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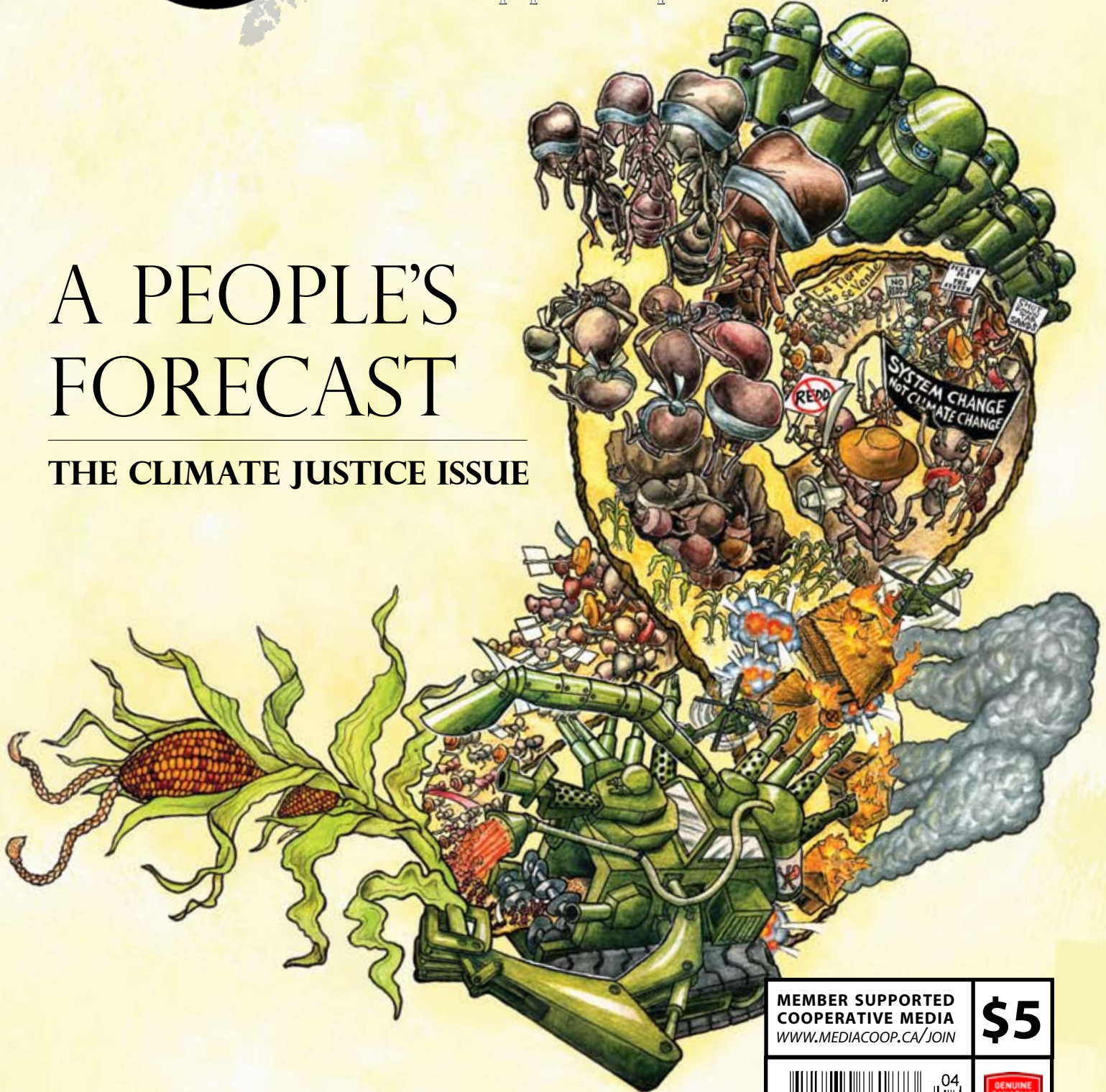
# The Dominion

news from the grassroots

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## A PEOPLE'S FORECAST

THE CLIMATE JUSTICE ISSUE



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# Fair Weather Warning

The earth is trying desperately to communicate with us. Record high temperatures, crop failures, natural disasters, and the flight of ecological refugees are its surefire signs that climate change is wreaking havoc in the present, and promising much worse for the future. Nevertheless, these warnings have done little to stir political and economic elites in Canada. Unwilling to take action domestically to curb runaway climate change, Canada has become an obstructionist pariah internationally at United Nations negotiations.

The Canadian government's reputation has taken a deserved beating, as the gulf widens between popular demands for action on climate change and the establishment's commitment to business as usual. The Conservatives' attempt to re-brand the Alberta tar sands as "ethical oil"—unlike that produced by tyrannical Saudis, goes their argument—is one indication of increasing concern over its tarnished image. But no rhetorical footwork can change the fact that the tar sands, sprawling and unregulated, are an extraordinarily destructive and thus immoral enterprise—even if it is a liberal democracy presiding over its operations, not a dictatorship.

Prompting absurd apologetics from the government and its polluting partners is but a small part of ending business as usual. Meaningful change will only come about with a powerful climate justice movement—grassroots, democratic, diverse—that brings concern for the human element to the climate debate's centre and makes social justice its top priority. We can do this best by organizing around frontline communities—



Indigenous, racialized, working class or poor, in the North and South, the same communities that are most severely impacted by the ecological crisis and least responsible for it.

