employed but stuck below the poverty line in 2012, not counting students and young adults living at home with their parents. Contrary to stereotypes about poverty being concentrated mainly in Vancouver and Surrey, the growing ranks of working poor appear to be spread out across the Metro Vancouver region. Ivanova's study explores the policies contributing to working poverty and develops recommendations for change.

The CCPA-Ontario also details a road map away from working poverty in the summer 2016 issue of *OnPolicy*. Focusing on the cities of Ottawa, London, Toronto, Thunder Bay, Kingston, Waterloo (region), Sudbury, Windsor and Hamilton, the magazine explores improving food security and providing dental benefits for the working poor, raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, tackling precarity in the workplace and improving working conditions for low-wage work as possible policy solutions.

The TPP and autos, copyright, postal services

The CCPA has released the final three reports in its series on the TPP, *What's the Big Deal? Unpacking the Trans-Pacific Partnership*. In *The Devil is in the Details: The TPP's Impact on the Canadian Automotive Industry*, John Holmes and Jeffrey Carey conclude the overall consequences for auto production and employment in Canada will likely be negative. The authors analyze the TPP's provisions governing tariffs, rules of origin and regional content. Canada's far more rapid phase-out of vehicle import tariffs will favour locating new assembly investment and reinvestment in the U.S. rather than Canada. Meanwhile, growth in Canadian vehicle exports to markets outside North America will be limited at best.

In the second report, *The Trouble with the TPP's Copyright Rules*, intellectual property expert Michael Geist discusses how the TPP would dramatically alter the balance between the interests of copyright owners and the users of protected goods and services. The study concludes that the 12-nation agreement, if ratified, could lead to millions of dollars in royalty payments being transferred out of Canada, the increased criminalization of copyright law and a loss of policy flexibility for future Canadian copyright reforms.

Finally, in *Signed, Sealed and Delivered? The TPP and Canada's Public Postal Service*, lawyers Daniel Sheppard and Louis Century assess the provisions in the TPP related to mail delivery and courier services. They find that while there is no immediate threat to Canada Post's monopoly on letter mail, the TPP creates unnecessary risks of trade litigation related to courier services and future reforms or service expansion at the Crown corporation.

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



PHOTO BY MARK BLINCH / THE CANADIAN PRESS

In the news

ANTHONY MORGAN

Why Canada needs Black Lives Matter

The rallying cry of Black Lives Matter is gaining an increasingly Canadian accent. Over the summer, in the cities of Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Montreal, Halifax and Toronto, thousands have gathered for marches and vigils under the banner of Black Lives Matter and/or to publicly express sadness and opposition to anti-black police brutality and the impunity that too often follows.

This activity has been largely precipitated by the police killings of Alton Sterling in New Orleans, Philando Castile in Minnesota and the police shooting of Charles Kingsley in Florida. But why are Canadians getting so bothered by anti-black police violence in America?

What most Canadians do not appreciate is that we too have a tragic trend of black men who have been killed by police with impunity, and thus who could be just as easily memorialized with their own haunting hashtags. Think #AndrewLoku, #JermaineCarby, #AlexWettlaufer, #KwasiSkene-Peters, #Jean-PierreBony, #IanPryce, #FrankAnthonyBerry, #MichaelEligon, #EricOsawe, #ReyalJardine-Douglas, #JuniorAlexanderManon, just to name a few names since 2010.

Despite this, as gatherings to protest state violence against black people in the U.S. have happened across Canada, what has emerged in media and public discourse has been disturbing. The typical response has been: "Hey, at least

being black in Canada is far better than being black in the U.S."

What needs to be understood is that by defensively diminishing black Canadian experiences of police violence, by arguing that it is worse in the States, that person is repeating the same violence as those who use the retort, All Lives Matter.

Both responses dehumanize and help to justify the molestation, maiming and murder of black bodies by police. Both expressions callously discard the sacred humanity, extreme pain and torturous trauma of not only the individual victims, but also of their families, friends and personal connections. This is also extremely insensitive to the black families, communities and their allies whose connection to common human decency causes them to feel the pain of others.

Any compassionate Canadian who has been following the solidarity gatherings that have been happening in Canadian cities will have heard some form of the same statement: Anti-blackness knows no borders. It is here and always has been. Just as Canada cannot deny its black population, it cannot deny its own record of anti-blackness.

Canada's record may not look as extreme as the American stack of black bodies, bloodied, battered and buried by police violence with impunity, but ours is a deplorable record on its own terms. For instance, in Toronto, since

at least 1978, no police officer has ever served time in prison for killing a black person, despite the fact that black people are extraordinarily over-represented in instances of police use of lethal force.

The Special Investigations Unit was in large part created to close the police accountability gap that existed and still persists when a black person is killed by an officer. Instead the SIU has primarily served to rubber-stamp black death at the hands of police with a horrifying nonchalance that is too typically consistent with the polite and passive-aggressive character of the ways anti-black racism plays out in Canada.

Indeed, the absence of police accountability for the taking of black life is a sordid and shameful tradition that Canada shares closely with America. But let's not forget that lethal force is only the most extreme expression of police violence.

Long before the blast of a police bullet burns through a black body, far too many blacks in Canada have been subjected to disproportionately high police scrutiny and surveillance, racial profiling, carding and other invasive intrusions that ultimately impale their life prospects, tear away at their humanity and compromise their sense of belonging in Canada.

To dismiss Canadian gatherings sparked by anti-black police violence in the U.S. only delays the inevitability of the racial justice reckoning that is already underway in Canada. The force behind this reckoning is primarily young, it is growing, it is Canadian.

This reckoning calls for a new generation of fairer and transparent state accountability mechanisms that will fully and finally replace the inaction and cowardice of police, public policy-makers and politicians who refuse to honestly and ethically respond to the ways that anti-black racism penetrates the 49th parallel.

ANTHONY MORGAN IS A TORONTO-BASED COMMUNITY ADVOCATE AND LAWYER. THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE TORONTO STAR ON JULY 25, 2016.



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“Inclusive” growth

Compiled by Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood

Neoliberal globalization is often associated with conservative politicians. Union-busting Thatcherism and deregulatory Reaganomics ushered in a wave of free-trading, tax-cutting, privatizing politicians who pushed their pro-corporate ideology across the globe.

But for all their efforts, those leaders couldn't do it alone. International institutions, non-governmental organizations and academic economists were crucial in pushing the neoliberal orthodoxy. These “non-partisan” actors gave neoliberalism the credibility it needed—the appearance of there being “no alternative” to economic reforms that were obviously harmful to large numbers of workers worldwide.

That's why recent reversals by some of the world's most influential proponents of neoliberalism are so notable. Researchers at the International Monetary Fund, one of the key enforcers of neoliberal globalization, recently admitted the project may have been “oversold.” Meanwhile, the elite management consulting

firm McKinsey & Company has just realized stagnating incomes are a problem, and that new regulations and tax transfers may be a good idea.

The problem

Most people in countries like Canada aren't benefiting from neoliberal globalization. More than **65%** of households in advanced economies saw their incomes decline between 2005 and 2014, according to McKinsey.

One likely cause is the erosion of labour unions. In the U.S., where only **11%** of workers are unionized, **81%** of households saw flat or falling incomes in the past decade. In Sweden, where **68%** of workers are unionized, only **20%** of households were stagnant during that period.

Another likely cause is austerity. Reducing GDP by 1% through government spending cuts increases long-term unemployment by **0.6 percentage points** and increases inequality by **1.5%**. “In terms of lower output and welfare and higher unemployment, [the costs of austerity] have been underplayed,” says the IMF paper.

If current trends continue, **70–80%** of households could see flat or falling incomes in the next decade. “Today's younger generation is at risk of ending up poorer than their parents,” says the McKinsey report.

Their solutions

For McKinsey, more progressive taxation is key to solving the inequality problem. Increasing transfers for low-income households and raising taxes on capital income are both on the table. Other suggestions include raising the minimum wage, increasing affordable housing, investing in public transit, and encouraging more women to work by supporting better maternity leave and child care programs. Much of this will sound familiar to Alternative Federal Budget readers.

At a macro level, the IMF paper argues that many governments are better off living with debt and engaging in “productive spending” rather than pursuing the brutal austerity demanded by neoliberalism. In a comical departure from past IMF policy, the paper acknowledges “the evidence of the economic damage from inequality” and suggests “policymakers should be more open to redistribution than they are.”

The new narrative

The G20 summit in Turkey last November was held under the banner of “inclusive” growth—an idea the Trudeau government has embraced. “I believe in investment rather than austerity,” said the prime minister before the summit. What kind

of investment? Trudeau's choice of McKinsey director Dominic Barton to chair the government's new Advisory Council on Economic Growth offers a hint.

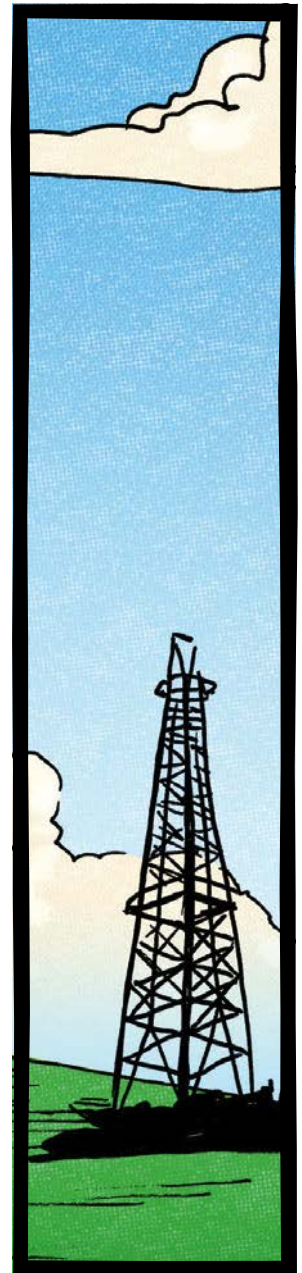
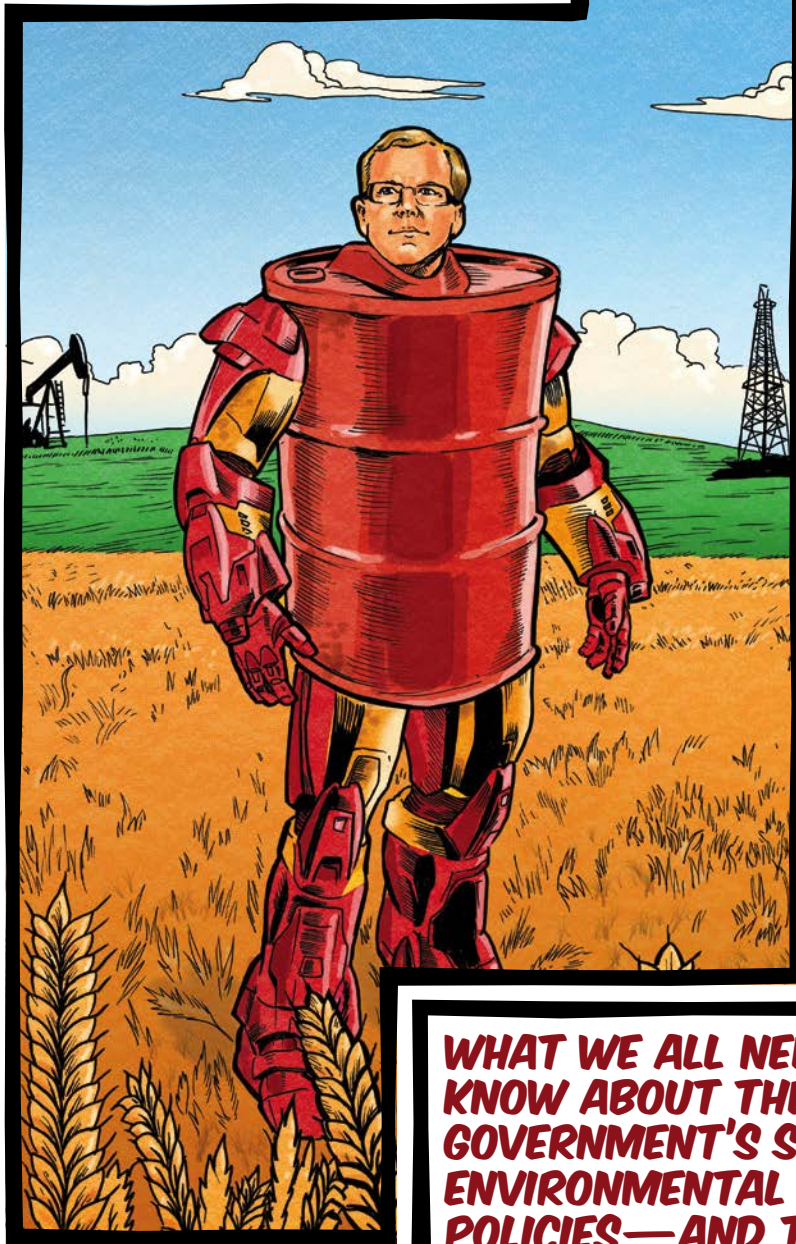
Barton has spoken of “the nature of the deep reform that I believe business must lead—nothing less than a shift from what I call quarterly capitalism to what might be referred to as long-term capitalism.” The council he is chairing is loaded with people who, like him, would prefer the solutions to the neoliberal crisis (and the finance for them) come from the private sector.

Likewise the IMF paper still claims there is “much to cheer in the neoliberal agenda,” and the McKinsey report makes a number of problematic suggestions, such as giving employers a greater voice in school curricula. The future of globalization as envisioned by these titans of global finance is unlikely to be what progressive social movements would champion.

In conclusion, it's hard not to take some satisfaction in the neoliberals' *mea culpa* for the mess we're in, but we should be cautious of their new “inclusive growth” narrative.

CANADA,

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT BRAD...



**WHAT WE ALL NEED TO
KNOW ABOUT THE WALL
GOVERNMENT'S SOCIAL,
ENVIRONMENTAL AND LABOUR
POLICIES—AND THEIR APPEAL
OUTSIDE SASKATCHEWAN**



AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WALL GOVERNMENT FROM CCPA-SK DIRECTOR **SIMON ENOCH**

MANY A PROGRESSIVE MAY HAVE BREATHED A SIGH OF RELIEF WHEN SASKATCHEWAN PREMIER BRAD WALL, SURELY CANADA'S MOST POPULAR (65% SUPPORT IN JUNE) AND SAVVY CONSERVATIVE, PUT TO REST SPECULATION OVER A RUMOURED FEDERAL LEADERSHIP BID.

If those same people think that makes him merely “Saskatchewan’s problem,” they haven’t been paying close enough attention. Since the election of his Saskatchewan Party in 2007, Wall has regularly intervened on national issues in ways that undermine progressive change—from his opposition to pension reform and a carbon tax to stereotyping refugees to misleading Canadians about the federal-provincial equalization program. As introduced here, and described in more detail in this special *Monitor* feature on Saskatchewan, Premier Wall has also beta-tested a number of conservative policy experiments that may soon launch in other provinces: carbon capture and storage, a largely unregulated fracking industry, a partially privatized social impact bond model for delivering public services, and a war of attrition on labour legislation. Far from being a local issue, Canadian progressives may want to get to know Brad a little better.

EQUALIZATION AND PIPELINES

Despite being relatively quiet about equalization reform during most of the Harper years, Wall became a passionate convert once Quebec municipalities voiced their opposition to the proposed Energy East pipeline (which would run through Canada’s second most populous urban area). The premier berated Quebecers for their intransigence: “Maybe we need to have equalization payments start flowing through a pipeline in order to finally get one approved through Central Canada,” he said.

The premier’s dog-whistle to Western alienation and anti-Quebec sen-

timent had the desired effect—conservative politicians and columnists across the country ridiculed the ungrateful easterners who dared exercise their democratic sovereignty on this controversial pipeline. Wall further derided the federal equalization formula, arguing that “have-not” provinces were receiving “too much money” that could be directed to national infrastructure or tax cuts.

It was all just more ammunition for the already toxic debate on equalization of recent years. Not only were “have-not” provinces accused of sending bills (for their profligate welfare spending) to the wealthy “haves,” but now Wall claimed prioritizing environmental over economic concerns was the “luxury” of other people who are more than happy to live off the resource wealth of other provinces, his in particular.

Such arguments rest on a wilful misrepresentation of how the equalization formula works. No province actually “pays into” the program. Equalization is administered through federal taxes that we all pay equally, and disbursed to provinces that fall below a national per-capita income standard based on revenue from five different tax sources. A smaller province could regularly balance its budget, or even run budgetary surpluses, yet still not be able to generate enough own-source revenue to meet the national standard for a variety of reasons, including a smaller population or tax base (income or corporate), lower average incomes, a downturn in international commodity prices for natural resources, etc. This explains why Prince Edward Island, with a total population of only 146,000, has tended to re-

ceive the largest equalization payments (about \$1,980 per person per year).

Saskatchewan was once among the “have-nots,” taking equalization payments every year except for 1975-76 and the period 1981-82 to 1985-86. But in 2008-09 the province’s fiscal capacity increased to the point where it no longer qualified. Its transition to “have” status was primarily due to increasing resource (oil and gas) tax and royalty revenues. Should those sources diminish—which they most surely will in the near term given the continued decline in oil prices—Saskatchewan might soon find itself once more a benefactor of equalization.

Wall’s distortion of the equalization formula sets a dangerous precedent for how Canadian federalism should operate. According to his logic, provinces on the receiving end of equalization should effectively cede their sovereignty (on certain decisions at least) to the interests of wealthier provinces or be “cut-off.” As St. Thomas University professor Tony Tremblay explains, such rhetoric amounts to tacit blackmail, as it seeks to popularize “a new landscape of distributive federalism, a landscape that attaches conditions to federal transfers of money.”

Recently, in response to calls from the Ontario government for Saskatchewan to adopt carbon pricing, Premier Wall rejoined, “it’s really none of their business in the province of Ontario as to what Saskatchewan does with its policies.” One wonders why Quebec doesn’t merit the same respect for its internal policy decisions as Saskatchewan. Nevertheless, Wall’s foray into the equalization debate has only further muddied the public’s understanding of how federal fiscal transfers work, while conjuring up an ugly anti-Quebec sentiment that ill serves the cause of national unity.

STEREOTYPING REFUGEES

Wall regularly exudes a folksy populist charm, but he is not averse to using divisive wedge politics when it suits his purposes. In the run-up to the 2016 Saskatchewan election, he dabbled in the worst kind of fear mongering when he used the Paris terror attacks of November last year as justification to sus-

pend the federal government's promise to accept 25,000 Syrian refugees.

In a letter to Prime Minister Trudeau, Wall said he was concerned the plan could "undermine the refugee screening process." While the premier conceded "the overwhelming majority of refugees are fleeing violence and bloodshed and pose no threat to anyone," he cautioned: "If even a small number of individuals who wish to do harm to our country are able to enter Canada as a result of a rushed refugee resettlement process, the results could be devastating."

In fact, Syrian refugees underwent multiple levels of intense screening—far beyond what any other visitor to Canada would experience. Prospective asylum seekers were registered with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)—a process that includes biometric identification—and interviewed several times by Canadian visa officers to verify their identity. The names of prospective asylum seekers were also run through various international and Canadian law enforcement databases. Women with children, unaccompanied minors, the elderly, sick and vulnerable were given priority. Young, single men who may have been combatants, or could not account for missing identity documents, did not make the cut.

Despite this unprecedented level of scrutiny, Wall—who either had little knowledge of the actual refugee screening process or feigned ignorance—continued to stoke unsub-

stantiated fears of ISIS operatives gaining easy access to Canada, an idea deemed fanciful by virtually *all* security experts and veteran foreign affairs officials.

The sad reality is that Wall's knee-jerk fear mongering not only delayed the settlement process, but also subjected incoming refugees to even more suspicion and mistrust than they might otherwise have experienced. "Our main concern is the unfair association being made between refugees and a security risk—it has a broad impact in terms of how refugees are treated," lamented Janet Dench, executive director of the Canadian Council for Refugees.

RETIREMENT INSECURITY

Interprovincial consensus is rare and hard to come by when it happens. But there it was, or so it seemed, at the end of June 2016: the provinces and federal government had agreed to upgrade the Canada Pension Plan so that everyone has adequate savings to ensure a decent retirement. The decision recognized that the preferred retirement solutions to date—voluntary, private savings mechanisms like RRSPs, PRPPs and TFSA's—are wholly inadequate to the task, "a colossal failure," in the words of former TD chief economist Don Drummond.

Indeed, as CCPA researcher Hugh Mackenzie has explained, these voluntary retirement vehicles are notoriously underutilized, with only one in

four eligible tax-filers making contributions and even fewer maxing them out. Moreover, RRSPs are wildly inefficient, being massively subsidized through tax breaks yet charging high management fees and underperforming most public plans.

The failure of voluntary savings plans, coupled with the drastic elimination of employer-supported pension plans, is making more and more Canadians dependent on mandatory public pension programs like the CPP, Old Age Security (OAS) and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). Given this reality, voices from all quarters of the economy—and now Canada's provinces—have called for pension reform as the best means to ensure an adequate level of retirement security for Canadian seniors.

All provinces but one, that is. Premier Wall and his Saskatchewan Party government have opposed modest enhancements to the CPP at each and every turn. They regularly parrot business lobby talking points that misrepresent greater CPP payments as a "job-killing payroll tax" rather than the efficient social safety net they are. Whether in good economic times or bad, the Wall government has argued that businesses are simply too fragile to allow Canadians a modicum of retirement security, repeating the mantra that "the time isn't right." Instead, Wall continues to champion the same failed voluntary, pooled savings plans that have only worsened the retirement crisis.

THE WALL GOVERNMENT: A CHRONOLOGY

NOVEMBER 2007

Saskatchewan Party wins its first provincial election; Brad Wall becomes premier.

MAY 2008

Bill 5, the Public Service Essential Services Act, becomes law, giving employers broad discretion to categorize public sector workers as "essential," thereby removing their right to strike.

MAY 2008

Bill 6, the Trade Union Amendment Act, becomes law. The act ends automatic union certification when more than 50% of workers sign union cards, and relaxes restrictions on employer dissemination of anti-union information during certification drives.

JULY 2008

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL)

launches a constitutional challenge to bills 5 and 6, arguing they violate workers' rights to collective bargaining and to organize new unions

OCTOBER 2008

The government institutes its "Saskatchewan First" policy for Crown corporations that forces them to sell out-of-province investments whether these are profitable or not.

APRIL 2009

The government reneges on its electoral commitment to reduce provincial GHG emissions, opting to adopt the drastically reduced federal government target.

MARCH 2010

The government sells the province's 38-year-old educational television channel, the Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN), for a mere \$350,000 to private company Bluepoint. Two years later, Bluepoint sells SCN to Rogers

The Saskatchewan government is going ahead with the recently announced CPP reform, but only reluctantly—and with strings attached. Wall said he feared that by sitting it out, “a more aggressive plan like the province of Ontario’s would be implemented nationally.” (Ontario dismantled its fledgling ORPP after Prime Minister Trudeau announced the improvements to the CPP.) Faced with inevitability, Wall nonetheless used what power he had to water down the changes, ensuring your enhanced pension will be later in coming and less generous than it might have been.

CLEAN COAL AND GREEN OIL

Of all the national issues Wall has addressed, he is perhaps most intractable on one of the most important for our collective future: climate change. While not an outright denialist, Wall has flirted with climate change skepticism, famously implying, in the 2016 throne speech, that those who want to reduce Saskatchewan’s reliance on fossil fuels are in thrall to a “misguided dogma that has no basis in reality.”

Wall’s actual position is more considered, aimed at maintaining business as usual. In many ways he exemplifies what Shannon Daub of the CCPA-BC has deemed “the New Denialism,” and what Mike Soron calls “Climate Conservatism.” Wall accepts the climate science; he just doesn’t feel especially burdened by it. As Soron

explains, “Unlike those who pretend global warming does not exist, this denial acknowledges the climate emergency as a real problem, yet rejects measures that respond to it in an adequate or timely way.”

Wall’s favourite talking point is that Canada is “only responsible for three per cent of global emissions,” and therefore any attempt to lower them will have much less impact than in more polluting countries. Not only does this position deny our *historic* responsibility for carbon emissions—we have been spewing carbon a lot longer than less industrialized countries—it also neglects the fact we are one of the largest *per capita* GHG emitters in the world (*the* highest, according to the World Resources Institute). Moreover, being a small total emitter relative to the rest of the world does not absolve us. Premier Wall’s logic is akin to the first-grader who, caught red handed doing something they shouldn’t, pleads “the bigger kids are doing it too!”

Saskatchewan has undergone a series of extreme weather events over the past few years, among them record floods, wind, hail and unprecedented wildfires. Despite the increasing intensity and frequency of these events, Wall is loathe to connect them with climate change or admit they are part of a “new normal.” This is despite the revealing fact that annual spending on provincial disaster assistance has jumped from a consistent \$3 million and under a dozen years ago to

above \$100 million in two of the past four years.

As Wall has sought to downplay the effects of climate change and Saskatchewan’s contribution to it, his major role on the issue nationally has again been one of obstruction. Upon taking power in 2007, the Saskatchewan Party government reneged on an electoral commitment to reduce provincial emissions by 32% below 2004 levels by 2020, claiming it would have negative economic impacts. Instead, Wall promised to adopt the diminished federal target of a 20% reduction below 2006 levels by 2020. Even this more modest standard may prove elusive, as the province has seen the greatest rise in GHG emissions since 1990 (66%) and now accounts for 10% of Canada’s total. With just 3% of the population, Saskatchewan is the greatest per capita emitter in the country.

Not content to stymie meaningful emissions reduction targets at home, Wall has been a vociferous opponent of federal attempts to put a national price on carbon, torpedoing the Harper government’s proposed cap-and-trade program and threatening a constitutional challenge to Trudeau’s proposed national carbon tax. The premier’s preferred alternative to pricing carbon is to invest in carbon capture and storage (CCS), a \$1.5-billion taxpayer-subsidized fetish of the Saskatchewan government.

The government’s Boundary Dam facility, which captures carbon from coal and then uses it to assist in unconven-

Broadcasting for \$3 million, more than 8.5 times what the government received.

AUGUST 2010

The government begins contracting out certain surgeries to privately operated for-profit clinics in Regina and Saskatoon.

MARCH 2011

The government eliminates the Saskatchewan Film Employment Tax Credit, significantly undermining the provincial industry. A 2012 Saskatchewan

Media Production Industry Association (SMPIA) survey found that 40.3% of respondents classify themselves as former SMPIA members who have either found work in another industry or are unemployed and looking for work in other industries.

AUGUST 2011

The government spends \$40 million to hire Seattle-based John Black and Associates to institute “lean management” in the province’s health care system. The management

theory, based on Toyota’s auto-manufacturing process, is heralded as a means to drastically improve efficiency and cost savings in the health system. A subsequent study by University of Saskatchewan researchers concluded the provincial government has spent \$1,511 on lean management for every one dollar saved.

NOVEMBER 2011

The Saskatchewan Party wins another provincial election.

MARCH 2012

The government implements its “regulation by declaration” procedures, essentially allowing the petroleum industry to regulate itself.

NOVEMBER 2012

The Saskatchewan government privatizes Information Services Corporation (ISC), the Crown responsible for registration of land titles, corporate registration and vital statistics.

tional oil extraction (what SaskPower, the provincial power utility, calls “clean coal and green oil”), has been plagued by multiple shutdowns, fallen short of its emissions targets, required expensive equipment replacement and repairs, and faces millions of dollars in penalties for failing to deliver the promised amount of carbon to prospective buyers. Despite these challenges it appears the Wall government will double down on carbon capture as a means to continue Saskatchewan’s reliance on coal for the majority of its electricity generation.

SaskPower recently contracted to purchase 118 million tonnes of coal over the next 13 years. This would suggest the government fully intends to convert the province’s other outdated coal-fired generating facilities to CCS, which should worry anyone concerned about reducing GHG emissions. Despite the government’s claims, CCS is not a climate change strategy. As Brian Banks and Mark Bigland-Pritchard explain, the one million tonnes of CO₂ captured at the Boundary facility (when it is working) amounts to about 7% of all GHGs created by SaskPower’s coal-fired generation, and less than 2% of the province’s total emissions. Moreover, for each tonne of carbon dioxide used to recover oil, about 2.7 tonnes of carbon dioxide are eventually emitted from combustion of the extra oil recovered.

In reality, Boundary Dam is an exorbitantly expensive oil recovery scheme that will do little to significantly reduce

Saskatchewan’s runaway greenhouse gas emissions. Though Wall has announced a SaskPower target of 50% renewable power generation by 2030, there is still no plan to deal with our largest-emitting sector—oil, gas and mining—which is responsible for a third of Saskatchewan’s greenhouse gases.

Finally, beyond Wall’s climate policy failings, we would be remiss not to mention the premier’s public attacks on those who would have the province change course. Wall recently engaged in a Twitter war with author Naomi Klein and Stanford University professor Marc Jacobson over the possibility of decarbonizing Canada’s economy by 2050. After first demonstrating some rather questionable math skills, Wall blithely dismissed the premise of a sustainable economy in 35 years as being “blinded by the pixie dust and gored by the unicorn.”

Similarly, in a recent address to the Calgary Petroleum Club, the premier warned of the “existential threat” facing the oil industry by “an ever-growing matrix of activists,” including proponents of the Leap Manifesto and the divestment movement that calls for companies and public institutions to sell off their fossil energy holdings. And in the immediate wake of the recent Husky Oil pipeline spill—250,000 litres of heavy oil and solvent discharged into the North Saskatchewan River, 70,000 Saskatchewan residents left with a compromised water source—Wall’s first instinct was to lament that

the disaster might “make it harder to sell new energy infrastructure” in the future.

The crux of the Wall government’s “new denialist” climate strategy is to diminish, deny and demonize: diminish the actual impacts of climate change and Canada’s contribution to it, deny any meaningful climate policy and demonize those that seek to advance an environmentally sustainable future. In this respect, Premier Wall is an industry-sponsored holding action, ensuring the continuation of business as usual at a time when rapid and meaningful change is of the essence.

CONCLUSION

Here in Saskatchewan, we know the rest of the country rarely pays much attention to us. We hope the contributions to this special issue of the *Monitor* will convince you there are many good reasons to start. The policy preferences of the Saskatchewan government, and the obstructionism of Premier Wall on the national stage, are clearly not just local issues; they are directly in the way of progressive Canada-wide solutions to climate change, and more effective social programs. Whether it’s regressive right-to-work style labour legislation, environmental regulation by industry self-declaration, or privatizing and profiting from social investment, Saskatchewan has become an incubator for right-wing policies that may well be coming to a province near you. **M**

FEBRUARY 2013

The government announces that all future liquor stores in the province will be privately owned and operated.

OCTOBER 2013

The government announces its intention to use a public-private-partnership (P3) model for the construction of nine new elementary schools in the province.

DECEMBER 2013

The government privatizes the majority of the province’s hospital and health centre

laundry service to Alberta-based K-Bro Linen Systems.

JANUARY 2015

The Supreme Court of Canada strikes down the Public Service Essential Services Act. In a 5-2 ruling, the Court finds unionized Canadian workers have a constitutionally guaranteed right to strike.

AUGUST 2015

The government privatizes food services at provincial correctional institutions. Initially, food quality is so

poor inmates refuse meals in protest.

NOVEMBER 2015

The government announces plans to privatize 40 publicly owned liquor stores and license 12 new private stores in the province.

Premier Wall sends a letter to Prime Minister Trudeau asking the federal government to redouble security checks on incoming Syrian refugees in the wake of the Paris attacks that month.

MARCH 2016

The government passes legislation allowing patients to pay out of pocket for private, for-profit MRI scans.

APRIL 2016

The Saskatchewan Party wins its third provincial election. In June, Premier Wall is reported to have the support of 65% of the population.



Andrew Stevens

Lessons for labour

Saskatchewan stops short of union-busting, but the balance of power has shifted in the Wall years

SASKATCHEWAN'S labour movement was awarded a rare victory in the winter of 2015 when the Supreme Court of Canada rendered a historic decision on the constitutional right to strike. In *SFL v. Government of Saskatchewan* Canada's top court deemed the province's Public Service Essential Services Act (commonly known as Bill 5) unconstitutional. Proclaimed in 2008, the legislation effectively prohibited a cross-section of public sector employees and their unions from engaging in job action should employers deem the work to be "essential." The legislation was widely recognized as a hammer looking for a nail, as Saskatchewan's strike data illustrates.

While labour rejoiced in its hard-fought legal victory in 2015, the province's conservative premier, Brad Wall, responded by musing on Twitter, "Here is an essential service in Sask that the [Supreme Court of Canada] cannot overturn," in reference to a player on Saskatchewan's prized football team, the Roughriders. The prairie populist has often used social media as a testing ground for controversial policies. It was on that forum Wall pondered if young workers should be required to pay union dues, prompting labour to question if right-to-work legislation was in the works. Fortunately nothing so dramatic materialized. But the remark raised concerns that anything could be on the table when it came to labour legislation.

Now, as a conservative government comes to power in Manitoba, and Ontario embarks on its own ambitious "Changing Workplaces Review," there is value in reflecting on how the Saskatchewan Party successfully navi-

gated to choppy waters of labour legislation reform.

In 2014, the Liberal government in Nova Scotia used Bill 5 as a model for its own Bill 30 and Bill 37, showing that parties of all stripes in Canada were looking to their like-minded neighbours when crafting anti-labour legislation. The federal Conservatives had also built an "essential service" designation as a means to arbitrarily suspend workers' rights. And for a time, Ontario's failed Progressive Conservative leader Tim Hudak keenly followed the Saskatchewan Party's relatively delicate approach to labour relations reforms since at least 2011. Of course, Hudak's promise to make Ontario a right-to-work province and fire 100,000 public servants failed to invoke Brad Wall's political acumen.

But Bill 5 and the essential services battle was just one piece of a broader struggle involving reform of employment standards and labour relations legislation in Saskatchewan. In 2012, the government embarked on an ambitious comprehensive review with the launch of the "Consultation Paper on the Renewal of Labour Legislation in Saskatchewan." As part of the public consultation process, the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety received thousands of submissions from businesses, unions and the general public. A ministerial advisory committee composed of labour and business representatives was also struck to provide guidance, but some suspected the legislation had already been drafted by the time "consultations" commenced. An early draft of the legislation (Bill 85) was circulated for review and further consulta-

tion by 2013. Reforms were ultimately enshrined in a single piece of omnibus legislation, the Saskatchewan Employment Act (SEA), in 2014.

The SEA is a culmination of efforts meant to "modernize" and "simplify" labour relations, according to a government consultation document. Whether or not the act is equipped to deal with modern labour market challenges, like the rise of non-standard employment relationships, technological change and self-employment, remains to be seen. And indeed, the SEA came to pass when times were good and workers generally content, yet was set up to confront unions and their influence when the boom ends. That time has come.

Such is the brilliance of a critical piece of legislation that at once satisfies the ideological marker of the Saskatchewan Party and its political allies, yet stops short of union busting. Consequently labour was unable to muster public outrage over the changes and focused its energy instead on a legal battle. This is what can be learned from the Wall government's iteration of conservatism and conservative politics in Saskatchewan.

LABOUR RELATIONS IN THE NEW REGIME

Supreme Court victory aside, changes to the labour relations framework still pose serious problems for unions in Saskatchewan. Card certification was swiftly brought to an end and employers have been granted the right to communicate directly with workers during unionization campaigns and negotiations. Labour was unsuccessful in reversing these reforms during the many legal challenges. And although strike action

was awarded a semblance of constitutional protection in the Court's 2015 decision, current legislation still frustrates the capacity of private and public sector workers to engage in legal forms of job action. A prolonged period of mediation and conciliation is now required before work stoppages can commence.

Construction unions faced their own battle in 2010 when the government introduced Bill 80. The legislation amended the Construction Industry Labour Relations Act to allow for wall-to-wall organizing, threatening the dominance of craft-based building trades and opening the construction industry up to the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC). CLAC is widely accused by other labour organizations of being a company-dominated union, even though the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board has yet to uphold these charges. CLAC even sided with the "open shop" construction lobby group Merit Contractors Association in supporting Bill 80.

There was reason for unions to be concerned. The last conservative government, led by premier Grant Devine, waged an all-out war on the building trades, nearly decimating construction unions in the province. Union density collapsed, going from around 80% to just 10% within a decade. Changes to an otherwise tranquil construction labour relations regime appeared senseless in a booming economy.

Legislated changes have also allowed businesses to bypass union representation during the bargaining process by invoking a last offer vote directly with the membership. Previously this was only permissible in the event of a strike lasting longer than 30 days. Employers have even been empowered to carve "supervisory" employees out of existing bargaining units, creating new burdens for unions during bargaining and the day-to-day practice of labour relations. Only registered nurses have been able to reach a compromise with the government on this matter, invoking their influence through the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) to develop special regulations

for this powerful cohort of health care professionals.

Deficit-induced austerity has even called into question the government's commitment to negotiated wage increases and the sanctity of good faith bargaining. Teachers in Saskatchewan found this out the hard way when the minister of education, Don Morgan (who, incidentally, also holds the labour portfolio), confirmed that the government would only cover half of the promised 1.9% increase, leaving cash-strapped school boards to finance the balance.

"[W]e are not backing away from the contract," Morgan insisted. He just refused to pay for it. Due to a \$3-million shortfall, one board was forced to let go 74 teachers and educational assistants. As political scientist Charles Smith wrote in June, "the decision to sidestep a negotiated collective agreement demonstrates this government's tense relationship to workers' collective rights to freely bargain." Layoffs also hit publicly supported agencies that deliver educational and support services to newcomers in Saskatchewan when the government axed its 42-year-long partnership with the Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation (SCIC).

P3S AND PRIVATIZATION

Privatization has unsurprisingly amplified divisions between the government and labour. And without robust successor rights provisions in the legislation an austerity-driven agenda poses a serious challenge for public sector unions.

A year into its second mandate, the Wall government decided to partially privatize a lucrative land and corporate registry business, the Information Services Corporation (ISC). Over a dozen Crown corporations have been sold off and various areas of public sector employment have been contracted out since the Saskatchewan Party came to power less than a decade ago. There has also been a push to expand the use of public-private partnerships (P3s) for major infrastructure projects in the province, illustrated best by the

wastewater treatment facility debate in Regina in 2013.

More recently the government carried through with its promise to replace five publicly owned regional hospital laundry services with a centralized facility owned by Alberta's K-Bro Linen Systems. Over 300 workers across the province were left unemployed by this cost-cutting measure. Most of these savings will be maintained by employing a workforce earning about \$7 an hour less than their unionized counterparts, according to a study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

The government has also moved ahead with liquor store privatization, allowing more private vendors and the selling off of a handful of existing locations, just as it halts the construction of new publicly owned franchises. This comes despite evidence indicating the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority (SLGA) and public liquor sales generate a healthy revenue stream for government coffers, and are not a drain on the treasury as the government's consultation survey suggested. Although not a product of Wall's labour law reform agenda, the gradualist nature of Saskatchewan Party privatization allows the government to maintain popular support while advancing its ideological objectives.

Provisions in the Saskatchewan Employment Act dealing with basic employment standards, however, have not been marred by the same ideological tenacity as labour relations. The government defied protests from some sections of the business lobby, namely the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), by introducing annual minimum wage increases indexed to inflation, providing some solace to workers who occupy the growing low-wage industries (far from a living wage by any measure, but still a step in the right direction). About 5% of Saskatchewan's workforce earns the legislated minimum wage of \$10.50 an hour.

Even interns received recognition in the new legislation and guaranteed compensation for their work. Unpaid internships have been ef-

fectively banned in Saskatchewan. There is some cause for concern when it comes to the sanctity of hours of work. Employers and employees can now negotiate an extension to the working day and overtime commitments through modified work arrangements without approval from the Ministry of Labour. Although the capacity for workers to negotiate the configuration of their workweek appeals to some, these provisions in the SEA could very well unbalance already asymmetrical relations between employers and Saskatchewan's most vulnerable workers— young people and migrants.

A SAFER PLACE TO WORK?

Health and safety in Saskatchewan has received a symbolic boost through the government's commitment to *Mission: Zero* and other measures like summary offence ticketing. Employers now face steeper financial penalties when it comes to unsafe workplaces. But experts have questioned the Ministry of Labour's commitment to enforcement and meaningful application of the law. There is even some suspicion that senior policy-makers within the ministry have shaped enforcement to meet the interests of business, undermining worker safety in the process.

In 2013, a policy change resulted in a radical decrease in the number of inspections and notices of contravention, with the government opting instead to focus scarce resources on the most injury-prone workplaces. That same year, a report on the 2011 incident at the Co-op Refinery in Regina shed light on shortcomings of self-regulation and voluntary compliance when dozens of workers were injured in an explosion caused by a corroded pipe. The government has yet to institute a mandatory piping inspection plan and looks instead to industry for guidance. A deputy minister even admitted to being "too patient" with the refinery when it came to waiting for the company to develop its own safety practices. Labour has been understandably concerned

with the Saskatchewan Party's commitment to safety in the province.