These communities are hit first and worst, and that is precisely why they fight back the hardest. Their struggles did not, however, suddenly emerge when someone cried, "Climate justice!" So instead of pondering how to win over these struggles to the banner of climate justice, we are tasked with building wider networks of support for the most-affected communities. Victories in these struggles—against super-highways and for mass public transit; against industrial pollution and for universal health care; against mines and oil and gas extraction, and for a low-energy economy; against mono-crops and for sustainable agro-ecological farming; against wars for hydrocarbons and for democratic control over where we work, where we live and how we collectively make

decisions—will ease and improve the lives of many and cool the planet.

Science has laid out the non-negotiable targets for carbon emission thresholds, beyond which catastrophe looms. But such targets shouldn't become campaign centrepieces. Fixation on particles per million or emission percentages will encourage a carbon fundamentalism that can distract from the root causes of climate change and present opportunities for false solutions. Genuine solutions—for both the immediate crisis of runaway climate change and the enduring crises of an economic system committed to wastefully endless growth, resource wars and colonial land theft—are those advanced

by communities everywhere, as they strive for healthier, richer and better lives.

While science sets out hard and fast limits, the notion of "climate justice" will shift and meld as the movement grows and becomes more inclusive and representative. If it is many things, it should at least be a call to address mass poverty and suffering, the energy and biodiversity crisis, and climate change within an integrated vision of human progress. As some Indigenous peoples say, let us "live well," with each other and with the earth.

This is the enormous challenge for our movements. Our goal in this special issue of *The Dominion* is to leave with you an array of stories about the pursuit of such struggles in or connected to Canada, glimpses of communities on the front lines of climate change, and some pathways to collective action for resilience, for justice, and for survival.

—the Editorial Collective

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## International Mining Abuses Continue Unabated

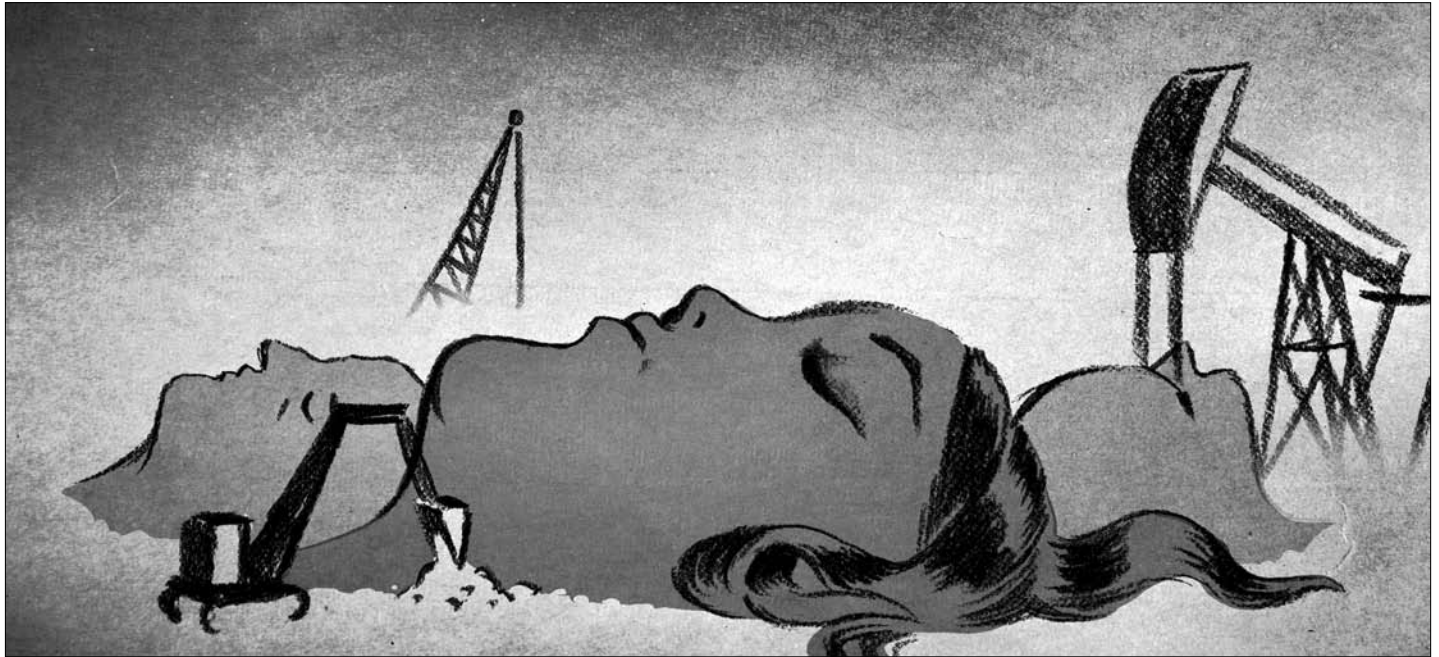
by Megan Kinch

Bill C-300, the "Responsible Mining Bill" introduced in the wake of a damning 2007 report on the Canadian mining industry's environmental and human rights record, was defeated during its third reading in Canadian Parliament.

Although the bill was criticized for potential "interference" with the "sovereignty" of developing nations, Canada is simultaneously pursuing C4A, a bloc trade agreement with several Central American countries that would mostly likely override national sovereignty on environmental issues. A subsidiary of Canadian corporation Pacific Rim is already suing the government of El Salvador for millions of dollars under a related agreement (the Central American Free Trade Agreement) for enforcing environmental regulations.

Meanwhile, repression of those reporting on Canadian mining interests abroad is on the rise. Amnesty International issued an urgent action alert in January regarding death threats received by human rights lawyer Hector Berríos on January 23, 2011. Three anti-mining activists were killed in his region of Cabanas, El Salvador, in 2009. Elsewhere, Guatemala is ramping up a "war on drugs" and has suspended civil liberties in areas in which anti-mining organizing is prevalent. In the Philippines, a broadcast journalist covering mining company abuses was recently shot dead. In Papua, New Guinea, police recently began arresting employees of Barrick Gold on charges of rape against Indigenous women near the Porgera mine.

At home, awareness of mining abuses is growing, especially among students. In January, protests were held at Stanford Fleming University in Vancouver, and a series of anti-mining events began at the University of Toronto—alleging



Matt Forsythe

links between human rights abuses and increasing academic interference by mining companies within the university.

## Tar Sands in the Great Lakes

by Toban Black

Bitumen from Alberta's tar sands continues to be processed in Sarnia, Ontario, and the surrounding townships. Imperial Oil, Nova Chemicals, Suncor and Shell all have refineries in Sarnia-Lambton's well-known "Chemical Valley"—where BP and Enbridge operations can also be found. This petro-chemical industry complex surrounds the Aamjiwnaang First Nation reserve, and sits directly across the river from Port Huron, Michigan. Aamjiwnaang residents are researching the resulting health impacts on communities in the area. The dramatic reduction in male births, due to endocrine-disrupting chemicals, is one of the most startling outcomes of local pollution. Other health impacts include cancers, respiratory problems and increased blood pressure.

Although tar sands refining is only one of many local pollution

sources, the industry casts a significant shadow over the future of the area. As with natural gas from shale rock, bitumen from the tar sands is increasingly necessary to extend the life of fossil fuel and petro-chemical industries in Sarnia. Conventional oil and gas are becoming less affordable and available, yet are used to make rubber, plastics, and various chemical and fuel products in Chemical Valley.

Like many other midwestern cities, Sarnia's existing oil and gas pipeline networks, and its other historical ties to petrochemical industries, may continue to draw fossil fuel companies to the region. Although Shell abandoned 2008 plans for a new tar sands refinery in the area amid protests, Suncor recently invested \$1 billion for refinery upgrades which included further integration with their other tar sands operations.

## Shale Gas Under Fire

by Paloma Friedman

The public debate on shale gas extraction is heating up as environmental experts and community groups face off against governments and the fuel industry. Already established in the US and Western Canada, exploratory shale

wells are now being drilled across northeastern North America to gauge the quantities of this energy resource, touted by gas producers as a cleaner-burning fossil fuel. In Quebec, the provincial government has thrown its weight behind shale, claiming high energy estimates from existing wells and positive economic spin-offs; it says there is enough gas to supply Quebecers' energy needs for the next 200 years and spur the creation of thousands of jobs. Yet in many locations environmental and safety impacts have yet to be studied, and leaks have been reported in more than half of the wells in Quebec. Recently, the province's public health authority joined a growing number of

experts and environmental activists in urging a halt to exploration until such impacts are fully assessed.

In Pennsylvania, reports by conservation groups show that shale gas companies have amassed more than 1,500 environmental violations in the course of drilling. Elsewhere, local residents are winning out against industry. Nova Scotian activists met with a cabinet minister after a petition against shale gas exploration was tabled in the provincial legislature. In New York State, lawmakers recently buckled under public pressure and imposed a six-month moratorium on shale gas exploration.



The Climate Justice Co-op is a proposal for a new way of conducting environmental work.

This initiative aims to establish an environmental organization that is member-funded, grassroots-based, and democratically run.

[www.climatejusticecoop.org](http://www.climatejusticecoop.org)

# A Wet'suwet'en Grassroots Alliance

by Toghestiy Wet'suwet'en  
(Warner Naziel)

WET'SUWET'EN YINTAH—Despite losing most of their homelands and resources primarily as a result of colonial dispossession, agriculturalism, deforestation and mining activities, the Wet'suwet'en continue to resist the illegitimate imposition of federal and provincial government jurisdiction. The Wet'suwet'en view the federal and provincial governments as illegitimate regulatory systems. By imposing the Indian Act and creating very small reservations at the turn of the 20th century, the federal government has deliberately sought to control the once impenetrable territories of these fiercely independent

*A grassroots Wet'suwet'en group has moved to revive and implement their ancient laws. In 2008, the newly resurrected Wet'suwet'en Warrior Society, the Lhe Lin Liyin, began to hold meetings with Wet'suwet'en communities.*

peoples.

This situation is changing.