Saskatchewan's track record on migrant and foreign worker protection also deserves consideration when it comes to evaluating the province's framework of worker rights. In the last decade, the number of migrants employed in Saskatchewan has increased fivefold. An estimated 10,000 foreign workers now call Saskatchewan their (temporary) home.

Proclaimed in 2013, Saskatchewan's progressive Foreign Worker Recruitment and Immigration Services Act (FWRISA) offers important protections from malicious recruiters and immigration agents, but it stops short of making the exploitation of foreign workers and new Canadians a labour issue. Public servants and policy-makers consulted widely when crafting the FWRISA, entering into discussions with labour organizations on how best to raise the floor of rights for foreign labour and immigrants in Saskatchewan. FWRISA offers meaningful protections for newcomers in Saskatchewan and represents a significant albeit largely uncelebrated win for labour. There are some limitations, however.

The Ministry of the Economy, which manages the FWRISA and the program integrity unit established to oversee the legislation, has a short-lived history with the practices of investigation and enforcement. Since 2008, there have been more than 200 "program integrity cases" involving the mistreatment of skilled and unskilled foreign workers in Saskatchewan. Third party representatives are at the heart of these infractions. Offenders might lose their right to legally offer services to foreign nationals coming to Saskatchewan, but otherwise problems simply disappear. Unlike the publication of comparable offences, like employment standards violations and unfair labour practices, the exploitation of foreign workers is not exposed on a publicly accessible database. Provincial freedom of information requests have been unable to yield detailed information about program integrity investigations and outcomes.

CONCLUSION

These developments must be considered in the context of a right-wing agenda that has been masked by relatively high economic growth and low unemployment, at least until recently. It is in this environment that Premier Wall has allowed the conversation around labour legislation reform, privatization and business-friendly economic policies to follow conservative lines. Most importantly, Wall has been successful in not allowing confrontation with political opponents to damage the government's reputation, signaling that his populist rhetoric holds a great deal of credibility with the people in Saskatchewan.

After all, the Saskatchewan Party secured 62% of the popular vote in the 2016 provincial election. Wall also commands a substantial number of union votes. A weak NDP opposition has further enabled this trajectory in Saskatchewan politics. The government's use of public consultations— on the questions of labour law reform and liquor privatization, for instance— has provided further legitimacy to such policies. Indeed, conservatism in the province maintains a human face.

There are also lessons for unions in the *SFL v. Saskatchewan* case, an otherwise important legal win for labour. A modest privatization agenda, austerity, and labour relations legislation that has further empowered employers will continue to undermine union influence in the province. Labour's costly legal battle is largely pyrrhic if it cannot effectively deploy this constitutional victory and its newfound right to strike.

And in the absence of a proper advocacy mechanism for non-unionized employees, business interests have largely shaped revisions to employment standards, despite some concessions to workers. What Saskatchewan needs is a coherent living wage movement, ideally a branch of the Fight for \$15 and Fairness campaign, through which to confront growing labour market inequalities. **M**



Angela V. Carter and Emily M. Eaton

Saskatchewan’s “Wild West” approach to fracking

THE COMBINATION of fracking and horizontal drilling ignited a shale oil boom in Saskatchewan, highlighted by exponential growth in the Bakken oil fields over the past decade. Wells drilled into the Bakken grew from just 75 in 2004 to nearly 3,000 by 2013. By 2015, there were over 7,500 horizontal fracked wells across the province (see Figure 1). While the spread of fracking has incited intense public concern and a range of government regulation around the world (given the health and environmental risks of the extraction method), Saskatchewan government officials and industry representatives argue current regulations on fracking are “comprehensive” and “robust.” Is this accurate?

We attempt to provide an initial response to that question here. First we describe fracking, its risks and the typical regulatory responses to them. We then focus on the growth of the industry in Saskatchewan and its impacts, while also clarifying the gov-

ernment’s policy approach to fracking. We argue that Saskatchewan primarily applies existing oil and gas regulations to fracking with a few minimal revisions. At the same time, the government is weakening regulatory enforcement in the province by relying on industry self-regulation.

WHAT THE FRACK?

The use of fracking technology has spread rapidly across the United States and Canada since the 2000s when companies began to use multiple fracture treatments (multi-stage fracking) along horizontal drilling paths to access “tight” gas and oil reserves.

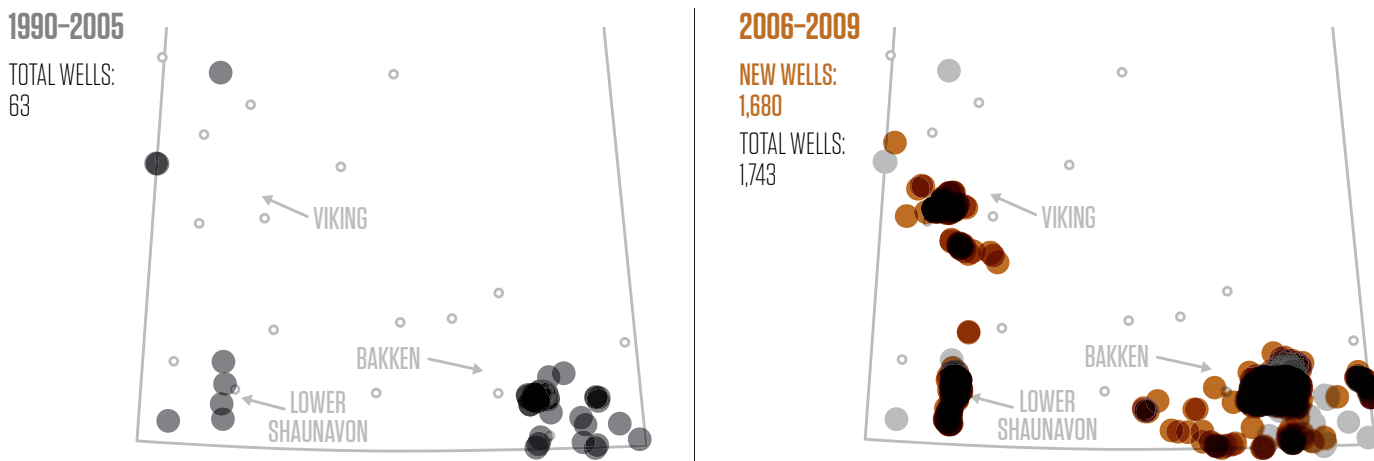
Fracking involves breaking up underground formations to release oil and gas trapped in small pockets of impermeable rock by pumping in a mix of water, chemicals and sand. The technology incited a boom in unconventional gas production in the U.S., but over the last decade it has also boosted tight oil production in Canada. The Bakken formation underlying Saskatchewan and Manitoba and bordering the U.S. is the largest produc-

ing tight oil play in the western region. In great part thanks to fracking technology, over a million barrels of crude oil a day are drawn from it.

Fracking is associated with a wide range of impacts: pollution or overuse of surface or groundwater; emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases; damage to wildlife habitat and rural communities due to extensive webs of infrastructure and traffic; threats to human health; interference with traditional subsistence and other sectors (tourism, ranching and agriculture); and earthquakes. Anti-fracking movements have grown across the globe since the late 1990s in response to these risks, with civil society groups demanding bans or stronger regulation of fracking. A notable example is the annual “Global Frackdown,” an international day of action against fracking that has been growing since it began in 2012.

In Canada and the U.S., fracking regulation is primarily left to provinces and states, though some local governments have also been very active in opposing fracking through implementing moratoria and bylaw

Figure 1 Horizontal fracked wells in Saskatchewan, 1990–2015



revisions. Government responses to fracking vary widely, but typically they take one of three forms:

1) Moratoria or temporary bans:

These are generally called to allow time to assess fracking's impacts on the environment, as in New York, Nova Scotia, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

2) Permit, but regulate:

Here governments opt to allow fracking after implementing more comprehensive regulatory changes to address the unique risks and impacts of extraction. Colorado is one example, as is Alberta, where Directive 083 specifies an "Unconventional Regulatory Framework," and new requirements for monitoring and reporting seismic activity have been implemented.

3) Applying existing regulations to fracking:

In this approach, any regulatory changes are slight, typically encouraging information disclosure about chemicals used in fracking. This is the case in Texas, which denies that fracking impacts groundwater and has not adjusted regulations. Yukon also took this approach when it ended a temporary moratorium to allow fracking in the Liard Basin, emphasizing that regulations are "robust, modern and designed to regulate all oil and gas activities." Political scientist Dianne Rahm provocatively describes the Texas approach to fracking as "pretty much 'the wild West'" of regulation. Although, in 2011, the state did legislate minimal disclosure of chemicals used in new

wells, regulations are missing on water use, waste disposal and greenhouse gas emissions.

What explains these starkly different regulatory approaches? Studying Colorado and Texas, Charles Davis identifies several central factors: how much governments are dependent on oil and gas revenues, how supportive politicians and policy-makers are for oil and gas, and how much political influence the industry has in comparison to groups that might raise concerns about fracking, such as environmental organizations, municipalities and non-oil industries.

Davis describes how industry representatives and public officials have a shared interest in heavily oil-dependent states. They work together to expand oil and gas development while marginalizing groups expressing concern about fracking. Furthermore, as Barry Rabe and Christopher Borick observe, these governments are "reluctant to take any unilateral environmental policy steps that might threaten their economic well-being."

FRACKING SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan has been producing oil on a commercial scale since the 1940s and has seen many spikes and slumps in production (see Figure 2). Since the 1990s, however, production has reached new heights. Today, the government of Saskatchewan prides itself on being an "energy giant." Indeed, the province is ranked sixth largest oil-producing jurisdiction on

the North American continent, "behind only Texas, Alberta, North Dakota, California, and Alaska," according to a 2015 government fact sheet.

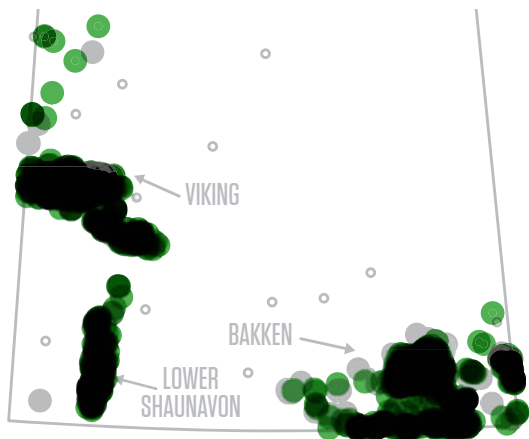
Record-breaking oil production, drilling activity and petroleum rights sales over the last decade are due in part to the combination of horizontal drilling and multi-stage fracturing, which has boosted the production of "light, tight oil" in three main formations. The Bakken formation in southeast Saskatchewan is the most developed of these, producing 2.8 million barrels of light oil in December 2012, followed by the Viking and Lower Shaunavon formations.

Environmental consultants, landowners and environmental organizations interviewed for our research note many negative environmental impacts and significant risks from fracking. For example, multi-stage fracking uses extreme quantities of water (up to 750,000 gallons of fresh water per single well in Saskatchewan) that is lost from the hydrological cycle when it is disposed of deep underground. Moreover, the development of Saskatchewan's Bakken oil has dramatically increased the venting and flaring of associated gas. In 2013, over 17% of the province's GHG emissions came from the oil and gas sector's "fugitive emissions" alone. Saskatchewan now has the highest GHG emissions per capita in the country.

Interviewees were also concerned about the surface impacts of fracking. The fragmentation of the province's last vestiges of native prairie (which makes native species more vulnerable

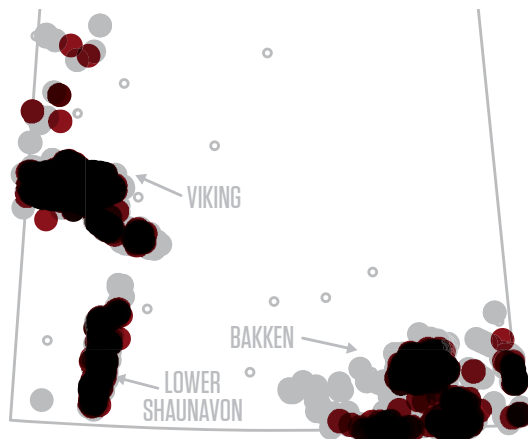
2010-2012

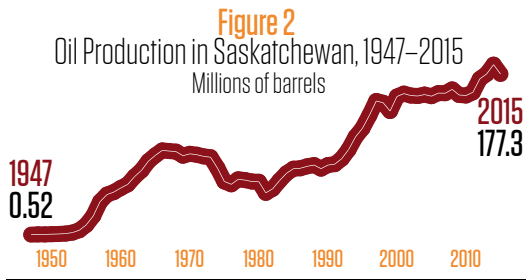
NEW WELLS:
3,264
TOTAL WELLS:
5,007



2013-2015

NEW WELLS:
2,718
TOTAL WELLS:
7,725





to encroachment from noxious weeds and imperils habitat) was highlighted by interviewees, along with the damage done to vegetative growth when highly saline produced water is spilled across the landscape. A spreadsheet available on the Ministry of the Economy website shows there have been more than 18,000 spills of salinated water, oil and natural gas in the province since 1990.

Despite new risks posed by the rapid growth in multi-stage fracking, the Saskatchewan Party government and policy-makers from the ministries of the economy and environment insist (without evidence) that fracking has not resulted in negative environmental impacts and has been done safely for 50 years. Yet in making this claim, government officials are equating the use of single frack jobs on horizontal wells (used over many decades in the province) with multi-stage fracking using horizontal wells, which introduces important risks, particularly relating to water. The government's refusal to regulate this relatively new technique as a distinct practice is apparent in the Ministry of the Economy's newly adopted (2012) oil and gas conservation regulations and by the Ministry of Environment's de facto exemption of oil and gas wells from environmental assessment.

NO NEW REGULATIONS

Oil and gas is regulated in Saskatchewan primarily by the Ministry of the Economy, established in 2012 with the stated aim of fostering economic growth. This super-ministry administers the oil and gas conservation regulations first adopted in 1985 and updated in 2012, more than five years after the oil industry began its intensive use of horizontal multi-stage fracking. Yet regulations

pertaining specifically to fracking are conspicuous by their absence. In fact, there are only three regulations that specifically refer to fracturing in the 2012 update, and two of these were already part of the 1985 rules. The only new regulation pertaining to fracking prohibits the blending of high-vapour-pressure hydrocarbons with propping agents—usually a blend of ceramic, silica or resin-coated sand used to prop open fractures after a formation has been fracked.

Beyond enforceable regulations directly applicable to fracking, a regulatory guideline administered by the Ministry of the Economy prohibits the blowing of flowback fluids and sands into a pit or sump, or onto the surface of a lease. Instead, it recommends that fluids and frack sand be contained in a tank and disposed of in an approved disposal well. Companies need only notify the ministry of disposal and have 48 hours to do so. Unlike in British Columbia and Alberta, there is no requirement in Saskatchewan to disclose the contents of fracking fluids.

Other jurisdictions have responded to the increased risk of groundwater contamination posed by multi-stage fracking by strengthening requirements on the production casing used to line wells. In Saskatchewan, well casing requirements are uniform for fracked and non-fracked wells, and are minimal compared to standards applied in other jurisdictions. For example, while some U.S. states require cement bond logs and intermediate casing for fracked wells, neither are required in Saskatchewan. Furthermore, it is not necessary in the province to cement production casing to the surface, and adding casing strings (to protect against high pressure and high risk treatments) is at the discretion of the operator.

Finally, a recent directive on associated gas conservation is of relevance to fracking. Flaring is a critical issue arising from the rapid expansion of the technology. While it does not specifically reference fracking, Directive S-10 requires operators venting or flaring more than 900 cubic metres per day to implement conservation measures. However, the efficacy

of this new directive is questionable since it can be circumscribed if operators can show that conserving gas is uneconomical or if venting and flaring are deemed temporary or non-routine.

Next to the Ministry of the Economy, the Ministry of Environment takes a clear secondary role in the regulation of oil and gas development in the province: it may review each oil and gas project, but it has granted industry a de facto exemption from environmental impact assessment.

One interviewee told us that since 1999 the Ministry of the Environment has provided letters to companies indicating that wells are not developments under the Environmental Assessment Act, thereby shielding them from undergoing an environmental impact assessment (EIA). According to data provided by the ministry, between 1995 and 2010 only two EIAs were completed for new oil and gas projects. Over the more recent 2006–2010 period, which saw an intense increase in oil well licensing, only one new oil and gas project underwent an assessment.

While individual oil wells may not pose significant environmental effects, the cumulative effect of thousands of wells drilled every year through technologies such as multi-stage fracking is certainly worthy of more thorough regulatory and environmental impact assessment by the province, and more public consultation.

GETTING (FURTHER) OUT OF THE WAY

Not only has Saskatchewan neglected to implement new regulations to address the unique risks associated with the boom in fracking, the province is also actively undermining the ability of regulators to enforce even the existing rules.

Premier Wall has coupled a right-wing agenda of austerity in the public service with an ideological program of economic development characterized by “cutting red tape” and removing and reducing barriers to economic growth by “creat[ing] the best environment for business—and then get[ting] out of the way.” Indeed, the contraction of the public service has

been a key priority for the Saskatchewan Party government, despite the province experiencing an economic boom from the mid-2000s to 2014. As noted recently by the minister of finance, the government has “embarked on a process to reduce the size and cost of government operations,” aiming to “reach a 15 per cent reduction in the size of the public service over four years primarily through attrition.”

In Saskatchewan, ensuring regulatory compliance is already challenging given that oil production happens across vast geographies in rural areas. But stagnating staff numbers and booming industry activity strain the regulatory system even further. A series of CBC news reports in 2015 showed widespread and chronic problems with wells across the province leaking gas containing hydrogen sulphide (which can cause serious harm or death to animals and humans) at concentrations that well exceeded the regulatory maximum. Referring to regulatory enforcement in the province, the assistant deputy minister of the Ministry of the Economy’s petroleum and natural gas division admitted, “there’s [sic] been sites that have not received the attention they should,” and noted the ministry does not have “enough boots on the ground to get this work done” given the ongoing oil boom.

Workers at the four regional petroleum development offices responsible for regulatory compliance in the province told us that field staff are finding it increasingly difficult to proactively audit and inspect the industry. Rather, their jobs mostly involve reacting to incidents such as spills, and responding to complaints from landowners and the general public. In one field office an interviewee reported that three field staff are responsible for enforcing the regulations—from the initial exploration through drilling, production and abandonment phases—on roughly 20,000 wells. Another interviewee highlighted that the number of staff in the office has remained the same since the 1980s while the number of wells in the region has increased dramatically, leaving less time for random field inspection of wells.

Field office staff admit they do not have enough time to enforce all the regulations, so they prioritize only certain issues and supplement the enforcement of “minor infractions” by employing summer students. Moreover, to avoid new hiring, site reclamation enforcement is contracted out to private consultants whose work is monitored by regional offices.

The Wall government is further diminishing regulatory oversight through processes of industry self-service and what it calls “regulation by declaration.” Ed Dansock, Saskatchewan’s senior strategic lead for oil and gas development, claimed this process allows companies to self-declare that they meet regulatory requirements, which reduces the role (and therefore workload) of the ministry to conducting random audits rather than overseeing each application and project. All routine applications for drilling, including routine horizontal multi-stage fracking, now receive instantaneous approval through an online “self-service” submission tool that grants approval from all three ministries (environment, economy and agriculture) involved in the regulation of oil and gas.

In other words, the Saskatchewan government is actively retreating from regulating oil and gas: industry will self-declare compliance and government oversight will be diminished to random audits. According to a regulator interviewed for this research, Saskatchewan’s “regulation by declaration” approach is novel in Canada, with jurisdictions like Alberta keenly interested in implementing it should it be deemed a success.

WHY IS SASKATCHEWAN A REGULATORY LAGGARD?

Given Davis’s understanding of the variance in fracking regulation, Saskatchewan’s minimalist approach makes sense. The province emphasizes that oil and gas is “one of Saskatchewan’s leading industries.” Oil royalties accounted for \$1.5 billion of government revenue in 2013-14, with an additional \$106 million from the sale of provincial lands to oil companies, which combined represents close to

14% of the province’s total revenue. In addition, the oil and gas sector provided approximately 33,000 person-years of employment in 2015. This is no small contribution in a province that has bled agricultural jobs in rural communities over the last two decades.

At the same time, the interests of the oil industry are easily heard by politicians and policy-makers. As noted in a recent CCPA-Saskatchewan study, oil, gas and uranium companies make significant contributions to both the Saskatchewan Party and the NDP (28% and 22% of top corporate contributions respectively between 2008 and 2010). Oil companies are top funders of the Saskatchewan Party: in the 2011 election year, Crescent Point Resources, the largest tight-oil extraction company, contributed the third largest corporate contribution to the party.