Frustrated by the sedated response of the Office of the Wet'suwet'en to a recent Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline proposal, a grassroots Wet'suwet'en group has moved to revive and implement their ancient laws and the necessary vehicles for enforcing these laws. In 2008, the newly resurrected Wet'suwet'en Warrior Society, known as the Lhe Lin Liyin, began to hold meetings and camps with members of their communities. The proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway project involves construction of a 1,170-kilometre-long dual oil and condensate pipeline through Wet'suwet'en territories from the Alberta tar sands to Kitimat, BC. Other companies such as Kinder Morgan, the Pembina Pipeline Group, and Pacific Northern Gas are also interested in using this same corridor. For many Wet'suwet'en people, nothing seemed to be happening to

protect their lands from these threats to their livelihoods. In late 2009, the Unist'ot'en Clan of the Wet'suwet'en took a brave step and made a bold statement to the outside world, separating from the central tribal organization because they felt their interests were not being protected; rather they felt they were being undermined by their own elitist leadership and tribal office staff. The Unist'ot'en territories make up approximately two thirds of the 22,000 square kilometres of the entire Wet'suwet'en land base.

A statement made by Enbridge CEO Pat Daniels on January 22, 2011, characterized the First Nations resistance to the proposed pipeline as simply "hurdles." Lhe Lin Liyin co-

founder Mel Bazil bravely stepped forward to say that "We are not merely a hurdle for the Enbridge Northern Gateway project, we are an impenetrable wall which is fortified by the same fighting spirits of our warrior ancestors who also refused to allow trespassers onto our sacred lands."

Unist'ot'en spokesperson Freda Huson addressed all industrial impacts on their once pristine territories in a sobering statement. "Our territories have been decimated from industry. We will tolerate it no longer. We will do what it takes to protect it."

This fight for jurisdiction and Indigenous rights is far from over. The Lhe Lin Liyin and Unist'ot'en are gearing up for a new season of resistance—resistance which will make their ancestors and unborn generations proud.

*Toghestiy Wet'suwet'en is hereditary chief of the Fireweed Clan of the Wet'suwet'en Nation.*



Wet'suwet'en people assert their sovereignty.

Warner Naziel

## Indigenous Law and Sovereignty and Canada's Fossil Fuel Regime

by Jasmine Thomas

SAIK'UZ—Indigenous Nations in British Columbia have been strongly resisting the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Project, currently under the federal Joint Review Panel (JRP) process. The Yinka Dene Alliance includes Nadleh Whut'en, Nak'azdli, Takla Lake, Saik'uz and Wet'suwet'en First Nations, whose traditional territories cover approximately one quarter of the pipeline route.

The JRP released its "List of Issues" to be covered in the environmental assessment of the Northern Gateway Project on January 19, 2010, and also stated that Enbridge must provide the panel with more information. The JRP rejected consideration of numerous key issues raised by First Nations, community groups, environmental organizations and individuals on matters related to climate change, the greenhouse gas implications of the project and the increase in tar sands production that it would enable.

But the Yinka Dene Alliance and other First Nations in British Columbia have chosen to boycott the flawed JRP process because of the lack of respect shown to Indigenous laws, authority and rights from the very beginning of the process.

On December 2, 2010, over 61 First Nations presented the "Save the Fraser Declaration" spearheaded by the Yinka Dene Alliance. This is the second major declaration based upon Indigenous law and sovereignty opposing the project.

It states: "We will not allow the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipelines, or similar tar sands projects, to cross our lands, territories and watersheds, or the ocean migration routes of Fraser River salmon."

Enbridge officials continue to claim that the 61 First Nations who have signed onto the Declaration are only a "minority" and that the project will proceed. Resolutions have been passed by the BC Municipalities and BC First Nations Summit opposing the project; petitions have been brought to the House of Commons demanding a legislated ban on tankers and future drilling on BC's coast; and over 80 per cent of British Columbians oppose the project. The Yinka Dene Alliance have told Enbridge CEO Patrick Daniels and President John Carruthers that they will reject the company's revenue-sharing offer and will not sacrifice the generations to come for any price.

*Jasmine Thomas is a member of the Saik'uz First Nation.*



# Water is Medicine, Water is Life

by **Neddie Thompson**

AKWESASNE—Water is life. When we carry a child, that child is in that water—the amniotic sac. That water holds our life for nine months that the women carry a child.

Once you go to a birth, you know how connected you are with the earth, and all of the creation around us. All my life I was told that it is the water that's going to be really important.

We have rites of passage where the older women have the young women doing their moon ceremonies, which are still going on today. We teach our young women how our Grandmother Moon had made all kinds of sacrifices, and that we're only here for a time on this earth, as beings, and we have our laws. One of the laws is to take care of the water.

Right now we have to make our language strong, because our language means a lot more than what we are talking now, using the English language. That's our power: our language and our culture.

They try to destroy us and their own people with whatever chemicals and prescription drugs. Now that's going into our water source, all the chemicals. The water runs through all of our territories and goes into the ocean. In that is all the sickness.

It's genocide what they're doing. They've been doing it since they set foot here on our lands. It's time to tell them that they have no more powers to do so, no matter what kind of law they write.

We have our laws, and it's to protect all of creation. All the women need to rise up, no matter what, all of the stuff that we've been put through. The men are there to protect us, and stand by us and what we do.

We have to go and use our voices and speak out. And tell them that we're here to tell them that our Mother Earth is sick now and we have to take care of her. With that, we have to start renewing everything.

That's what it's going to take. It's not going to take money and



how much land you own, because you can't put a price on the land. We have to put a stop to all the industries, corporations, and that money, the dollar. Their world isn't going to work. It's going to all come down.