Industry representatives are also actively involved in oil and gas policy-making as part of the Saskatchewan Petroleum Industry/Government Environment Committee (SPIGEC). Through SPIGEC, industry associations work alongside departmental ministers to develop regulatory guidelines for the oil and gas sector, including the 2012 minor reforms to fracking rules.

Petroleum industry executives and managers are obviously pleased with the regulatory environment they have helped to create in Saskatchewan: as documented in the Fraser Institute’s 2015 Global Petroleum Survey, “Saskatchewan is once again the top-ranked Canadian province on the ‘policy perception index.’” Saskatchewan is also the top-ranked Canadian province in terms of environmental regulations and considered the “most attractive” Canadian province for petroleum exploration and development.”

Elected officials from both major parties seem happy to conserve this “favourable” regulatory environment by supporting fracking and downplaying its risks. This was plainly demonstrated in the bipartisan support of the Saskatchewan Party’s 2013 motion in the legislature that affirmed the assembly’s endorsement for the continued use of hydraulic fracturing in Saskatchewan’s energy sector.

While the province has a long history of environmental social movements opposing the nuclear industry, to date there has been limited organized opposition to the oil and gas industry or fracking specifically. Nor have the concerns of rural landowners coalesced into the kind of anti-fracking lobby notable in Colorado and other U.S. states.

Rural landowners interviewed for our research expressed severe grievances with, yet dependence on, industry. They receive income from surface leases (roughly \$1,500 to \$3,000 per well per year) and from selling access to surface water, disposing of drilling mud and/or trucking or removing snow for the industry. These off-farm sources of income are important given declining agricultural economies; landowners do not want to jeopardize the jobs and livelihoods of people in their families and communities by speaking against the oil industry.

Organized public opposition to fracking has developed in other provinces with important oil and gas sec-

tors such as B.C., Alberta, and Newfoundland and Labrador. While a similar kind of mobilization is not yet apparent in Saskatchewan, opposition to fracking is growing in Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities alike. This may pick up in response to new evidence of the negative impacts of fracking in the province being documented in scientific research or revealed through environmental and public health incidents that are clearly linked to fracking.

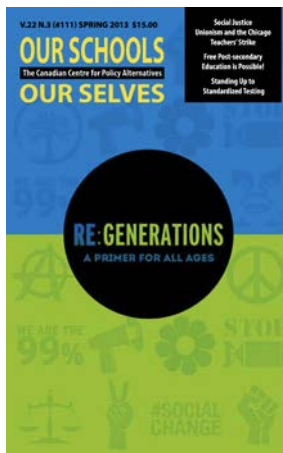
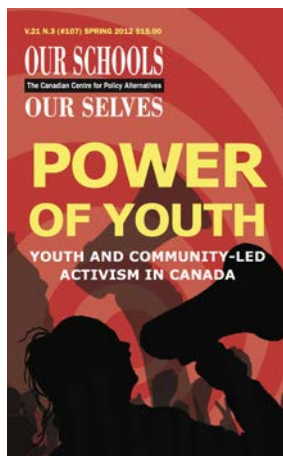
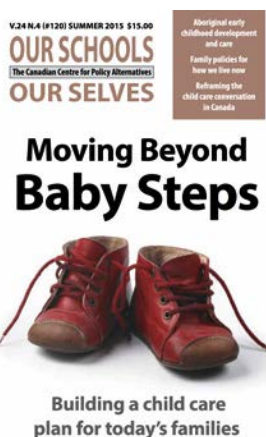
CANADA'S TEXAS?

Public opposition to fracking has spread to wherever the technique is used across the world. Governments in Canada and the U.S. have generally responded by either banning the practice, regulating it or effectively ignoring it. Saskatchewan has taken the latter path, in all likelihood due to the province's economic dependence on oil, the political influence of industry, legislative and bureaucratic support for the sector from all major political parties and the limited opposi-

tion to fracking from environmental organizations and landowners.

In contrast to jurisdictions that have paused or stopped fracking to study the environmental and safety impacts, Saskatchewan is allowing it to take place under current regulations developed for conventional oil and gas activities. The province has not even implemented requirements for companies to publicly disclose the chemicals they use to frack—a minimal request in jurisdictions, including Texas, taking the most hands-off approach to regulation.

Contrary to the claims of public officials and industry representatives, the province's fracking regulations are hardly "robust" or "comprehensive." In fact, the Wall government is "streamlining" the licensing, regulation and monitoring processes for all oil development, including fracking, and moving toward a system of industry self-service and self-regulation. In this way, Saskatchewan presents an even more remarkable example of "wild West" fracking regulation than Rahm found in Texas. **M**



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FINDING LEADERSHIP

Taylor-Anne Yee is a third-generation Chinese Canadian from Treaty 6 Territory, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. This is her story of how she joined a program called Next Up* and learned that introverts can become leaders, and anyone can change the world.



*Next Up is a leadership program for young people interested in social and environmental justice. See more at www.nextup.ca.

My life was so different before I left Saskatchewan. I mean, I'm still "me" inside, I just see things differently now.

Growing up, I would hear people say things like

There will always be homelessness.

If they just worked harder...

That's just the way things are.

They're just lazy.

People didn't mean to be hurtful, but talking like this affected us all unconsciously and changed how we looked at each other.

I used to think the same way. I even repeated what people said about those who tried to change this world.

It was easy for me to simply go along with what everyone else was doing and thinking. There was no reason to think I should be doing anything. I had a pretty good life after all. This all changed when I left Saskatchewan to go to Bible College for a year.

Do those protestors really have to be disrupting traffic like that?

It's just the way things are...

It affected me, too.

Here, I started to read the news. I paid special attention to politics (I used to think politics was incredibly boring, but I thought it was the "adult" thing to do).

To my surprise, I ended up identifying with a party. I had my first political "debate" with a friend.

Your party's economics make no sense!

But it's not just about the money... it's about people, too!

I cast my first ever vote for that same party in the fall election.

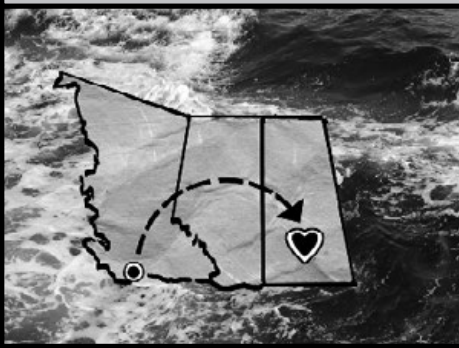
I also became socially aware after seeing homelessness first hand when I went to Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. I saw a place where people go when society abandons them.



But I also saw a community, and leaders trying to end poverty. It made me think about what I was supposed to be doing in all of this.



When I was moving back home, I felt a little helpless. I was prepared to simply return to a "normal life." Go to school, get a job, make money...



But how I viewed my province had completely changed.

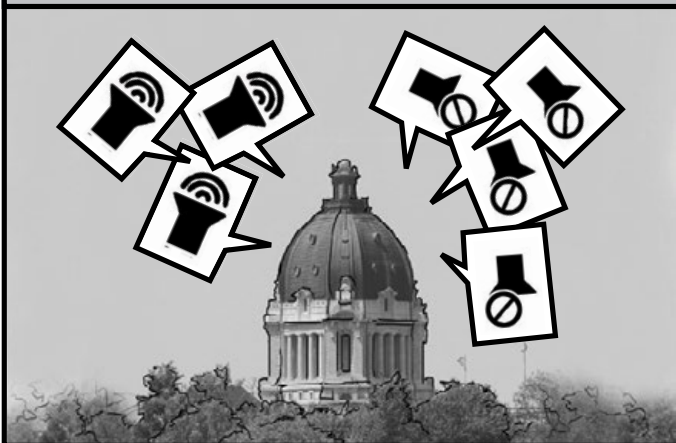
See, before I left home, I was in a similar mindset as many other young people who didn't feel any particular connection to Saskatchewan.



But being away made me realize how much I loved our province. And when you love something, you want to care for it.



So when I returned home and saw that we had our own social and environmental problems that the government wasn't talking about, I couldn't just leave.



The government would always tell us to focus on what we did best: natural resources. I know our politicians love our province, too, and they are doing their best for us.

But our province is worth more than what we take out of the ground.

We have much more potential than this...





I wanted to do something about the suffering I saw, but how? I was given this piece of reality, but I didn't know what to do with it.

Then one day, out of the blue, I received an e-mail from my mom's friend: "Have you heard of Next Up? You may be interested."

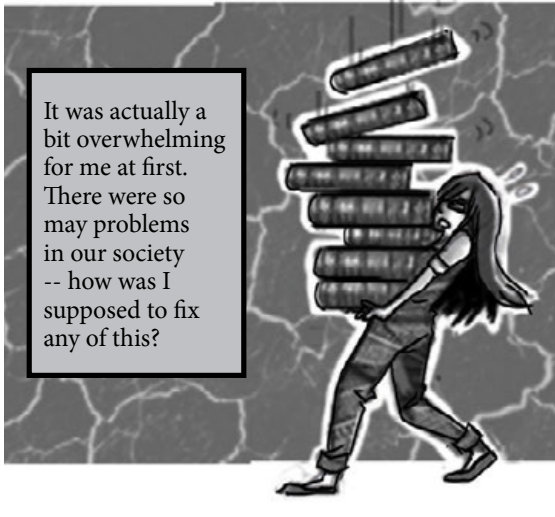


because our strength comes from our people... but right now, many of those people are suffering.



Next Up was exactly what I was looking for.

I learned so much about the world through this program.



It was actually a bit overwhelming for me at first. There were so many problems in our society -- how was I supposed to fix any of this?



Of course, I wasn't alone, and Next Up showed me that, too.

The people I've met through Next Up were some of the most amazing leaders I have ever seen. They were inspirational, smart, and compassionate. I looked up to them a lot, and I still do to this day.



So when I reflect on how Next Up changed my life, I can say that it has in many ways. At the same time, and as I said before, I have not changed that much inside. I am just more aware and I feel inspired to make our province a better place for everyone.



When I think about that, I wonder how many other people in Saskatchewan also want to make a difference, but feel like they can't. Just like me before Next Up, they may be missing something. I hope to do what I can to help people find their missing piece. As leaders, this is what we must do.

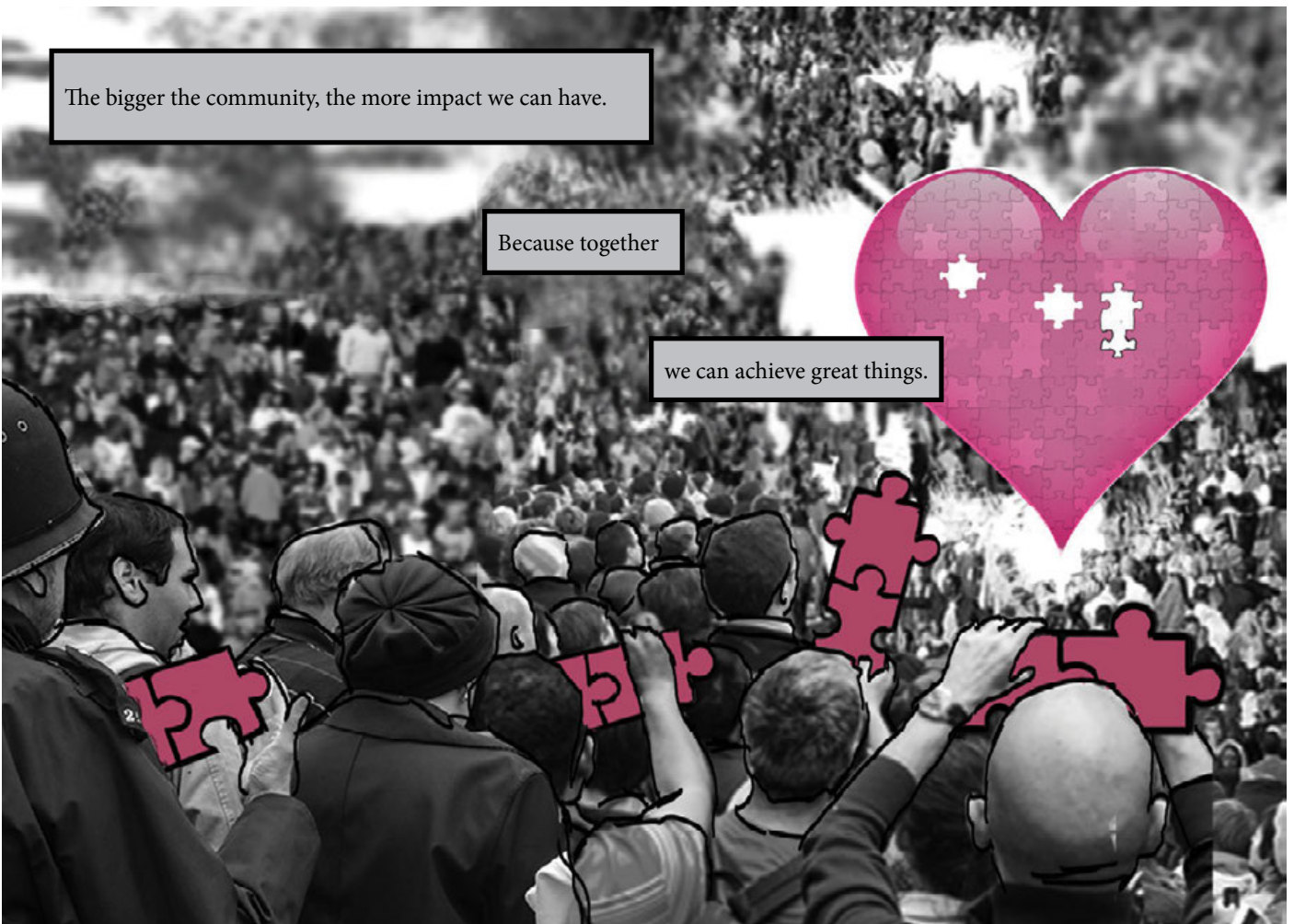
We must use our leadership to give people inspiration, empathy, hope, strength... whatever it is they need to start making a difference. If we are able to do that, we can build a community of people who will help solve social and environmental issues.



The bigger the community, the more impact we can have.

Because together

we can achieve great things.



This story is based on my comic from the Summer 2016 issue of Our Schools/Our Selves. If I have portrayed a culture incorrectly, please let me know at tayloranneeye@gmail.com.



Erica Violet Lee

Indian summer

IN NOVEMBER 1885, eight Native men were hanged in what is now Fort Battleford, Saskatchewan. These men were executed by the North West Mounted Police as part of a campaign to break down North West Resistance efforts in the prairies. Native children at Battleford Industrial School, the nearby residential school, were brought out to watch their relatives hang.

Tourists to the site in mid-August 2016 would have come across a replica of Fort Battleford and been greeted by actors in full North West Mounted Police costume. From this point they might have followed a path to where Battle River meets *kisiskāciwani-sipiy* (the North Saskatchewan River) and, had they looked closely, noticed bubbles along the banks from a recent Husky Energy pipeline spill. Had they also visited nearby First Nations along the river they would have seen a thick mix of bitumen and diluent coating the grass on the shoreline.

From there, if you move east up the North Saskatchewan to the Forks, then follow the South Saskatchewan River southwestward, you will eventually find Saskatoon. In November 1990, a 17-year-old Cree man was dropped on the outskirts of the city by the Saskatoon Police Service. He did not make it back before freezing to death in the -40 C weather. His name was Neil Stonechild.

As a Cree girl growing up in Saskatchewan during the inquiry into Stonechild's death, I remember a video clip of the Saskatoon police in their heavy winter coats, leaving footprints in the snow as they stepped around Neil's body, his upper half barely covered by a thin blue jacket. I saw that three seconds of footage played on TV so many times that 20 years later the image is still vivid in my mind.

In Saskatchewan we are taught from a young age to believe that

death is the natural state for Indigenous people. The only good Indian is cold, still and settled. Anything that subverts this expectation is a threat to the safety of the province and its property. As often as the rest of the country forgets about Saskatchewan, it remains a daily battleground of Indigenous history and presence in Canada.

On August 4, 2016, a 22-year-old Cree man from Red Pheasant Cree Nation was shot and killed by a white farmer as he walked toward a farmhouse near Biggar, Saskatchewan, where he and three friends had stopped to ask for help changing a flat tire. His name was Colten Boushie.

When I heard the news I was out of the province, far away from loved ones already organizing for Colten's family. I could only bear to skim the news stories, and ended up getting stuck on a line about how the four young people spent the day swimming before they pulled up to Gerald Stanley's farmhouse.

Maybe it's because the freezing Saskatchewan winters seem to amplify tragedy, but for some reason I believed the prairie summer was a sacred time when nothing bad could happen. For a 22-year-old,

"WHAT IS IT LIKE TO LIVE WITH A FEAR OF NATIVE PEOPLE SO INTENSE THAT YOU ARE WILLING TO SHOOT A 22-YEAR-OLD IN THE NAME OF DEFENDING YOUR PROPERTY?"

August is about swimming at the lake with friends, drying off our already-brown, summer-darkened skin with a towel, and brushing the sand off our feet before we put our shoes on for the drive home. But here was the hot soup of prairie racism boiling over: *"Farmer that killed one person for trespassing—shame on you. You should have shot all four of them and buried them out back,"* said one of many social media comments about Colten's death, some of them quoted by the CBC.

What does it do to Indigenous people forced to watch the murders of relatives and loved ones, understanding it is just another attempt to make us cold, still and settled? Native people on the prairies already know the answer. We know racism so thick it makes the air heavy to breathe, food tough to digest, life hard to live.

The more useful question now is, "What is it like to live with a fear of Native people so intense that you are willing to shoot a 22-year-old in the name of defending your property?"

Despite the heaviness, Native folks are just like you, at least in some ways. We take naps in the August heat, we go for long drives to the lake, we go swimming, we fall in love. The difference is that we do all these things in a nation that long ago decided Native freedom, Native love and Native life are, more than anything else, threats to Canadian property.

In the last warm days of this year, Native people will continue doing what we have always done, since time immemorial, in our prairie homelands. We will get together with friends, take naps in the August heat, go swimming, and carry Colten's memory alongside the legacy of resistance in our already-brown, summer-darkened skin. (*Kinanaskomitin* [thanks] to Hayden King for his guidance in the process of writing this article.) **M**

THE CLIMATE IS CHANGING. SO SHOULD PREMIER WALL.

DAVIDA BENTHAM

IN 2012, Saskatchewan surpassed Alberta as Canada's largest per-capita emitter of greenhouse gases (GHG). In support of the polluters (or perhaps to avoid any cognitive dissonance) the Brad Wall government also went beyond the climate denying rhetoric we were used to hearing across our western border.

The federal government and most provincial governments appear to have grasped the severity of climate change and are beginning to act. At the end of June, the Trudeau government announced a review of Harper-era environmental reforms, including the controversial hollowing out of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, Fisheries Act and Navigable Waters Act. Public consultations will be an important part of this review, which will also consider the needs and concerns of Indigenous peoples with the objective of incorporating Indigenous traditional knowledge into environmental decision-making processes.

The Ontario government just released a Climate Change Action Plan that will invest nearly \$2 billion annually—the expected proceeds from a cap and trade program to be implemented in 2017—in public transit, building retrofits and the development of carbon-neutral technology. Quebec launched its cap and trade program in 2012, while British Columbia implemented a revenue-neutral carbon tax in 2008 to ensure emitters pay the full price, and to make clean energy alternatives more attractive.

Alberta, once seen as the most oppositional to climate action, just passed legislation implementing a carbon tax that will take effect in 2017. And in June 2016, New Brunswick announced GHG reduction

targets that surpass national standards. The conversations around climate change are not only shifting at the legislative level, but also in the courts. Consider the recent Federal Court decision to overturn the approval of Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway pipeline because the Harper government failed to adequately consult with First Nations.

So what of Saskatchewan? Unfortunately, the province is led by a premier who has rejected climate change science and the Leap Manifesto as “misguided dogma that has no basis in reality.” Wall recently started an embarrassing Twitter fight with environmentalist and Leap co-organizer Naomi Klein, in which he misquoted research from Stanford University environmental engineering professor Mark Jacobson that was cited in the manifesto.

The premier has also taken it upon himself to be the travelling spokesperson for TransCanada's proposed Energy East pipeline, visiting Toronto, Montreal and Saint John to bolster the project—all on the public dime. To top it off, Wall is the loudest provincial leader opposing a national carbon pricing strategy. “This is fundamentally the wrong time for the country, and especially for Western Canada, to be looking at another tax on everything,” he said in July, just before a meeting of the premiers in Whitehorse.

While Ontario successfully phased out coal-fired electricity generation in 2014, the Saskatchewan government boasts of having the world's first “post-combustion coal-fired carbon capture and sequestration project” integrated into a power station. But is it a sign of innovation and cutting edge technology or just a really bad idea? I believe it is the latter.