It's going to be a long process. You can't just do it overnight. And no, you can't sign any piece of paper, because they change their laws all the time, and ours never really did.

Once our people wake up from the oppression, from all the damage, one day soon, we'll all get together and go to the ones that try to change all the laws.

Everything is dying now, all

around us. They're killing all our people and their own people. We can't sit with them. We have to let them know—we have to tell them—because they sit with us for a little while, and they smoke that peace pipe, and okay, it's just a band-aid effect for a little while.

There comes a time when our generation has to say the time is now. You've done all this hurt. It's going to be all of us, the people, who are going to have to get together, from all directions on this land, and say: It's over.

All the original people have that spiritual connection to all of the creation. It all has to do with how we talk to one another, and

the medicines, and the spiritual part of it.

It's going to be the women, or the children, that will be strong to do that, that'll be able to just understand who they are and why they come to this journey here on the land. Since time immemorial, it's the women that give birth to all of our children, to take care of this land.

*Neddie Thompson is an original woman and traditional midwife from Akwesasne, Kanienkehaka (Mohawk) Territory. Her Frontline account was recorded via phone, transcribed, and edited (due to space considerations only) by Sandra Cuffe in Vancouver.*

# Justice

## Bearing the future

by Sandra Cuffe

VANCOUVER—A boy found his younger brother's body hanging in the basement. Another mine passed the environmental review process. More women are going missing and are murdered. The search for a nuclear waste site continues.

Stories told by the media are presented as a series of disconnected incidents and issues. Most governments, federal or otherwise, work in a similar framework of disconnection, whether to determine jurisdiction or to deflect accountability. Public discussion often separates reality into compartments.

The discourse of many groups and campaigns working on environmental and climate issues explicitly rejects this disconnected perspective. However, that same discourse has been questioned for its failure to make many other connections that Indigenous peoples, women and others have been pointing out for decades.

"Once you go to a birth, you know how connected you are to the earth, and to all creation around us," says Neddie Thompson, a traditional midwife from Akwesasne, in Kanienkehaka (Mohawk) territory. "It's the women who give birth to all of our children...to take care of this land."

"As an Indigenous feminist, one of the links I, as well as many Indigenous women across the world, see is between reproductive health and environmental justice. Simultaneously I am angry about the lack of recognition of this link within most environmental discourse," wrote Cree/Norwegian Indigenous feminist Erin Konsmo. Also a student, she added that "[it's] insulting to hear in environmental classes that the idea of any form of sustainability is a new concept."

The declaration from the International Indigenous Women's Environmental and Reproductive Health Symposium held last year in California states that "[sover-

eignty] and autonomy in relation to our lands, territories and resources are intricately connected to sovereignty and autonomy in relation to our bodies, minds and spirits."

In occupied Canada, and throughout Turtle Island (North America) and Abya Yala (the Americas), the language used to describe resource extraction and environmental destruction is often framed in terms of the war on the land. The phrase is often used as though this were somehow separate from the wars on Indigenous peoples, on women, and on all beings inhabiting the planet.

The identification of the planet as living, life-bearing, and feminine—Mother Earth, among many other names—has been adopted by many environmental and climate activists. Resource extraction and environmental destruction are often also framed in gendered language, particularly using analogies of rape. The use of these words, however, often does not include any kind of analysis of the connections between violence against the earth and violence against women.

An entirely different worldview is illustrated through the spoken and written words of Indigenous peoples throughout this hemisphere, the original keepers and defenders of the lands on which environmental and climate campaigns are now carried out.

"Grassroots and land-based struggles characterize most of Native environmentalism," wrote Anishnaabeg author and activist Winona Laduke in *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life*. "We are nations of people with distinct land areas, and our leadership and direction emerge from the land up."

"Western European peoples have never learned to consider the nature of the world discerned from a spatial point of view. And a singular difficulty faces peoples of Western European heritage in making a transition

from thinking in terms of time to thinking in terms of space," wrote Sioux author, teacher and activist Vine Deloria Jr. in his now-famous 1972 book *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*.

"The very essence of Western European identity involves the assumption that time proceeds in a linear fashion; further it assumes that at a particular point in the unraveling of this sequence,

the peoples of Western Europe became the guardians of the world," continued Deloria.

Many environmental and climate organizations and activists now support the ongoing struggles for collective Indigenous rights to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) over any activity or policy that may impact their territories. Less well known is the story of how the struggle for the right to





# Embodied

## to protect the Earth



Caitlin Crawshaw

FPIC is rooted in the organized response of Indigenous women some 40 years ago to the involuntary sterilization of Indigenous women in different territories otherwise known as the United States.

"It's a really interesting history how it became central to our work and recognition of our rights as Indigenous people—the right to FPIC now relating to

development on our territories, laws, toxins being used on our lands related to cultural items, and it all started as medical [terminology]. It started with the right of women to say yes or no, to be fully awake and not under threat when they give their agreement or any kind of medication," longtime International Indian Treaty Council organizer Andrea Carmen told multiracial Indigenous

hip-hop feminist reproductive justice freedom fighter Jessica Yee. The transcript of the conversation is included in Yee's introduction to *Feminism FOR REAL*.

In the words of the SisterSong Women of Colour Reproductive Justice Collective, a network of dozens of grassroots organizations, the reproductive justice framework "represents a shift for women advocating for control of their bodies, from a narrower focus on legal access and individual choice (the focus of mainstream organizations) to a broader analysis of racial, economic, cultural, and structural constraints on our power."