When electricity is generated through the burning of coal, the carbon that is produced is captured, sold and transported by pipeline to nearby oil fields where it is used for oil recovery. Excess carbon is injected and stored deep underground in a sedimentary basin. Instead of combating climate change, Saskatchewan is using captured carbon to extract more non-renewable resources.

Saskatchewan's First Nations Power Authority is a good step toward more autonomy over energy projects for the province's Indigenous communities. But without a provincial policy on climate change or energy production, renewable energy projects will continue to struggle to gain real traction. Here Ontario offers another positive example in its set-asides for First Nations within the lauded Green Energy Act, which used feed-in-tariffs to encourage green energy production.

In November 2015, Wall did announce that Saskatchewan would get 50% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030 by developing three new wind power projects that will nearly double Saskatchewan's wind generation by 2020. This is a step in the right direction that should diversify our electrical grid. Still, it does little to relieve Saskatchewan's economic reliance on non-renewable resource extraction.

The metaphoric dragging of our feet in Saskatchewan matters to all Canadians and, frankly, to the world. Our economy is broken and we all face a very real threat of a changing climate. But with policies that reflect the current global need to address climate change, we can create a new economy that provides skilled employment and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. **M**



Rachel Malena-Chan

ILLUSTRATION BY REMIE GEOFFROI

Lulling the province to sleep on climate change

The Wall government's denial, false promises and fairy tales are holding back meaningful action across Canada

SASKATCHEWAN PREMIER Brad Wall has earned his reputation for being “Harper-lite” when it comes to climate change rhetoric and support for policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Progressives often react to Wall’s statements on these issues with shocked outrage. They repost the worst on social media feeds with comments like “SHAME” or “Hey Brad, get with the program!” It’s satisfying but does little to actually change things for the better. Wall remains popular, and while the community is responding it’s difficult to get traction on climate action in this province.

One reason for this is that opposition parties, and to some extent social movements, have failed to present a coherent alternative to Wall’s pipeline dreams. Progressives can learn how to do better by looking at the literature on how climate change is communicated and theories of public narrative generally. Specifically, there is great potential for using strategic use of stories, reframing, and other communication tools to successfully resist Wall’s agenda, allay fears and underline the promises of economic transition, and inspire action toward meet-

ing Canada's commitment to keep average global temperatures from rising beyond 2 C above pre-industrial levels.

If only this were a local problem. But Saskatchewan's intractable position on climate change is slowing action on the national stage as well. The Trudeau government has committed to working with premiers to determine Canada's climate policy future. The longer it takes to establish a framework for navigating the changes coming to Canada's political, economic and social landscape, the harder it will be to adapt to the *physical* challenges climate change guarantees. Wall has made a point of reframing environmental policy exclusively as an economic loss: his government supports the oil and gas industry on the grounds it is essential to the continued prosperity of the province, the region of Western Canada and the country as a whole.

To many of us in Saskatchewan, it's clear that austerity policies are at the root of both the erosion of our social infrastructure and the current instability of our province's economy. Extractivist thinking and short-term planning have not only made us susceptible to the risks borne in all boom-and-bust economies, but have done so by repeatedly undermining the rights of Indigenous people and those who live off of these lands. Rather than taking responsibility for contributing to the mess we're in, Wall continues to defend the oil and gas industry's economic potential while the more important services we've entrusted to the government—teaching children, protecting workers, caring for the sick—are depleted.

In this context, it can become tiresome to keep hearing the leaders of Saskatchewan make foolish comments about environmental policy. But many people in Western Canada agree with Wall's attitude toward climate policy, reflected in the renewed majority his government won in April's provincial election. The government narrative on climate change relieves the deepest held concerns of everyday rational people in this province. Unlike many who oppose him,

MANY PEOPLE IN WESTERN CANADA AGREE WITH WALL'S ATTITUDE TOWARD CLIMATE POLICY, REFLECTED IN THE RENEWED MAJORITY HIS GOVERNMENT WON IN APRIL'S PROVINCIAL ELECTION.

Wall's rhetoric is consistent and clear: you don't need to worry; the premier's got your back. At a time when things are actually not OK for many people in the province, Wall positions himself as a hero for the downtrodden and a champion to a hurting industry in this region.

WHERE PEOPLE TURN WHEN NOTHING MAKES SENSE

Despite overwhelming evidence proving the reality of human-caused climate change, it remains a polarizing topic. As a number of studies have shown (e.g., Matto Mildemberger et al., 2016; A. Leiserowitz et al., 2013), denial of climate science and resistance to pro-environment policy often correlates with a person's political affiliation, religion or employment with the fossil fuel industry. In Canada, these attitudes are concentrated in Saskatchewan and Alberta, where the highest levels of climate change denial in the country are found alongside the lowest levels of support for carbon pricing. We can chalk this up to "regional culture," but to understand what else is going on below the surface we can turn to theory about public narrative.

According to theorists George Lakoff and Marshall Ganz, humans make sense of information and categorize the complexity of everyday life by

weaving together "frames" to create narratives. Language plays a significant role in bringing frames and narratives to mind, which gives purpose to our identities. This is both a conscious and unconscious process, with many frames held simultaneously and drawn upon strategically by individuals. For example, you might at different moments be encouraged to think of yourself as a taxpayer, a citizen, a parent, a progressive person or a settler. The corresponding narrative frameworks behind these identities centre different values to explain why things are the way that they are or how they ought to be.

Public narratives are stories based on frames and values that are widely accepted; they "shape the goals we seek, the plans we make, the way we act, and what counts as a good or bad outcome of our actions" at a population scale, according to Lakoff. They are reproduced and reflected by political institutions, economic structures and social norms. At a personal level, public narratives are salient because they explain lived experience.

Most people feel their lives ought to be valued, that the quality of their lived experience matters. If you are benefiting from the status quo and are threatened by some development (e.g., climate change or the political response to it), you will naturally want to understand the potential impacts and what you should do in response, whether it means to vote a certain way, buy a certain thing, learn more about a certain idea or join up with a certain group.

Alternatively, if the status quo affords you a low quality of life, you might seek out a story to satisfy your anger or your sense of injustice in the form of blame. We've seen scary examples of this phenomenon in the U.K. and U.S. recently, where disenfranchised classes are seeking meaning in xenophobic narratives about the shifting social and economic dynamics they are experiencing. Corrupt leaders are able to concentrate power by capitalizing on the disorientation of the public—by filling the void left by narrative dissonance.

DOES SASKATCHEWAN NEED A HERO?

As research by Matthew Nisbet (2009), Kathryn Doherty and Thomas Webler (2016), and Kari Norgaard (2011) demonstrates, the frames and narratives used to communicate climate change—through personal relationships, social media, traditional media, educators, politicians, scientists or health professions—produce social norms that have a real impact on how that information is processed, and whether or not it results in meaningful action. Language is more than a means of conveying data. Public narratives can (and should) be based upon evidence, but we must remember that storytelling is a process of *framing facts to elicit emotions*. Resonant public narratives are created not with ideologically sound arguments but, as Ganz tells us, by triggering value-based emotional responses; they are “the discursive means we use to access values that equip us with the courage to make choices under conditions of uncertainty, to exercise agency.” Narratives are activating because they leave people feeling empowered to do something about what matters most to them.

Public narratives promoted by the Saskatchewan Party have framed the “courageous choice” as confidence in their governance, as a vote for a hero (Premier Wall) that will fight for Saskatchewan in times of turmoil. People care about their families, the stability of their jobs and the quality of life their children can expect. Wall is saying he’s going to protect all of that, and furthermore that he’s the *only* one who can.

Unfortunately, few alternative public narratives have been offered to the people of Saskatchewan. Wall’s narrative has been tested this summer by a brutal oil spill and a disappointing budget, but urgent solutions and strategies are needed right now. Who will inspire a mass movement for transition in policy and practice? For those fighting for the rights of Indigenous communities and for ambitious investment in the renewable energy sector, this is a vital moment for exposing the Wall government’s

decade of poor decision-making, yet no political party is championing a popular, progressive alternative.

LESSONS FROM SASKATCHEWAN’S STORY

In many ways, Canada’s climate change story is being written in Saskatchewan. But the struggle to find meaning in the transition to a decarbonized economy, as the scientific, economic and moral case for change intensifies, is playing out globally among those who feel they have the most to lose.

Norgaard explains through her research how citizens of a Norwegian town used different public narratives to prop up “socially organized denial” of climate change, which protected them from what many interpreted as a threat to Norwegian culture and identity. While individuals in the town believed climate change was real, social norms in the oil-producing country created a sort of double reality: concerns were managed in a way that disoriented them from taking action together.

If denial of climate change can be socially organized and perpetuated by public leaders, so too can mobilizing narratives be planted and fostered in the public sphere. According to Ganz, “public narrative, understood as a leadership art, is thus an invaluable resource to stem the tides of apathy, alienation, cynicism, and defeatism” An alternative narrative

might stress urgency, anger, hope, empowerment and solidarity, creating a common vision for diverse people acting collectively

Doherty and Webler’s 2016 study supports Ganz’s theory, finding that agency and empowerment are key components of moving people from feeling alarmed about climate change to engaging in actions like voting, donating or organizing collectively for climate change policy. By telling mobilizing stories that address the emotional and social realities experienced in the Prairies we can create space for new political possibilities.

TIPPED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Ganz argues that when society experiences tipping points, “during moments of disruption and disequilibrium—of the sort that open up political opportunity structures—narratives can transform uncertainty and fear into familiar stories that, when well chosen, bring people together, forge common identities, and rouse them to collectively act.” As Saskatchewan approaches the ideological limitations of fossil-fuel-led growth, what will make it possible to face the changes coming our way?

What definitely won’t work is a story that makes no sense. For instance, don’t expect someone who believes the climate change science to support infrastructure projects that promise to put Saskatchewan over its GHG emissions budget. This type of value-action gap only produces more narrative dissonance. Either climate change is a serious problem—and serious people take leadership on climate change seriously—or it’s not, in which case legitimate leaders can passably fail to act on the issue. It can’t be both.

Progressives need to offer a more salient story that takes into account people’s fears and insecurities and makes meaning of, rather than preys upon, their most basic desire to be OK. Communication must be open, willing to listen, ready to reframe. Instead of *dehumanizing* those who reject climate science it’s time we appreciated how everyone is looking for

BY TELLING MOBILIZING STORIES THAT ADDRESS THE EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL REALITIES EXPERIENCED IN THE PRAIRIES WE CAN CREATE SPACE FOR NEW POLITICAL POSSIBILITIES.

Revenue sharing could reduce Indigenous child poverty

Saskatchewan holds the dubious honour of having Canada's second highest child poverty rate (69%) for on-reserve First Nations children, behind only Manitoba where the rate is an obscene 76%. As David Macdonald and Daniel Wilson explain in their 2016 report, *Shameful Neglect: Indigenous Child Poverty in Canada*, Saskatchewan also has the second lowest levels of non-Indigenous child poverty (13%), constituting the greatest disparity between non-Indigenous and status First Nation children anywhere in the country.

While child poverty rates on reserve are almost uniformly abysmal across Canada, they are significantly lower in Quebec (37%) where the gap with non-Indigenous children is also narrowest. According to Macdonald and Wilson, this is primarily due to the low poverty rate (23%) among the Eeyou Istchee—James Bay Cree of northern Quebec—who make up roughly half of Quebec's total on-reserve population, and whose better situation can be linked to a resource revenue sharing agreement with the province.

The James Bay Cree receive a fixed \$70 million per annum from revenues off hydro-electric generation on their territory, which supplements, to some extent, chronic underfunding from the federal government. A similar situation holds for the Nunavik Inuit, whose child poverty rates are also closer to the national average. This is also apparently a consequence of a revenue sharing agreement through which the Nunavik Inuit receive 50% of the first \$2 million in royalties received by the government from any natural resource development on their lands, as well as 5% of additional resource royalties after that.

It is profoundly disappointing, given these examples, that both of Saskatchewan's major political parties refuse to consider resource sharing. The provincial NDP, which had initially supported the idea, backed away from it after Premier Brad Wall accused the party of promoting a "special deal" for a "portion of the population." Wall's characterization of revenue sharing as favouritism for one group over another, rather than an attempt to redress the historic under-funding and neglect of First Nations communities, only ignited deep-seated racist sentiments in the province. The majority of the public roundly rejected the idea.

The Wall government's political gamesmanship effectively took revenue sharing off the table, scuttling a potentially powerful policy tool that could—in consultation with First Nations and Métis communities—effectively combat Indigenous child poverty in Saskatchewan.

—Simon Enoch, director, CCPA-SK

a way to make sense of this story—each one of us is searching for our role in the bigger global plot being played out beyond the reaches of our control. Narrative is powerful when it "marks an entry into a world of uncertainty so daunting that access to sources of hope is essential," says Ganz.

What can we offer to the people of Saskatchewan as an essential source of hope in this moment of uncertainty? Here are three tips for telling climate change stories that could empower and mobilize prairie people—and perhaps the rest of the country.

1. Centre audience **values**: Think about what matters to the people listening to the message. Consider the core values that define them and draw out a moral call to action. As Naomi Klein writes in *This Changes Everything*, a transition this great requires people unafraid of moral language. It needs leaders who can offer not just policy alternatives but an *alternative worldview*—one that centres collectivism and equal rights for all people.

2. Be mindful of **emotions**: In high-stakes situations, public narratives elicit strong emotions. People in Saskatchewan are right to feel uneasy about the challenges facing the province. Direct their anger and frustration toward inadequate leadership and convey hopeful messages about the alternatives available to them.

3. Point to **action**: If information about climate change threatens someone's livelihood or their children's wellbeing, they ought to be given the choice to respond beyond changing their lightbulbs. Engaging in real solutions means action that is collective and political. It is an opportunity to ask, given the status quo is unsustainable and already failing so many people, what kind of society and economy do we want to create here in Saskatchewan, and what will it take? Long-term planning is obviously needed for adaptation at the local level and community leaders ought to be empowered to identify local needs and opportunities.

Community organizers and political opposition in Saskatchewan are at a critical moment as we fight to define an alternative public narrative to the story perpetuated by the Wall government. The premier continues to back the false hopes of oil and gas development, and when his investments in the fossil-fuel economy fail to deliver, many people will be unnecessarily left behind in the transition to a climate-friendly economy. Workers need a real plan, social services need to be strengthened, not eroded, and Indigenous rights and ways of being must be respected and honoured if we are going to navigate the road ahead.

Rather than throw up our hands in frustration with the climate denialism in Regina, we must take it upon ourselves to promote a more compelling story about climate change in the Prairies.

What matters?

What's at stake?

What do we want?

What will it take? **M**



Taylor Bendig

I love you, you SIB

The Wall government is enamoured of social impact bonds. Should we be worried?

ASK ANY community-based organization (CBO) if they want five years of guaranteed funding for one of their projects and odds are they'll have said "yes" before you can finish the sentence. CBOs have spent decades struggling for financial stability, knowing their programming would benefit greatly from the security and continuity it offers. So when EGADZ—a venerable Saskatoon charity that supports underprivileged youth—chanced upon such long-term funding it didn't disappoint.

EGADZ used the money it received from a social impact bond (SIB) to turn an old bed and breakfast downtown into a home and life skills training centre for at-risk single mothers and their children. Since opening its doors in May 2014, the program—dubbed "Sweet Dreams"—has been an inspiring success. So much so that it is being used to raise the profile of SIBs (it was Canada's first) as a promising new private funding model for social services.

In a social impact bond model, private investors put up money for a years-long social program (inmate rehabilitation and child services are especially popular). Specific, measurable goals are set, a community-based organization delivers the program, and at completion a third party assesses the results. If the objectives were met investors are repaid with interest; if not, they lose part or all of their money.

Saskatchewan's provincial government has become enamoured of the SIB model. In April 2015, Premier Brad Wall described it to the media as "the next generation of social policy innovation," and "arguably more effective" than government-run pro-

gramming. That same month, he appointed former social services minister June Draude to the new post of legislative secretary for social impact bonds, charging her with promoting more SIBs in the province. In September 2015, Draude announced, at an SIB conference in Ontario, that four more bonds were in the works for Saskatchewan.

Yet despite the Saskatchewan government's enthusiasm, there's little evidence available about the overall effectiveness of the private funding model. As of July 2015, there were just 44 SIBs in operation worldwide. The world's first SIB, a five-year recidivism reduction program in Britain, only concluded last year. Sweeping conclusions about the model's effectiveness are therefore a bit premature, and concerns that have followed the model since its creation have by no means been put to rest.

The introduction of private investment—and private profit—into the field of social services has been controversial. The Alberta College of

Social Workers, for instance, went on record against SIBs in an early 2013 media release, declaring the bonds would "lead to social issues being judged on their attractiveness to investors as opposed to the quality of service offered."

It's a criticism Saskatchewan partially avoided in its first SIB. Sweet Dreams isn't all that sweet as investments go. The project's \$1-million budget is funded by Conexus Credit Union and by Colleen and Wally Mah, a real estate power couple who have long been major supporters of EGADZ. Conexus and the Mahs agreed to a 5% rate of return if the project met its objectives—much less than SIBs in other countries often provide, and likely lower than what it would cost government to fund the program through borrowing.

One criticism of the SIB model that Sweet Dreams can't avoid, however, is that in order to offer a return of any sort there needs to be a quantifiable measure of success that doesn't work for many social programs. In Sweet Dreams' case, the metric is simple enough: if 22 children stay with their mothers for six months after leaving the program, the "desired objectives" are met. But social programming focuses on many objectives—long-term mental health is perhaps the best example—that can't be easily quantified or meaningfully assessed over a period of only a few years.

Because social impact bonds are ultimately still government funded, money for SIBs comes out of the general pool available for social programming. In other words, the more money earmarked for easily quantifiable SIBs, the less there is for the

CANADIAN GOVERNMENTS' LOVE OF P3S IS ONE REASON TO BELIEVE SIBS WILL BE WIDELY ADOPTED HERE.

long-term, qualitative programs that SIBs will never touch. But even among programs suitable for SIBs the issue remains that it is investors, not public officials, who decide what programs get funded.

With only one SIB in existence in all of Canada, private sector control over social programming choices is a pretty distant threat. But interest in SIBs is growing, and not just in Saskatchewan: Manitoba's newly elected premier has tasked two of his ministers with developing the model, and Ontario's 2016 budget announced plans to "pilot one or more social impact bonds (SIBs) in the province." Investor influence over social programs is an issue worth watching, especially if SIBs take off in Canada the way they have in countries like the U.S. and U.K., or the way public-private partnerships (P3s) already have in Canada.

In fact, Canadian governments' love of P3s is one reason to believe SIBs will be widely adopted here. Like P3s, SIBs provide a way for governments to keep spending "off the books." Because private investors provide the initial funding for SIB projects, the cost to government can be left out of budget calculations until investors are repaid at the end of the program. A project like Sweet Dreams, with a five-year duration, effectively allows government to provide services immediately while deferring the costs until after the next election. Especially for governments facing a cash-flow crisis (as Saskatchewan is now) the appeal of such an arrangement is obvious.

SIBs provide the added political benefit of allowing governments to claim that if the program is unsuccessful they will not pay at all. In practice, this is unlikely to be true. SIBs are most attractive to investors when they involve little risk, and Sweet Dreams is no exception. Intake to the program is selective and the biggest criterion for applicants is motivation. Mothers who lack the drive to keep custody of their children—and thus meet the objectives that trigger investor repayment—aren't admitted to begin with. The

DESPITE THE SASKATCHEWAN GOVERNMENT'S ENTHUSIASM, THERE'S LITTLE EVIDENCE AVAILABLE ABOUT THE OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRIVATE FUNDING MODEL.

success rate is accordingly high: as of June 2016, just over two years into the project, 21 mothers (out of the five-year goal of 22) had already completed the program and remained with their children.

Sweet Dreams was set up to succeed, as any social program should be. When governments, like the one in Regina, tout the possibility SIBs may not have to be repaid, they are ultimately celebrating the possibility that their social programs will fail.

Such arguments also gloss over the fact private players still make a profit on SIBs, successful or not. The model requires a third party to assess whether program objectives were met, a role that consulting firms have been eager to claim. Deloitte, which was hired as the "independent assessor" for the Sweet Dreams project, heavily promotes social impact bonds for understandable reasons. SIBs create a window for the company to turn a profit on social programming in a way that traditional program delivery doesn't provide.

Saskatchewan's lone flirtation with the SIB model is a success story. But the relatively inexpensive and small-scale Sweet Dreams project, where local investors were willing to accept a low rate of return, puts

Saskatchewan in a very different position than other jurisdictions that employ SIBs. By comparison, the first SIB project in the United States (a recidivism reduction project at a New York prison) offered Goldman Sachs a return of up to 22% on its \$9.6-million investment.

So where will the Wall government go from here? The possibility of a "made-in-Saskatchewan" social impact bond model is certainly enticing. If the province continues to recruit philanthropist investors willing to accept low interest rates it could possibly avoid a major SIBs backlash as experienced elsewhere—that they ultimately cost more than they would with direct public funding.

Even if that were the case, we should reasonably ask why private funding is needed in social programming at all. Low-interest SIBs are still ultimately paid for by taxpayers: they still require hiring consultants to assess whether program goals are met; they still hand power over social programming to private players; and they still tempt governments to use them as a means of concealing and delaying programming costs.

Given all of this, the alternative—having government contribute stable, long-term funding directly to program providers like EDADZ—can't be ignored. There are bureaucratic hurdles to doing so, of course, but these can be overcome.

Indeed, the greatest problem posed by social impact bonds may be that they will be used as an excuse to avoid restructuring government funding models toward long-term commitments. By connecting long-term funding to private finance through the SIB model, the Saskatchewan government may make private sector involvement mandatory for getting valuable projects off the ground, in much the same way the previous federal government tied infrastructure funding to the P3 model.

For anyone concerned about social programming in Canada, SIBs are an issue worth watching. Other provinces are undoubtedly paying attention, with a mind to expanding the model in years to come. **M**

Supporter Profile

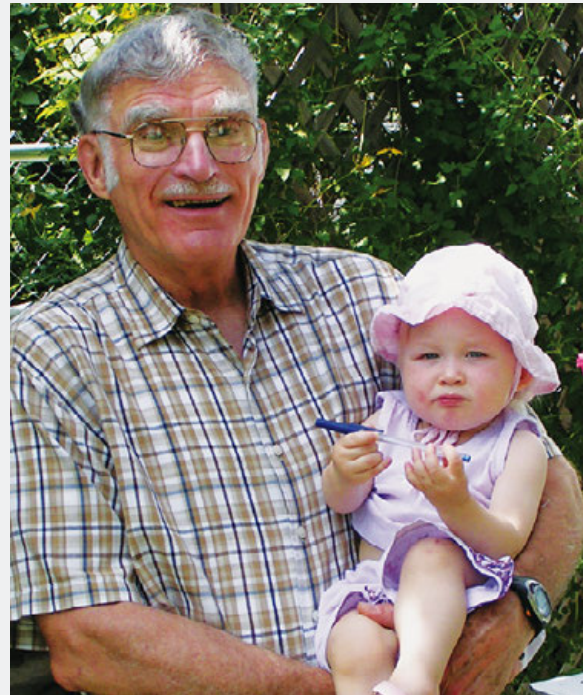
Dan Beveridge

Someone who had a big influence on me, at age 22, was Norman Mackenzie, a missionary in India whom I met on a hitchhiking trip around the world. Norman and his family were living in a Bhil village where he was using co-operatives to help peasant farmers reduce their dependence on local moneylenders and landowners. They worked together to get a water pump for irrigation, to purchase seed and fertilizer, etc. I asked Norman where he learned about co-operatives and he said, "Western Co-operative College in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan!" I was studying at the university in Saskatoon but had heard nothing about co-operatives in my 15 years of formal education in the province with probably the most co-operatives in Canada.

When I finished my MA in the mid-1960s, I enrolled in a short course at the college that gave me a real eye-opening experience, a new perspective on democracy. While we liked to say we lived in a democracy, this did not extend to the economic system, whereas co-ops were a form of economic democracy, owned and controlled by the member-users. I learned about co-operatives as an alternative to both the capitalist corporation model and the state-owned Crown corporation model. This led me to working as an instructor at the college and then in Africa. Then, while working in Regina in university extension, I was privileged to work in the 1970s with Professor Louis Xhignesse, who really influenced me to develop a more ecological perspective, and farmers like Elmer Laird, president of the Back to the Farm Research Foundation and chair of the environmental committee of the National Farmers Union, who led a movement to explore and develop alternatives to chemical agriculture.

I don't remember when or why I started supporting the CCPA, but there are at least two reasons I continued, and why I consider the centre to be special. First, it appeared to me that the CCPA was a place where an alternative vision of society was presented, an alternative to the dominant consumer society. I was excited by the vision promoted by the World Council of Churches, at its conference in Nairobi, Kenya in 1975, for a "just, participatory and sustainable society." I saw the need for exploration of policy alternatives to work toward that vision.

Second, as a compulsive CBC radio listener I saw the need for and value of a "progressive think-tank" to be



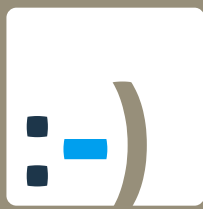
called on for quality, evidence-based commentaries on media interviews as an alternative to the widespread influence of the Fraser Institute. I believe it is important to use a variety of media in addition to the CCPA *Monitor* to reach a wider audience and to help legitimize perspectives and policies that may be at variance with the dominant ones, which are often based on a short-term economic rationale.

I am a monthly supporter for the obvious reasons: first, because the CCPA needs an assured, predictable income flow to budget and plan quality work; and second, because this is a convenient way for me to support the many organizations I consider important. My hope for the future involves my grandchildren and a return to the vision I mentioned earlier. I am extremely concerned about the climate change crisis and the lack of action by those nations most responsible for it. My hope is that the CCPA shall continue to challenge existing models and to present alternatives that could lead to an ecologically sustainable and just society for the planet.



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The CCPA is grateful to those who have switched to monthly giving or are considering it in the future. We would appreciate the chance to provide information about the benefits of monthly giving — please contact Jennie Royer, development and administrative services, at 1-613-563-1341 ext. 305 or jennie@policyalternatives.ca.



The good news page

Compiled by
Elaine Hughes

Solar summer

Former tar sands workers Adam Cormier (electrician) and Lliam Hildebrand (boilermaker) have co-founded an organization, Iron and Earth, to press for investment in renewable energy alternatives. Many of the skills required to build, maintain and run tar sands facilities are similar to those required in renewable technologies. Iron and Earth will be developing a training program for tradespeople to work in solar energy projects and is consulting with tar sands workers on a Workers' Climate Plan. Solar Impulse 2, a single-seater plane (pictured) with a greater wingspan than the Boeing 747, touched down in Abu Dhabi on July 26, completing a historic round-the-world trip powered entirely by the sun. "Our mission now is to continue to moti-



vate people, corporations and governments to use these same solutions on the ground wherever they make sense," said Bertrand Piccard, chairman of the project. A few days earlier, on July 12, California's large solar energy plants produced enough energy to power more than six million homes—and this was not counting the electricity generated by the estimated 537,000 solar panels on the rooftops of private homes and businesses in the state. Meanwhile in Salt Lake City, the mayor and council have created a Climate Positive 2040 plan to transition to 100% renewable energy sources by 2032 and reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2014. "Leading on climate change today is an obligation we all share with each other and to future generations," said Mayor Biskupski. / [Rabble.ca](#) / [CTV](#) / [Huffington Post](#) / [EcoWatch](#)

Friendlier food, cosmetics, toys

A 10-year study by the Swiss Research Institute of Organic Agriculture in Kenya indicates that organic agriculture is a viable strategy for the tropics, generating comparable yields to "conventional" methods but with lower input costs, such as from

the use of chemicals, and higher revenue potential. Paris-based Sodexo, one of the world's largest food service suppliers, will switch to cage-free eggs by 2025, joining European countries that banned battery cages for hens in 2012. Starting in 2018, Walmart will require the use of any product on its shelves be clearly labelled. It follows a decision by the retailer in 2013, in partnership with the Environmental Defense Fund, to restrict or remove products containing butylparaben (a preservative in cosmetics), formaldehyde (a carcinogen found in wood products and building materials), and triclosan (used in clothing, kitchenware, furniture and toys). / [OrganicBIZ](#) / [Washington Post](#) / [Reuters](#)

Science and the body

A woman diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS) in 2015 can speak again, in her own voice, using many standard text-to-speech devices. Before losing the ability to speak to the progressive neuron disease, Jessie Levine, 45, recorded samples of her voice, which was blended with those of her two sisters by VocaliD, a Massachusetts company founded by speech technology professor Rupal Patel. A new Australian-U.S. study suggests that within five years a vaccine will be available for the presently incurable Alzheimer's disease. Although the exact pathology of Alzheimer's is not clear, scientists know that when amyloid-beta and tau (both proteins) die, they can build up in plaque,

which blocks connections between nerve cells in the brain. The vaccine would address this. Elsewhere, neuroscientists have created a map of the cerebral cortex, the part of the brain responsible for cognition, based on MRI images of the brains of 210 people. They believe the map will be useful in helping surgeons avoid those areas of the brain involved with speech or movement, and assist in the study of autism, schizophrenia, dementia and epilepsy. / [Associated Press](#) / [Medical Daily](#) / [Reuters](#)

Flora and fauna

The U.S. state of Georgia could easily top 3,000 loggerhead sea turtle nests this year, surpassing a previous recovery target for the threatened animal of 2,800 nests by 2028. It's possible new escape hatches built into shrimp nets, and voluntary limiting of artificial lights along beaches at night (to avoid disorienting hatchlings trying to find their way to sea), are having an effect. San Francisco County Board has banned the sale of polystyrene (Styrofoam, foam packing, cups and mooring buoys) effective January 1, 2017. In water, the material falls apart and looks like food to many marine animals. Morocco, already a green policy leader, has banned plastic bags—for real this time. A 2009 prohibition on the production and use of black plastic bags didn't quite stick. This time, bags made of paper and fabric will be made widely available as an alternative. / [Associated Press](#) / [Ecowatch](#)



Story by Naomi Klein / Illustrations by Kara Sievewright

Edward Said and the violence of othering in a warming world

EDWARD SAID WAS no tree-hugger. Descended from traders, artisans and professionals, he once described himself as “an extreme case of an urban Palestinian whose relationship to the land is basically metaphorical.” In *After the Last Sky*, his meditation on the photographs of Jean Mohr, he explored the most intimate aspects of Palestinian lives, from hospitality to sports to home décor. The tiniest detail—the placing of a picture frame, the defiant posture of a child—provoked a torrent of insight from Said. Yet when confronted with images of Palestinian farmers—tending their flocks, working the fields—the spec-

ificity suddenly evaporated. Which crops were being cultivated? What was the state of the soil? The availability of water? Nothing was forthcoming. “I continue to perceive a population of poor, suffering, occasionally colourful peasants, unchanging and collective,” Said confessed. This perception was “mythic,” he acknowledged—yet it remained.

If farming was another world for Said, those who devoted their lives to matters like air and water pollution appear to have inhabited another planet. Speaking to his colleague Rob Nixon, he once described environmentalism as “the indulgence of spoiled tree-huggers who lack a

proper cause.” But the environmental challenges of the Middle East are impossible to ignore for anyone immersed, as Said was, in its geopolitics. This is a region intensely vulnerable to heat and water stress, to sea-level rise and to desertification. A recent paper in *Nature Climate Change* predicts that, unless we radically lower emissions and lower them fast, large parts of the Middle East will likely “experience temperature levels that are intolerable to humans” by the end of this century. And that’s about as blunt as climate scientists get. Yet environmental issues in the region still tend to be treated as afterthoughts, or luxury causes. The reason is not

ignorance, or indifference. It's just bandwidth. Climate change is a grave threat but the most frightening impacts are in the medium term. And in the short term, there are always far more pressing threats to contend with: military occupation, air assault, systemic discrimination, embargo. Nothing can compete with that—nor should it attempt to try.

There are other reasons why environmentalism might have looked like a bourgeois playground to Said. The Israeli state has long coated its nation-building project in a green veneer; it was a key part of the Zionist “back to the land” pioneer ethos. And in this context trees, specifically, have been among the most potent weapons of land grabbing and occupation. It's not only the countless olive and pistachio trees that have been uprooted to make way for settlements and Israeli-only roads. It's also the sprawling pine and eucalyptus forests that have been planted over those orchards, as well as over Palestinian villages, most notoriously by the Jewish National Fund, which, under its slogan “Turning the Desert Green,” boasts of having planted 250 million trees in Israel since 1901, many of them non-native to the region. In publicity materials, the JNF bills itself as just another green NGO, concerned with forest and water management, parks and recreation. It also happens to be the largest private landowner in the state of Israel, and despite a number of complicated legal challenges, it still refuses to lease or sell land to non-Jews.

I grew up in a Jewish community where every occasion—births and deaths, Mother's Day, bar mitzvahs—was marked with the proud purchase of a JNF tree in the person's honour. It wasn't until adulthood that I began to understand that those feel-good faraway conifers, certificates for which papered the walls of my Montreal elementary school, were not benign—not just something to plant and later hug. In fact, these trees are among the most glaring symbols of Israel's system of official discrimination—the one that must be dismantled if peaceful co-existence is to become possible.

The JNF is an extreme and recent example of what some call “green colonialism.” But the phenomenon is hardly new, nor is it unique to Israel. There is a long and painful history in the Americas of beautiful pieces of wilderness being turned into conservation parks, and then that designation being used to prevent Indigenous people from accessing their ancestral territories to hunt and fish, or simply to live. It has happened again and again. A contemporary version of this phenomenon is the carbon offset. Indigenous people from Brazil to Uganda are finding that some of the most aggressive land grabbing is being done by conservation organizations. A forest is suddenly rebranded a carbon offset and put off-limits to its traditional inhabitants. As a result, the carbon offset market has created a whole new class of “green” human rights abuses, with farmers and Indigenous people being physically attacked by park rangers or private security when they try to access these lands. Said's comment about tree-huggers should be seen in this context.

And there is more. In the last year of Said's life, Israel's so-called “separation barrier” was going up, seizing huge swathes of the West Bank, cutting Palestinian workers off from their jobs, farmers from their fields, patients from hospitals—and brutally dividing families. There was no shortage of reasons to oppose the wall on human rights grounds. Yet at the time, some of the loudest dissenting voices among Israeli Jews were not focused on any of that. Yehudit Naot, then Israel's environment minister, was more worried about a report informing her, “The separation fence...is harmful to the landscape, the flora and fauna, the ecological corridors and the drainage of the creeks.” “I certainly don't want to stop or delay the building of the fence,” she said, but “I am disturbed by the environmental damage involved.” As the Palestinian activist Omar Barghouti later observed, Naot's “ministry and the National Parks Protection Authority mounted diligent rescue efforts to save an affected reserve of irises by moving it to an alternative reserve. They've also created tiny passages [through the wall] for animals.”

Perhaps this puts the cynicism about the green movement in context. People do tend to get cynical when their lives are treated as less important than flowers and reptiles. And yet there is so much of Said's intellectual legacy that both illuminates and clarifies the underlying causes of the global ecological crisis, so much that points to ways we might respond that are far more inclusive than current campaign models—ways that don't ask suffering people to shelve their concerns about war, poverty and systemic racism and first “save the world,” but instead demonstrate how all these crises are interconnected, and how the solutions could be too. In short, Said may have had no time for tree-huggers, but tree-huggers must urgently make time for Said—and for a great many other anti-imperialist, postcolonial thinkers—because without that knowledge there is no way to understand how we ended up in this dangerous place, or to grasp the transformations required to get us out. So what follows are some thoughts—by no means complete—about what we can learn from reading Said in a warming world.

He was and remains among our most achingly eloquent theorists of exile and homesickness, but Said's homesickness, he always made clear, was for a home that had been so radically altered that it no longer really existed. His position was complex: he fiercely defended the right to return, but never claimed that home was fixed. What mattered was the principle of respect for all human rights equally and the need for restorative justice to inform our actions and policies. This perspective is deeply relevant in our time of eroding coastlines, of nations disappearing beneath rising seas, of the coral reefs that sustain entire cultures being bleached white, of a balmy Arctic. This is because the state of longing for a radically altered homeland—a home that may not even exist any longer—is something that is being rapidly, and tragically, globalized. In March, two major peer-reviewed studies warned that sea-level rise could happen significantly faster than previously believed. One of the authors of

the first study was James Hansen, perhaps the most respected climate scientist in the world. He warned that, on our current emissions trajectory, we face the “loss of all coastal cities, most of the world’s large cities and all their history,” and not in thousands of years from now but as soon as this century. If we don’t demand radical change we are headed for a whole world of people searching for a home that no longer exists.

Said helps us imagine what that might look like as well. He helped to popularize the Arabic word *sumud* (to stay put, to hold on): that steadfast refusal to leave one’s land despite the most desperate eviction attempts and even when surrounded by continuous danger. It’s a word most associated with places like Hebron and Gaza, but it could be applied equally today to residents of coastal Louisiana who have raised their homes up on stilts so that they don’t have to evacuate, or to Pacific Islanders whose slogan is “We are not drowning. We are fighting.” In countries like the Marshall Islands and Fiji and Tuvalu they know that so much sea-level rise is inevitable that their countries likely have no future. But they refuse just to concern themselves with the logistics of relocation, and wouldn’t even if there were safer countries willing to open their borders (a very big if), since climate refugees aren’t currently recognized under international law. Instead they are actively resisting: blockading Australian coal ships with traditional outrigger canoes, disrupting international climate negotiations with their inconvenient presence, demanding far more aggressive climate action. If there is anything worth celebrating in the Paris Agreement signed in April—and sadly, there isn’t enough—it has come about because of this kind of principled action: climate *sumud*.

But this only scratches of the surface of what we can learn from reading Said in a warming world. He was, of course, a giant in the study of “othering,” described in *Orientalism* as “disregarding, essentializing, denuding the humanity of another culture, people or geographical region.” And once the other has been firmly established, the ground is softened for any transgression: violent expulsion, land theft, occupation, invasion. Because the whole point of othering is that the other doesn’t have the same rights, the same humanity, as those making the distinction. What does this have to do with climate change? Perhaps everything.

We have dangerously warmed our world already, and our governments still refuse to take the actions necessary to halt the trend. There was a time when many had the right to claim ignorance. But for the past three decades, since the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was created and climate negotiations began, this refusal to lower emissions has been accompanied with full awareness of the dangers. And this kind of recklessness would have been functionally impossible without institutional racism, even if only latent. It would have been impossible without orientalism, without all the potent tools on offer that allow the powerful to discount the lives of the less powerful. These tools—of ranking the relative value of humans—are what allow the writing off of en-

tire nations and ancient cultures. And they are what allowed for the digging up of all that carbon to begin with.

Fossil fuels aren’t the sole driver of climate change—there is industrial agriculture, and deforestation—but they are the biggest. And the thing about fossil fuels is that they are so inherently dirty and toxic that they require sacrificial people and places: people whose lungs and bodies can be sacrificed to work in the coal mines, people whose lands and water can be sacrificed to open-pit mining and oil spills. As recently as the 1970s, scientists advising the U.S. government openly referred to certain parts of the country being designated “national sacrifice areas.” Think of the mountains of Appalachia, blasted off for coal mining, because so-called “mountain top removal” coal mining is cheaper than digging holes underground. There must be theories of othering to justify sacrificing an entire geography—theories about the people who lived there being so poor and backward that their lives and culture don’t deserve protection. After all, if you are a “hillbilly,” who cares about your hills? Turning all that coal into electricity required another layer of othering too: this time for the urban neighbourhoods next door to the power plants and refineries. In North America, these are overwhelmingly communities of colour, black and Latino, forced to carry the toxic burden of our collective addiction to fossil fuels, with markedly higher rates of respiratory illnesses and cancers. It was in fights against this kind of “environmental racism” that the climate justice movement was born.

Fossil fuel sacrifice zones dot the globe. Take the Niger Delta, poisoned with an Exxon Valdez-worth of spilled oil every year, a process Ken Saro-Wiwa, before he was murdered by his government, called “ecological genocide.” The executions of community leaders, he said, were “all for Shell.” In my country, Canada, the decision to dig up the Alberta tar sands, a particularly heavy form of oil, has required the shredding of treaties with First Nations, treaties signed with the British Crown that guaranteed Indigenous peoples the right to continue to hunt, fish and live traditionally on their ancestral lands. It required it because these rights are meaningless when the land is desecrated, when the rivers are polluted and the moose and fish are riddled with tumours. And it gets worse: Fort McMurray—the town at the centre of the tar sands boom, where many of the workers live and where much of the money is spent—is currently in an infernal blaze. It’s that hot and that dry. And this has something to do with what is being mined there.

Even without such dramatic events, this kind of resource extraction is a form of violence, because it does so much damage to the land and water that it brings about the end of a way of life, a death of cultures that are inseparable from the land. Severing Indigenous people’s connection to their culture used to be state policy in Canada—imposed through the forcible removal of Indigenous children from their families to boarding schools where their language and cultural practices were banned, and where physical and sexual abuse were rampant. A recent

truth and reconciliation report called it “cultural genocide.” The trauma associated with these layers of forced separation—from land, from culture, from family—is directly linked to the epidemic of despair ravaging so many First Nations communities today. On a single Saturday night in April, in the community of Attawapiskat (population 2,000), 11 people tried to take their own lives. Meanwhile, DeBeers runs a diamond mine on the community’s traditional territory; like all extractive projects, it had promised hope and opportunity.