"We believe reproductive justice exists when all people have the social, political and economic power and resources to make healthy decisions about our gender, bodies, sexuality and families for ourselves and our communities," wrote Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice, one of the founding members of the SisterSong. "Reproductive Justice aims to transform power inequities and create long-term systemic change, and therefore relies on the leadership of communities most impacted by reproductive oppression."

The terms "reproductive justice" and "environmental justice" have been used to emphasize this broader analysis and the need for long-term systemic change. The "justice" framework is not new; it has been used for decades by marginalized women and communities, and in particular, Indigenous women.

"Climate justice" is a term now used by many different people and organizations to make a similar distinction between their perspective and the narrow framework of much environmental discourse. However, if the centuries of experience and voices from the same people and communities the climate justice movement purports to support are ignored, dismissed, romanticized, or silenced, then perhaps the

*"Sovereignty and autonomy in relation to our lands, territories and resources are intricately connected to sovereignty and autonomy in relation to our bodies, minds and spirits."*

—*International Indigenous Women's Environmental and Reproductive Health Symposium*

inclusion of "justice" is a cosmetic touch to the same environmental discourse.

Regardless of intentions, a mission statement or policy document is only words on a piece of paper. They can either become an ongoing reality, or they can join a long trail of broken treaties.

In 1992, longtime Sioux activist Floyd Red Crow Westerman recited some of the lyrics from his 1973 song "They Didn't Listen" to conclude his testimony at the World Uranium Hearings in Austria: "And I told them not to dig for uranium, for if they did, the children would die. They didn't listen, they didn't listen to me. And I told them if the children die, there would be no keepers of the land. They didn't listen."

"If our midwives pass on Indigenous concepts of respecting our environment and keeping it healthy for the next seven generations, should they not be central to environmental discourse?" wrote Erin Konsmo in *An Indigenous Feminist Reminder of Women and Environmental Justice*. "They absolutely need to be. Otherwise, the ideas of risk will be greatly slanted away from our women and our future generations."

*Sandra Cuffe's mom used to borrow her own mother's old typewriter so her little daughter could type her stories. Thanks!*



Hector Rodriguez, posing defiantly in front of riot police, was among the thousands of Indigenous peoples, small farmers, women, environmental groups and other activists who took action at last year's two-week COP 16 conference in Cancun. The Indigenous contingent brought to the conference a clear anti-REDD message.

Allan Cedillo Lissner

## REDD Light!

### Indigenous say carbon offset plan threatens traditional title

by Dawn Paley

SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS, MEXICO—The carbon market was the hottest issue at last year's Conference of the Parties (COP)-16 summit in Cancun. Inside the meeting, delegates approved the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and Conservation program (REDD+). However, outside the official meeting, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Indigenous-led organizations clashed over its merits.

Opponents of REDD+ (or simply "REDD"), say the

mechanism is a false solution to the climate crisis which will intensify a pattern of land grabs by the private sector throughout the Third World. The final Cancun text on REDD does little to address these concerns, as it does not contain wording that would prevent conservation projects from encroaching on the rights and title of Indigenous peoples living in forest-rich lands.

Deforestation is responsible for at least 18 per cent of global carbon emissions—more than aviation and global transport combined—according to a report by carbon management company Carbon Planet. REDD is a

mechanism by which forests in developing countries are "sustainably managed" or designated as carbon sinks in order to mitigate climate change. Though REDD primarily emerged from the COP-13 in Bali in 2007, the idea germinated during Kyoto Protocol negotiations in 1997.

In Cancun, a clear anti-REDD message unified many Mexican Indigenous, environmental and peasant groups, but NGOs such as Greenpeace International, the World Wildlife Federation, the Environmental Defense Fund, and Conservation International promoted the REDD agreement.

No REDD projects have yet

been implemented in Chiapas, which, as a state with heavy forest cover, is a target region for the program. According to Gustavo Castro Soto, an organizer with Otros Mundos ("Other Worlds," a social and environmental justice organization) in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, the mechanisms for measuring the effectiveness and impact of REDD programs have yet to be designed.

Already, precursors to the implementation of REDD have people like Castro worried. Barring people's access to forests on *ejidos* (communally-held lands) is the first necessary step in putting these forested areas on the



carbon market.

"This is how the government will ensure that there is a forest in each *ejido*, and this will obviously be sold as an Environmental Service [a UN-defined category of the carbon market], for which the government will receive a quantity of money, of which the community will receive a fraction," said Castro.

"This is what they call sustainable community forest management," he said dryly.

Decisions about how exactly to finance REDD have been postponed to COP-17 in Durban.

"If REDD is going to be financed through the carbon market, it won't be a real solution to climate change," Mariana Porras of Friends of the Earth Costa Rica told *The Dominion* in a phone interview from San Jose. "We've denounced this, but government groups don't see it the same way," she said.

Market-based financing for REDD will likely complement

the ongoing privatization of forest reserves, which moves ownership and access rights of forests currently owned communally by Indigenous or peasant communities into the hands of individuals.

In Costa Rica, as in Mexico, the government is in the early phases of implementing REDD,

***"The agreements implicitly promote carbon markets, offsets, unproven technologies and land grabs—anything but a commitment to real emissions reductions."***

***—Indigenous Environmental Network***

which means engaging in public consultations. "If you see who gets invited to the meetings about REDD—to the consultations—it's rare that you'll see a peasant community, or peasant organizations," said Porras. "Mostly, you'll see people who own private lands, or people from private organizations."

In Cancun, the Indigenous Environmental Network stood in opposition to the discourse of many other NGOs. In a final statement from Cancun, they berated COP-16 as the "World Trade Organization of the sky," and harshly criticized the REDD plan. "The agreements implicitly

language fell short of grassroots solidarity. Days before the final agreement was reached, Executive Director Kumi Naidoo released a statement saying that "a good REDD deal would benefit biodiversity, people and the climate."

Greenpeace was steadfast in its support for the outcome of the climate negotiations in Mexico, and after COP-16 wound down, Naidoo posed for a photo with Mexican President Felipe Calderon, and praised the president's leadership in reaching a global climate agreement.

Resistance to the REDD program did not end with COP-16. Activists say that the COP-17 meeting in Durban at the end of the year will be decisive as to the future of REDD, and the carbon market is sure to be a key issue in the months preceding the conference.

*Dawn Paley is a journalist based in Vancouver.*

**May 2011**

**STOP SIGNS**

**CARS AND CAPITALISM**  
on the road to economic, social and ecological decay

Bianca Mugenyi AND Yves Engler

**mayday**  
magazine

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Current.  
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Based in Hamilton, Ontario, Mayday Magazine is a monthly grassroots publication committed to providing commentary and analysis of current events both locally and around the world.

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We need copy editors, contact moira@mediacoop.ca if interested.

Each barrel of mock crude extracted from **Alberta's tar sands** requires several barrels of water and hundreds of cubic feet of natural gas. Downstream communities are facing abnormally high rare cancer rates, water pollution, and a host of social impacts. The project faces growing global resistance, led by affected First Nations.

The closed **lead/zinc mine in Faro** holds 70 million tonnes of tailings and an estimated 500 million tonnes of contaminated waste rock. Site closure will cost as much as \$590 million, and require constant maintenance for at least 500 years.

**Mining resistance:** the Unist'ot'en evicted Lions Gate Minerals from Wet'suwet'en territory, Tahltan people imposed community moratoriums, West Moberley First Nation is in court battling First Coal Corporation, Nak'azdli blockaded the proposed Mt. Milligan mine.

The proposed **Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline** would transport 520,000 barrels of tar sands bitumen a day to a port in Kitimat. Sixty-one First Nations have declared total opposition to the project.

Current and planned **mines** include the Avalon rare earth mine, the De Beers Gahcho Kue diamond mine, the NICO gold project, uranium exploration in the Thelon area, and mining activity in the Edehzhie area.

The **Peel Watershed** is home to five major river drainages and four First Nations traditional territories. First Nations and ecologists are demanding full protection for the area, which is under threat from extractive industries.

Toxic remains of oil and gas activities dot the landscape in Treaty 8, which spans from northeast BC to northwest Saskatchewan. There are over 1,400 **abandoned oil and gas extraction sites** in northern BC alone.

Selwyn Resources Ltd. plans to exploit a massive zinc deposit in the eastern Yukon by 2014. Liard First Nations, already affected by Faro's environmental fallout, are concerned about zinc-laden **mine tailings** contaminating local rivers, and threatened to take the company to court after they failed to adequately consult with First Nations.

Development of northwestern **Saskatchewan's tar sands** is moving forward. Estimates place the area's potential bitumen output at as high as 2.3 billion barrels.