“Why don’t the people just leave?”, the politicians and pundits ask. But many do. And that departure is linked, in part, to the thousands of Indigenous women in Canada who have been murdered or gone missing, often in big cities. Press reports rarely make the connection between violence against women and violence against the land—often to extract fossil fuels—but it exists. Every new government comes to power promising a new era of respect for Indigenous rights. They don’t deliver, because Indigenous rights, as defined by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, include the right to refuse extractive projects—even when those projects fuel national economic growth. And that’s a problem because growth is our religion, our way of life. So even Canada’s hunky and charming new prime minister is bound and determined to build new tar sands pipelines, against the express wishes of Indigenous communities who don’t want to risk their water, or participate in the further destabilizing of the climate.

Fossil fuels require sacrifice zones: they always have. And you can’t have a system built on sacrificial places and sacrificial people unless intellectual theories that justify their sacrifice exist and persist: from Manifest Destiny to *Terra Nullius* to orientalism, from backward hillbillies to backward Indians. We often hear climate change blamed on “human nature,” on the inherent greed and shortsightedness of our species. Or we are told we have altered the earth so much and on such a planetary

scale that we are now living in the Anthropocene—the age of humans. These ways of explaining our current circumstances have a very specific, if unspoken meaning: that humans are a single type, that human nature can be essentialized to the traits that created this crisis. In this way, the systems that certain humans created, and other humans powerfully resisted, are completely let off the hook. Capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy—those sorts of system. Diagnoses like this erase the very existence of human systems that organized life differently: systems that insist that humans must think seven generations in the future; must be not only good citizens but also good ancestors; must take no more than they need and give back to the land in order to protect and augment the cycles of regeneration. These systems existed and still exist, but they are erased every time we say that the climate crisis is a crisis of “human nature” and that we are living in the “age of man.” And they come under very real attack when megaprojects are built, like the Gualcarque hydroelectric dams in Honduras, a project which, among other things, took the life of the land defender Berta Cáceres, who was assassinated in March.

Some people insist that it doesn’t have to be this bad. We can clean up resource extraction, we don’t need to do it the way it’s been done in Honduras and the Niger Delta and the Alberta tar sands. Except that we are running out of cheap and easy ways to get at fossil fuels, which is why we have seen the rise of fracking and tar sands extraction in the first place. This, in turn, is starting to challenge the original Faustian pact of the industrial age: that the heaviest risks would be outsourced, offloaded, onto the other—the periphery abroad and inside our own nations. It’s something that is becoming less and less possible. Fracking is threatening some of the most picturesque parts of Britain as the sacrifice zone expands, swallowing up all kinds of places that imagined themselves safe. So this isn’t just about gasping at how ugly the tar sands are. It’s

about acknowledging that there is no clean, safe, non-toxic way to run an economy powered by fossil fuels. There never was.

There is an avalanche of evidence that there is no peaceful way either. The trouble is structural. Fossil fuels, unlike renewable forms of energy such as wind and solar, are not widely distributed but highly concentrated in very specific locations, and those locations have a bad habit of being in other people’s countries. Particularly that most potent and precious of fossil fuels: oil. This is why the project of orientalism, of othering Arab and Muslim people, has been the silent partner of our oil dependence from the start—and inextricable, therefore, from the blowback that is climate change. If nations and peoples are regarded as other (exotic, primitive, bloodthirsty, as Said documented in the 1970s) it is far easier to wage wars and stage coups when they get the crazy idea that they should control their own oil in their own interests. In 1953, it was the British-U.S. collaboration to overthrow the democratically elected government of Muhammad Mosaddegh after he nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now BP). In 2003, exactly 50 years later, it was another U.K.-U.S. co-production—the illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq. The reverberations from each intervention continue to jolt our world, as do the reverberations from the successful burning of all that oil. The Middle East is now squeezed in the pincer of violence caused by fossil fuels, on the one hand, and the impact of burning those fossil fuels on the other.

In his latest book, *The Conflict Shoreline*, the Israeli architect Eyal Weizman has a groundbreaking take on how these forces are intersecting. The main way we’ve understood the border of the desert in the Middle East and North Africa, he explains, is the so-called “aridity line,” areas where there is on average 200 millimetres of rainfall a year, which has been considered the minimum for growing cereal crops on a large scale without irrigation. These meteorological boundaries aren’t fixed:

they have fluctuated for various reasons, whether it was Israel's attempts to "green the desert" pushing them in one direction or cyclical drought expanding the desert in the other. And now, with climate change, intensifying drought can have all kinds of impacts along this line.

Weizman points out that the Syrian border city of Daraa falls directly on the aridity line. Daraa is where Syria's deepest drought on record brought huge numbers of displaced farmers in the years leading up to the outbreak of Syria's civil war, and it's where the Syrian uprising broke out in 2011. Drought wasn't the only factor in bringing tensions to a head. But the fact that 1.5 million people were internally displaced in Syria as a result of the drought clearly played a role. The connection between water and heat stress and conflict is a recurring, intensifying pattern all along the aridity line: all along it you see places marked by drought, water scarcity, scorching temperatures and military conflict—from Libya to Palestine, to some of the bloodiest battlefields in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

But Weizman also discovered what he calls an "astounding coincidence." When you map the targets of Western drone strikes onto the region, you see that "many of these attacks—from South Waziristan through northern Yemen, Somalia, Mali, Iraq, Gaza and Libya—are directly on or close to the 200 mm aridity line." To me this is the most striking attempt yet to visualize the brutal landscape of the climate crisis. All this was foreshadowed a decade ago in a U.S. military report. "The Middle East," it observed, "has always been associated with two natural resources, oil (because of its abundance) and water (because of its scarcity)." True enough. And now certain patterns have become quite clear: first, western fighter jets followed that abundance of oil; now, western drones are closely shadowing the lack of water, as drought exacerbates conflict.

Just as bombs follow oil, and drones follow drought, so boats follow both: boats filled with refugees fleeing homes on the aridity line ravaged by war and drought. And the



same capacity for dehumanizing the other that justified the bombs and drones is now being trained on these migrants, casting their need for security as a threat to ours, their desperate flight as some sort of invading army. Tactics refined on the West Bank and in other occupation zones are now making their way to North America and Europe. In selling his wall on the border with Mexico, Donald Trump likes to say: "Ask Israel, the wall works." Camps are bulldozed in Calais, thousands of people drown in the Mediterranean, and the Australian government detains survivors of wars and despotic regimes in camps on the remote islands of Nauru and Manus. Conditions are so desperate on Nauru that last month (April) an Iranian migrant died after setting himself on fire to try to draw the world's attention. Another migrant—a 21-year-old woman from Somalia—set herself on fire a few days later. Malcolm Turnbull, the prime minister, warns that Australians "cannot be misty-eyed about this" and "have to be very clear and determined in our national purpose." It's worth bearing Nauru in mind the next time a columnist in a Murdoch paper declares, as Katie Hopkins did last year, that it's time for Britain "to get Australian. Bring on the gunships, force migrants back to their shores and burn the boats." In another bit of symbolism Nauru

is one of the Pacific Islands very vulnerable to sea-level rise. Its residents, after seeing their homes turned into prisons for others, will very possibly have to migrate themselves. Tomorrow's climate refugees have been recruited into service as today's prison guards.

We need to understand that what is happening on Nauru, and what is happening to it, are expressions of the same logic. A culture that places so little value on black and brown lives that it is willing to let human beings disappear beneath the waves, or set themselves on fire in detention centres, will also be willing to let the countries where black and brown people live disappear beneath the waves, or desiccate in the arid heat. When that happens, theories of human hierarchy—that we must take care of our own first—will be marshalled to rationalize these monstrous decisions. We are making this rationalization already, if only implicitly. Although climate change will ultimately be an existential threat to all of humanity, in the short term we know that it does discriminate, hitting the poor first and worst, whether they are abandoned on the rooftops of New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina or whether they are among the 36 million who according to the UN are facing hunger due to drought in southern and eastern Africa.

This is an emergency, a present emergency, not a future one, but we aren't acting like it. The Paris Agreement commits to keeping warming below two degrees Celsius. It's a target that is beyond reckless. When it was unveiled in Copenhagen in 2009, the African delegates called it "a death sentence." The slogan of several low-lying island nations is "1.5 to stay alive." At the last minute, a clause was added to the Paris Agreement that says countries will pursue "efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 C." Not only is this non-binding, it is a lie: we are making no such efforts. The governments that made this promise are now pushing for more fracking and more tar sands development, which are utterly incompatible with 2 C, let alone 1.5 C. This is happening because the wealthiest people in the wealthiest countries in the world think they are going to be OK, that someone else is going to eat the biggest risks, that even when climate change turns up on their doorstep, they will be taken care of.

When they're wrong things get even uglier. We had a vivid glimpse into that future when the floodwaters rose in England last December and January, inundating 16,000 homes. These communities weren't only dealing with the wettest December on record. They were also coping with the fact that the government has waged a relentless attack on the public agencies, and the local councils, that are on the front lines of flood defence. So, understandably, there were many who wanted to change the subject away from that failure. Why, they asked, is Britain spending so much money on refugees and foreign aid when it should be taking care of its own? "Never mind foreign aid," we read in the *Daily Mail*. "What about national aid?" "Why," a *Telegraph* editorial demanded, "should British taxpayers continue to pay for flood defences abroad when the money is needed here?" I don't know—maybe because Britain invented the coal-burning steam engine and has been burning fossil fuels on an industrial scale longer than any nation on Earth? But I digress. The point is that this could have been a moment to understand that we are all affected by climate change, and must take action together and in solidarity with one another. It wasn't, because climate change isn't just about things getting hotter and wetter: under our current economic and political model, it's about things getting meaner and uglier.

The most important lesson to take from all this is that there is no way to confront the climate crisis as a technocratic problem, in isolation. It must be seen in the context of austerity and privatization, of colonialism and militarism, and of the various systems of othering needed to sustain them all. The connections and intersections between them are glaring, and yet so often resistance to them is highly compartmentalized. The anti-austerity people rarely talk about climate change, the climate change people rarely talk about war or occupation. We rarely make the connection between the guns that take black lives on the streets of U.S. cities and in police custody and the much larger forces that annihilate so many black lives on arid land and in precarious boats around the world.

Overcoming these disconnections—strengthening the threads tying together our various issues and movements—is, I would argue, the most pressing task of anyone concerned with social and economic justice. It is the only way to build a counterpower sufficiently robust to win against the forces protecting the highly profitable but increasingly untenable status quo. Climate change acts as an accelerant to many of our social ills (inequality, wars, racism), but it can also be an accelerant for the opposite, for the forces working for economic and social justice and against militarism. Indeed the climate crisis—by presenting our species with an existential threat and putting us on a firm and unyielding science-based deadline—might just be the catalyst we need to knit together a great many powerful movements, bound together by a belief in the inherent worth and value of all people and united by a rejection of the sacrifice zone mentality, whether it applies to peoples or places. We face so many overlapping and intersecting crises that we can't afford to fix them one at a time. We need integrated solutions, solutions that radically bring down emissions, while creating huge numbers of good, unionized jobs and delivering meaningful justice to those who have been most abused and excluded under the current extractive economy.

Said died the year Iraq was invaded, living to see its libraries and museums looted, its oil ministry faithfully guarded. Amid these outrages, he found hope in the global antiwar movement, as well as in new forms of grassroots communication opened up by technology; he noted "the existence of alternative communities across the globe, informed by alternative news sources, and keenly aware of the environmental, human rights and libertarian impulses that bind us together in this tiny planet." His vision even had a place for tree-huggers. I was reminded of those words recently while I was reading up on England's floods. Amid all the scapegoating and finger-pointing, I came across a post by a man called Liam Cox. He was upset by the way some in the media were using the disaster to rev up anti-foreigner sentiment, and he said so:

I live in Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire, one of the worst affected areas hit by the floods. It's shit, everything has gotten really wet. However...I'm alive. I'm safe. My family are safe. We don't live in fear. I'm free. There aren't bullets flying about. There aren't bombs going off. I'm not being forced to flee my home and I'm not being shunned by the richest country in the world or criticized by its residents.

All you morons vomiting your xenophobia...about how money should only be spent "on our own" need to look at yourselves closely in the mirror. I request you ask yourselves a very important question...Am I a decent and honourable human being? Because home isn't just the U.K., home is everywhere on this planet.

I think that makes for a very fine last word. **M**

NAOMI KLEIN DELIVERED THE 2016 EDWARD W. SAID LONDON LECTURE, FROM WHICH THIS ESSAY WAS ADAPTED AND PUBLISHED BY THE *LONDON REVIEW OF BOOKS* IN JUNE.

Asad Ismi

French unions and students protest regressive labour laws

SOME OF THE largest demonstrations and labour strikes France has ever seen spread across the country from March to July. The action is set to continue in September as hundreds of thousands of workers and students protest a neoliberal labour law forced through the national assembly by the ruling Socialist Party (PS) led by President François Hollande.

The government passed the *Loi Travail* in July without debate or a vote (Hollande invoked a rarely used article of the French constitution that allows the president to rule by decree). The labour reform makes it easier for employers to hire and fire employees, and to impose wages and working hours. Hollande's reforms, which are opposed by a large majority of the French public, threaten labour rights won by French workers in struggles over the course of the last century.

"This law is not just bad by itself but signifies the destruction of the entire legal architecture protecting workers' rights in France," Jean-Yves Lesage explains to me. Lesage is a printer in a newspaper plant who has been a union activist and member of the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), France's largest union federation, for 30 years. The CGT is close to the French Communist Party and is leading the protests against Hollande's labour reform.

"In France we have three levels of labour laws," he says. "The national minimum for every person, which is the labour code (*Code du travail*), laws for each industrial sector, which cannot be below the national standard, and laws for each workplace, which cannot be below the legal standard for that sector.

"This architecture is very important because it gives every worker a minimum standard of labour rights even where the trade union is weak or non-existent," says Lesage. "The new labour law changes this architecture and accepts that a workplace labour agreement could be of a lower standard than a sector-wide agreement, which in turn could be below that of the national standard for labour rights. The door is then open to force workers and their unions to accept agreements under the level of any existing law. This means that there is no end to the extent to which labour rights can be undermined in each workplace."

This alarming prospect explains the intensity of the demonstrations against *Loi Travail*: workers are determined not to submit to what they consider the almost complete abrogation of their labour rights.

The official response has been massive police repression. Since March, 2,000 people have been arrested, demonstrators attacked with rubber bullets, water cannons and tear gas. Hundreds of protestors were injured during the biggest gathering so far (an estimated 1.3 million people) on June 14 in Paris. The police response made parts of the city look like a war zone.

"The state repression of union demonstrations against the new labour law has been super-violent on a scale that I have never seen before in France," says Florian, a union activist affiliated with the National Confederation of Labour (CNT), an anarcho-syndicalist union allied with the CGT in protesting the labour reform. (He asked that his last name not be included for fear of reprisal from the French government.)

"For the past four months, in these protests several people have lost their eyes due to rubber bullets fired at them by the police, a man has been put in a coma because the police fired a grenade at him which exploded near his face. These grenades have rubber bullets inside them. Another man was injured by a grenade fired at his spine. Police have also broken into a CNT local office in Lille and destroyed it, arrested its members for protesting, and confiscated files."

The severity of official repression has been facilitated by the state of emergency declared in November 2015 following terrorist attacks in Paris that killed 130 people. The emergency grants police increased powers to act without judicial consent. House searches can be conducted without warrants at any time and house arrests made. Curfews can be imposed, public movement limited and mass gatherings stopped. Public spaces such as bars and theatres can be closed and media can be censored.

A French state of emergency is only supposed to last for 12 days, but the Hollande government has extended it several times. After the Bastille Day attack in Nice this July, which killed 84 people, the national assembly voted to maintain the state of emergency until January 2017.

"The French government is using the state of emergency to suppress labour rights and human rights in France," says Richard Wagman, co-founder of France's New Anticapitalist Party (NPA), which has also been an active participant in the demonstrations. "Since the promulgation of the state of emergency and the massive deployment of police, military and paramilitary forces, there have been practically no arrests of suspected terrorists. The first arrests carried

out under the emergency were those of ecologists who were put in jail for protesting against the climate conference in Paris last December.

“Since then,” continues Wagman, “numerous trade unionists, social rights activists, anti-racist organizers, environmentalists and other progressives have been arrested, as the police no longer have to offer the same constitutional guarantees in prosecuting suspects for offences which are often imaginary. When terrorist attacks traumatize the country and police powers are increased, it’s the workers’ movement which is pushed back.”

Under Hollande, France’s military interventions abroad have increased dramatically, with attacks on Libya and Syria, and thousands of troops dispatched to Mali and the Central African Republic. According to Lesage, the terrorist attacks in France can be connected to the Syrian and Libyan campaigns, but “it is also linked to our colonialist history, our Muslim immigrants and the discrimination they suffer.”

Muslims in France are treated “violently” by the police, says Florian, who agrees the roots of terrorism lie in France’s foreign policy, especially its attack on Syria. “France needs to stop creating chaos in the Middle East and selling weapons all over the world if its government wants to end terrorism on its soil,” he says.

France’s largest business lobby—the Movement of the Enterprises of France (MEDEF)—enthusiastically backs the reforms and has long pressured the Socialist Party to lower labour standards in the face of prolonged recession and 10% unemployment. Hollande, who alongside Angela Merkel of Germany pressed Greece and other European countries to impose austerity on workers, was bound to pursue the same agenda at home.

“All EU governments faced with the pressures of globalization are enforcing austerity to reduce the living standards of their workers down to the level of China and India,” says Lesage. “Euro-capitalists now need a state better able to control the waves of public anger unleashed by this destructive process.”

This anger is particularly widespread in France. Hollande came to power four years ago by declaring that his enemy was “high finance.” But he proceeded to serve precisely this sector by enacting unprecedented neoliberal measures against the working class.

This betrayal has created widespread disillusionment with politics in France, leading to the phenomenon of *Nuit Debout* (“Rise Up All Night”). As part of the labour demonstrations over the summer, thousands of people have occupied public squares overnight to discuss politics and economics, and what kind of society they would prefer to live in.

“The convergence of struggles was the main theme put forth in *Nuit Debout*,” says Wagman, “bringing together workers and youth from different sectors in democratic, non-hierarchical debates, as well as initiating a number of militant initiatives to support ongoing struggles in different sectors.”

The phenomenon, which was inspired by the 2011 *Indignados* movement in Spain, has spread to other countries in Europe. “It is a modern form of proletarian internationalism in terms of class consciousness and democratic forms of organization,” Wagman says.

“People are tired of voting for progressive policies and being deceived. They can see that the political system does not work,” says Florian, who attended *Nuit Debout* in Place de la République, Paris, where the movement began. “When people do not agree with neoliberal measures and make this clear, the government passes these anyway and this is done by a so-called socialist government which keeps lying and working against the public interest.

“*Nuit Debout* shows that the French people crave politics, but a genuine socialist politics and the creation of a true participatory democracy that benefits everyone and not just the corporate elite. They want to be involved in fashioning such a democracy and refuse to be marginalized and manipulated by the economic elite.”

Hollande has become so unpopular in France that he could not even trust

his own party members to vote for the labour reform legislation, which is why he rammed it through the national assembly on July 20. Christian Paul, a deputy in the assembly who leads a dissident faction of the Socialist Party, warned this “would be politically devastating.” He told Prime Minister Manuel Valls in early July that “he risked further alienating left-wing voters if he overrode parliamentary opponents and forced the labour reform bill onto the statute books by decree ahead of legislative and presidential elections in mid-2017.”

While the Socialist Party appears headed for a significant loss in those elections, no formidable alternative exists on the left. The Left Front, a coalition of the Communist Party, Jean-Luc Mélenchon’s Left Party and the Unitarian Left, has only 15 seats in the national assembly out of a total of 577 (the far left is better represented at the regional and departmental level). The major opposition party, with 199 seats currently, are the right-wing Republicans (formerly the Union for a Popular Movement) led by Nicolas Sarkozy, who also drew mass protests in response to labour reform proposals when he was prime minister

Sarkozy has called Hollande’s *Loi Travail* “far too weak to solve the problems, but stinging enough to arouse the passions of the left. The government has proven its weakness faced with the protests.” (The Republicans are one of several groups challenging the legislation as unconstitutional.) Sarkozy would also prefer that the police had even more leeway to address terrorism. “We must be merciless,” he said at the end of July, “the legal quibbling, precautions and pretexts for insufficient action are not acceptable.”

The CGT has reacted with defiance to the imposition of the labour reform and large demonstrations are planned for September.

“We’re going to maintain the climate that we’ve known for the past four months and are thinking very concretely of other [protests] in the fall,” Philippe Martinez, the CGT secretary-general, told the newspaper *L’Humanité*. “I would remind you that there are laws that have been passed, but never applied.” **M**



A review essay by Jim Silver

PHOTO BY ZOLA STREET ART, MONTREAL

Competing visions of the city

IN HER EXCELLENT book, *Good Neighbors: Gentrifying Diversity* (Verso, 2015), sociologist Sylvie Tissot describes the often nuanced ways in which, when higher-income people move into lower-income neighbourhoods, it is the poor who lose. This is the case even when those higher-income people are, in American terms, liberal and in many ways progressive. That gentrification occurs is of course not news—it is part and parcel of the neoliberal city. However, Tissot's ethnographic method provides insights that take us beyond the typical explanations and descriptions of the process.

The people Tissot describes as “liberal upper middle class” gentrifiers (lawyers, architects, financiers, corporate managers, consultants,

lobbyists of various stripes) moved gradually and systematically over a 30-year period into a south Boston neighbourhood previously described as a “slum area” or “skid row.” These newcomers to South End Boston celebrated diversity and scorned open expressions of racist intolerance. They were different from the post-war white suburban homeowners who openly expressed racist hatred and often resorted to violence to push African-Americans out of their neighbourhoods.

But, as Tissot's subtle ethnographic analysis makes clear, there are limits to diversity and multiculturalism, and those limits are reached at the line that separates the liberal upper middle class from the poor, and especially the racialized poor. The com-

mitment to diversity so celebrated by the gentrifiers has come to mean the genuine welcoming of gay residents “while preventing the formation of a ‘gay district,’” opposing the “radical” African-American and Puerto Rican community's struggle for public housing, and “keeping blacks and Puerto Ricans at a distance.” Yet the process is more subtle than this might first suggest.

Tissot says “the public expression of racial prejudice elicits sharp reproach, while signs of openness to others (non-whites, the poor, gays) enhance rather than diminish reputations.” This is characteristic of the “new liberalism” that Tissot is describing. It is “a combination of inclusion and exclusion in which a certain kind of openness plays a role in



the consolidation of social status,” a process that nevertheless is “not implying any redistribution of status or power relations.” The diversity they celebrate allows these liberals “to profess a distinct attitude of progressivism, while at the same time diluting the racial question among the multitude of categories that make up diversity.”

We are familiar with this process here in Canada, since it bears such a strong similarity to our celebration of multiculturalism. The liberal upper middle class gentrifiers do not attack and chase out the poor in ranchist fashion. Rather, they engage in a variety of practices that

have the subtle effect of drawing distinct lines between themselves and the poor. Social status is secured through preferences for housing, art and restaurants—the liberal upper middle class define their status in part by the chic and expensive (and ethnically diverse) establishments they patronize, and even the dogs they own and the way they treat those dogs. In pursuit of this class project they have consciously and deliberately reconstructed the history of South End Boston, erasing its working class character and extolling its architectural heritage in such a way as to add monetary value to the neighborhood. The inno-

The Lord Selkirk Park (top) and residents Elvis, Chris, Don and Natalie

PHOTOS BY HOLLY ENNS

cent-sounding South End Historical Society has built a narrative about the neighbourhood that constructs the gentrifiers as brave and adventurous souls, building a new and diverse neighbourhood on the sometimes dangerous urban frontier.

The “spectacle of charity” further adds to liberal credentials and a narrative of the gentrifiers as purveyors of all that is good. Tissot argues that “philanthropy is one of the many

strategies that prominent family lines have used to maintain their social rank over the generations.” The reverse side of the charity/philanthropy coin is open hostility to state intervention. This is most particularly expressed in the liberal opposition to public housing. Poor people need public housing; the black and Puerto Rican community in particular has fought for decades for new developments in South End Boston. They have been aggressively opposed by the gentrifiers, who have managed to keep their distance—physically and otherwise—from existing public housing complexes and their inhabitants.

The gentrifiers’ relations with the poor “are increasingly a matter of philanthropic activity,” writes Tissot, and there is “a scarcity of encounters between white owners and other residents on terms other than those of sharp inequality.” She argues that, “effectively, blacks and Latinos remain stigmatized groups, and their ‘overly’ visible presence—the expression of their culture in public space, as well as any demands they might make—awaken a great deal of worry for the new elite.” There is little expression of open hostility toward the racialized poor, but “spatial proximity does not erase social distance.” The arrival of the upper middle class gentrifiers therefore “very much looks like the conquest of space,” says Tissot.

As is always and everywhere the case, that conquest did not happen without a struggle. South End Boston was for years “contested space.” But the upper middle classes brought money and sophisticated skills to the contest, and ultimately prevailed. They gradually took over the neighbourhood associations created in the 1960s to fight urban renewal. And they systematically and deliberately constructed a narrative about themselves that made them brave and adventurous pioneers—even though their presence, in the words of a local activist newspaper, was “depriving the poor of adequate housing and self-determination.”

These “pioneers,” Tissot argues, are the wealthy progeny of economic and regulatory changes initiated

in the Reagan era that involved cuts to public spending, rising salaries for managerial and financial elites and excessive bonuses to these upper middle class liberals. There is in South End Boston a strong sense of community: attractive housing has been saved and rehabilitated; diversity is celebrated; open expressions of racism and intolerance are frowned upon. But “the repudiation of exclusion and the valorization of openness—breaking with the social rejection of the poorest and with spatial segregation—have reworked the manner in which social distinction operates.”

This rich description of the more subtle ways that gentrification has been effected in South End Boston has important lessons for Canadians. For one, it speaks yet again to the failures of “social mixing,” still touted by some as an anti-poverty strategy. The belief that the mere presence in a neighbourhood or in a housing complex of more well-off middle class residents will benefit the poor is refuted, again, by Tissot’s findings. As she shows, even when open expressions of hostility are frowned upon, these “liberal” upper middle class gentrifiers, who are committed to diversity and who oppose open expressions of racist hostility, nevertheless exclude, in various subtle ways, the racialized poor. They then reap the social and financial benefits.

The outcomes of contests over urban space that is occupied by the racialized poor depend in large part upon the values driving the change efforts, and the purpose of those efforts. In South End Boston the struggle over space was driven by an elite fraction of the corporate capitalist class seeking to improve their personal circumstances. What might happen if change were promoted in low-income urban neighbourhoods for different purposes, driven by different values and as part of a different class project? The case of Winnipeg’s inner city offers some insights.

Over the past 20 years, but accelerated and considerably improved since 2009, a wide range of efforts have been made to promote change

in Winnipeg’s inner city. Many of these have proved unsuccessful, in whole or in part, but much has been learned, and inner-city residents have themselves become increasingly engaged in efforts to improve their neighbourhoods. The result has been a flowering of innovative and creative solutions including alternative educational strategies (especially for adults), programs to move the most marginalized of the racialized poor into decent jobs, neighbourhood community development initiatives that engage and involve low-income citizens in bringing about changes of their choosing (leading to improved safety and a stronger sense of community), and Indigenous organizations built on traditional values of sharing and community, driven by and for Indigenous people who themselves have experienced racialized poverty and the ongoing effects of colonialism. In the past six years especially, these homegrown efforts to build change were complemented by considerable public investment by the former provincial NDP government. This combination—a progressive government willing to invest public dollars in working poor-led initiatives—was beginning to produce real and positive change.

Tissot’s book describes a 30-year period of neoliberal gentrification in a once working class South End Boston neighbourhood. To the liberal upper middle class gentrifiers, housing is a commodity, and their efforts in the former “slum area” were dedicated to valorizing private property and creating public spaces that reflected their cultural values. In contrast, what has been happening in recent years in Winnipeg’s inner city is an expression of genuine social democracy. It has been predicated upon a belief in social and economic equality, and has sought to tap into and to build the capacities and capabilities of the racialized poor—the very people that Boston’s liberal upper middle class have wanted most to avoid.

For example, Lord Selkirk Park, Winnipeg’s largest public housing project located in the city’s low-income and considerably racialized North End, was only 50% occupied in

the 1990s. Half the units were boarded up. Nobody wanted to live there. It was regularly referred to by those who lived and worked there as a “war zone,” a reflection of the high levels of street gang activity and related crime and violence. In 2005, the North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC) began a major community development effort in Lord Selkirk Park, funded by a federal government Comprehensive Community Initiative grant. The entire effort was characterized, on the one hand, by the long, slow process of building relations with, and earning the trust of, residents by meeting with and listening to and learning from them. On the other hand, pressure was brought to bear on the provincial government to invest in the solutions that residents themselves said they needed. After a decade of this work, a variety of community-based institutions and programs—most of them on permanent provincial government funding streams as opposed to temporary project grants—are now in place in Lord Selkirk Park.

The changes have been dramatic. Lord Selkirk Park is now fully occupied and there is a wait list to get in. People are “voting with their feet,” but voting in the opposite way than was previously the case. More than 40 newcomer families, many of them African and/or Muslim, have successfully and safely integrated into this largely Indigenous housing complex. This is an outcome that would not have been possible a decade ago, when newcomers rarely ventured north of the rail yards, which physically and symbolically divide the city, because of the conflict between young Indigenous and African men, often over drug turf.

Approximately 80 adults have graduated with their mature Grade 12 from Kaakiyow, the adult learning centre located in the housing complex since 2007 to meet residents’ expressed needs. A literacy program that prepares adults for success at Kaakiyow is full to capacity and has a wait list. A recent evaluation reported that the Lord Selkirk Park Resource Centre, created in 2005 after residents said they needed a quiet

place to meet and talk with others, is “highly successful” and having a “profound effect in the lives of neighbourhood residents.” The director of the child care centre created in 2012 (again, because of residents’ expressed needs) has said “the change in the children already is amazing,” and she claims that provincial government evaluations, not now available to the public, confirm this.

In a documentary film now being completed to highlight the changes in Lord Selkirk Park, two Indigenous women elders tell their interviewers that 10 years ago they were afraid to leave their housing units because of crime and violence in the complex. Today they feel privileged to be living in good quality, affordable housing in a neighbourhood that is safe and has such a strong sense of community. The “contested space” that is Lord Selkirk Park has been significantly transformed in a way that has directly and substantially benefitted the largely racialized poor who live there. Everything done in Lord Selkirk Park has been done because residents have said they wanted and needed it, and each of these initiatives has been funded by the provincial government. In addition, in the wake of the 2008-09 global economic crisis the province chose to invest its fiscal stimulus dollars in the renovation of each of the 314 units in Lord Selkirk Park and hired local labour to do much of the work.

The positive effects of these anti-poverty efforts are not confined to Lord Selkirk Park. They are emerging, in many cases just beneath the surface, throughout Winnipeg’s inner city. For example, where the liberal upper middle class gentrifiers in South End Boston worked in various subtle ways to keep their distance from and oppose “radical” African-American and Latino activists, in Winnipeg growing numbers of suburban, white middle class youth are crossing the rail yards to get to the North End to learn from and work with young Indigenous activists who are showing the way to a better future. If such changes can be made in less than a decade in a neighbourhood as poor and as damaged by racism

and colonialism as Lord Selkirk Park, and in Winnipeg’s inner city more generally, imagine what would be possible if a similar effort were made across the country.

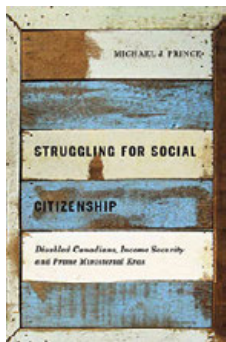
Tissot has described how the liberal upper middle class gentrifiers promoted their narrow self-interest by deliberately and successfully constructing a narrative about South End Boston—anti-racist, sophisticated, but against social housing and hostile to needs of the poor. We can see the same dynamic reproducing itself in most of Canada’s largest cities: housing and rental prices are pushed sky high, the poor are pushed out, and oftentimes real diversity is replaced by culturally uniform establishments designed to appeal to a well-off clientele (and increase property value).

The global result of privileging private property rights over the needs of the broader community is inequality and human misery on a scale so severe that even the International Monetary Fund is now acknowledging the many failures of neoliberalism. It is now plainly obvious we all pay a huge price—in terms of poor health and reduced educational outcomes, and high levels of crime and violence—when inequality is allowed to rise to the levels of today. Correspondingly, we will all benefit, in every respect, when inequality is dramatically reduced and racialized poverty is largely eliminated.

As the 40-year neoliberal project starts to fully unravel, and ascendant far-right political parties begin feeding upon the genuine disaffection of a precarious and disadvantaged working class, it is worth reflecting upon what is possible when a social democratic approach that is genuinely connected to those at the bottom of the income scale is adopted. Some innovative, community-driven, social democratic solutions have been adopted in Winnipeg’s lowest-income and most racialized communities. They work well, and should be at the heart of a progressive narrative across Canada to convince the public, government and ourselves that poverty can be eliminated if we choose to do it. **M**

Reviewed by Melissa Graham

Shaping the CPP, from the 1960s to today



STRUGGLING FOR SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP: DISABLED CANADIANS, INCOME SECURITY, AND PRIME MINISTERIAL ERAS

MICHAEL J. PRINCE

McGill-Queen's University Press (May 2016), 328 pages, \$34.95

IN THESE STILL early days for Prime Minister Trudeau, while progressive social reforms seem to be back on the table, Michael Prince reminds us of similar cultural changes in the past, and what we can learn from them moving into the future.

In *Struggling for Social Citizenship*, Prince, a social policy professor at the University of Victoria, takes a hard look at the country's largest social program, the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), and the prime ministerial eras that have shaped it over the last 50 years. It is a detailed political history that focuses the reader's gaze through a critical disability lens on the medicalization of income support, and the political factors that impact income security in either times of increasing social rights or increasing austerity.

In the first chapter, Prince introduces us to disability policy concepts, and the categorization of disability that occurs through eligibility criteria and other administrative practices. People living with disabilities often experience disability and impairment in a more fluid way than bureaucracy can tolerate; it becomes

the work of Canadians with disabilities to fit their lives into rigid definitions. Prince sees this challenge of navigating medical and legal bureaucracy as part of the struggle faced by Canadians with disabilities to maintain their social status as citizens.

The book identifies the CPP not only as a social right, but also as a marker for social citizenship that is formed through struggle, community membership and social standing. How each prime ministerial era understood disability shaped and limited social programs like the CPP. Prince explains, "the state is a force of control and segregation as well as of support and inclusion," where program reforms reflect the interests of the federal government. Such was the case in the 1960's, when vocational rehabilitation programs received 25% more funding for training in defence industries, and in the neoliberal ideas that have influenced the CPP in recent times.

Over the following chapters, Prince discusses the development of income support programs for workers and people with disabilities, and the course of reforms that have continued to shape the CPP disability program. Each elected prime minister, from Pearson to Harper, is given their own chapter, with key policy themes for each era.

Since the days of Pearson, disability income programs were based on the medicalization of people with disabilities, who have continued to be their main source of income. The legislation always acknowledged that people with disabilities could be workers, but it was not until the Pierre Trudeau era that social rights for people with disabilities caught up. This laid the groundwork for Mulroney to strengthen the benefits of the disability program while simultaneously reducing staff, in turn setting the program up for fiscal restraint.

An important theme in *Struggling for Social Citizenship* is the loss

of citizenship status faced by people with disabilities when fiscal restraint and austerity are the order of the day. Though the original intent of the CPP disability program was to reduce the stigma of disability, the Chrétien and Harper years saw that stigma return. Through their reforms the program became much more difficult to apply for and receive, and people were penalized for returning to work. Yet when the country found itself in tough economic times, the "business case" for hiring workers with disabilities was in full swing.

Prince also mentions the loss of administrative and social justice for program applicants and recipients in recent years. A Social Security Tribunal established by the Harper government dramatically reduced the effectiveness of the program's appeals process. Meetings with activists, social rights organizations and provincial governments were reduced to online consultations.

These policies not only influence the ways people with disabilities see themselves in society; they also reinforce existing social hierarchies and are a destructive force on community solidarity. Prince illustrates how the CPP disability program and other forms of income support challenge conventional ideologies of citizenship, where employment is a critical component. These conflicting notions have created a political battleground for people to navigate when they are most vulnerable.

It seems fairly clear, from reading this book, that reformation of the CPP can be impacted by social change, provided politicians are willing to listen. Financial support for people with disabilities is a keystone to our social rights in all areas of citizenship. Disability activists and organizations have long embraced the social model as a pathway for change; it is time this was reflected in policy. **M**

Hillary Clinton, roleplaying progressive

PROGRESSIVES HOPING FOR a Democratic victory in the upcoming U.S. election should be sorely disappointed by the party's presidential nominee. So argues **Diana Johnstone**, journalist, author and staunch critic of U.S. foreign policy, in her book *Queen of Chaos: The Misadventures of Hillary Clinton* (CounterPunch, November 2015). **Jeremy Appel** spoke to Johnstone on the eve of the Democratic National Convention in late July about Clinton, Trump, Sanders, gender politics and the cage of the two-party system.

JA: Your first two books, *Fool's Crusade* and the *Politics of Euromissiles* focus on the projection of unilateral U.S. power abroad. How would Hillary Clinton differ from Donald Trump on foreign policy?

DJ: Clinton adheres to the notion that American military power is capable of achieving just about whatever U.S. leaders want it to do. All that is needed to get our way is "resolve." Thus she and her foreign policy clique seem confident that U.S. air strikes could counter Russian influence in Syria. Such overconfidence leads to taking grave risks without weighing the possible outcomes. So far, Trump's foreign policy statements are somewhat ambiguous. In competition with Hillary for support from the influential pro-Israel lobby, Trump's aggressive condemnation of the Iran nuclear deal competes with Clinton's bellicose threats to "obliterate" Iran.

However, by promising to "make America great again," Trump implies the U.S. is not so all-powerful. Considering that he set out to win the nomination from the Republican Party, which is not exactly a peace movement, Trump may have been using aggressive rhetoric precisely in order to sell a policy of withdraw-

al from worldwide battlefields. Blaming free-rider allies sets a nationalist tone to such withdrawal. His focus on wiping out Islamic terrorism is consistent with normalizing relations with Russia and reversal of Hillary Clinton's "regime change" policy. Sounding "crazy" could be a symptom of realism.

JA: How effective do you think Bernie Sanders has been in challenging Clinton's foreign policy positions?

DJ: Unfortunately, he was not effective at all. By resigning from the Democratic National Committee to oppose Hillary Clinton's warlike "regime change" policy, Hawaii congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard gave Sanders a great opportunity to use his campaign to strengthen an anti-war constituency. Sanders failed to follow her lead, sticking to domestic policy issues without relating his social reforms to the need to challenge the military-industrial complex. His opposition to the 2003 invasion of Iraq was principled and foresighted, but that was a Republican war. He has shown much more tolerance for "humanitarian" wars waged by Democrats. Bernie failed to reply to charges that he "lacked experience" by aggressively exposing the deadly nature of Hillary's "experience."

JA: Whatever his flaws, Sanders galvanized the support of many progressives fed up with the Democratic establishment. What do you think these supporters should do now that he surrendered the nomination to Clinton?

DJ: Since it appears hopeless either to reform the Democratic Party from within (apparently Sanders' project), or to build the Green Party into a real national challenge, I think splitting the Democratic Party would be the best strategy. It might be easier to build a third party by splitting

one of the two than by starting from scratch. The Bernie campaign made it clear how much popular support exists for a return to the social outlook associated with the New Deal, which many people continue to associate with the Democratic Party. In reality, the progressive left is now deprived of effective political representation. Honestly, it is hard to see how to escape from the two party trap.

JA: Clinton's gender has played an oversized role in discussions of her candidacy, but your book urges voters to look past the idea of America's first female president.

DJ: That gives people a reason to vote for her. That and her "experience." In reality, after being the wife of a president (Bill Clinton), that "experience" was carefully crafted to prepare her to run for president: first senator, then Secretary of State. A suitable *curriculum vitae* for the job. I find it amusing that the candidacy is not a result of her experience, but rather that the experience is the result of her (carefully programmed) candidacy. She has cast herself in the role. Being a woman tends to protect her from more critical examination of that record.

Still, there is no doubt that because she is a woman she has been subjected to particularly vicious personal attacks. By the same token, Obama aroused unjustified animosity for being African-American. Just as having a black president failed to eliminate racism, a woman president is not going to end the war between the sexes in America—on the contrary. My problem with all this is that "the right of a woman to be President" is actually a very provincial domestic issue in the United States at a time when so much else is at stake, including the danger of World War III. This is just not the moment to focus on gender. Some other time, some other woman. **M**



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