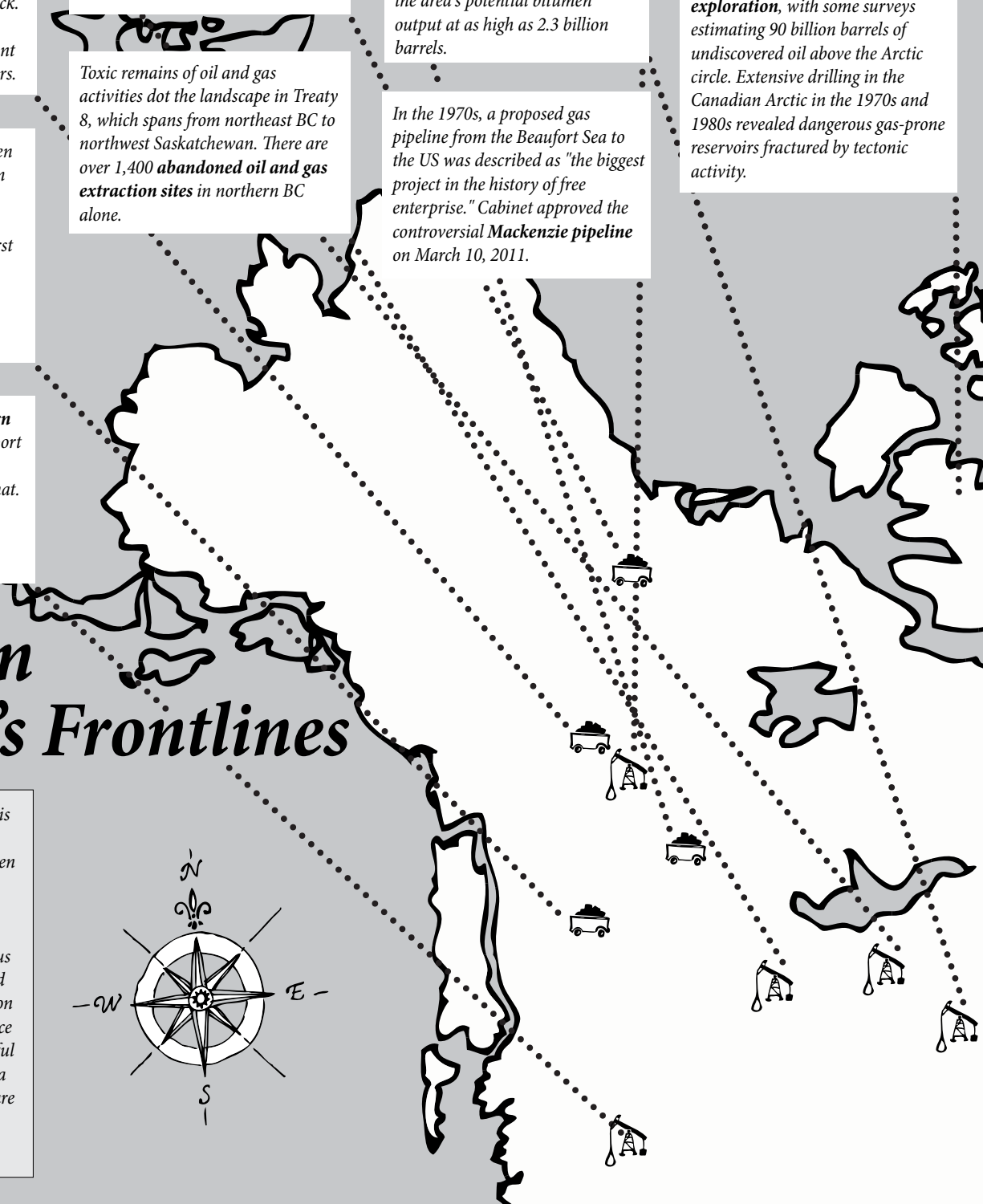
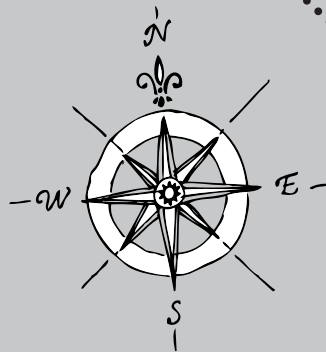
In the 1970s, a proposed gas pipeline from the Beaufort Sea to the US was described as "the biggest project in the history of free enterprise." Cabinet approved the controversial **Mackenzie pipeline** on March 10, 2011.

Inuit elders, hunters, and other Baker Lake residents continue to oppose **uranium mining** in the Kivalliq region, over a decade after 90.2 per cent rejected a proposed mine in a municipal plebiscite. Regardless, in 2007, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated changed its policy on uranium from opposition to conditional support, and signed an agreement with Kaminak Gold.

The Arctic region, comprised of 19 geological basins, is of increasing interest for **oil and gas exploration**, with some surveys estimating 90 billion barrels of undiscovered oil above the Arctic circle. Extensive drilling in the Canadian Arctic in the 1970s and 1980s revealed dangerous gas-prone reservoirs fractured by tectonic activity.

# Northern Canada's Frontlines

**Introduction:** Northern Canada is out of sight for the majority of Canada's population and too often out of mind in the mainstream media. Resource colonization is taking place in the traditional territories of dozens of Indigenous Nations: First Nations, Inuit, and Metis. The grassroots resistance on the frontlines of the climate justice movement, as well as the powerful struggles to demand that Canada respect Indigenous sovereignty, are too often ignored.





Deze Energy Corp.'s \$700-million **Taltson dam expansion** and transmission line proposal was rejected as incomplete and sent back to a review board. Resistance from the Lutsel K'e Dene Nation has already forced an overhaul of the project.

The Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inminuwug (KI) First Nation told De Beers Canada that no **mining activity** is currently allowed anywhere in its territory. Six community leaders were jailed in 2008 for disobeying a court injunction to remove their blockade against mining company Platinex. The KI's struggle galvanized efforts for mining legislation reform in Ontario.

Dene territory in the Athabasca Basin of northern Saskatchewan is the world's largest producer of **uranium**, accounting for 20 per cent of global production. While two Athabasca Dene First Nations have signed option agreements with CanAlaska Uranium Ltd., many Dene of northern Saskatchewan and Lutsel K'e have joined the Inuit from Baker Lake in opposing Ur Energy's proposed Screech Lake uranium exploration near the Thelon Game Sanctuary in the Mackenzie Valley.

Fifty years of hydro development have immeasurably impacted landscape, destroyed essential wildlife habitats and eroded First Nations' treaty rights and livelihoods. More than **ten new dams** are in the works, along with new projects including the Arctic Bridge Gateway, the Bipole III Transmission Line expansion and railway expansion.

The proposed **Mary River iron mine** on Baffin Island will use giant ice-breaking ore carriers that will travel year round through the Foxe Basin. Local Inuit fear this will disrupt wildlife migration corridors and prevent them from travelling across the Basin to the west coast of Baffin Island.

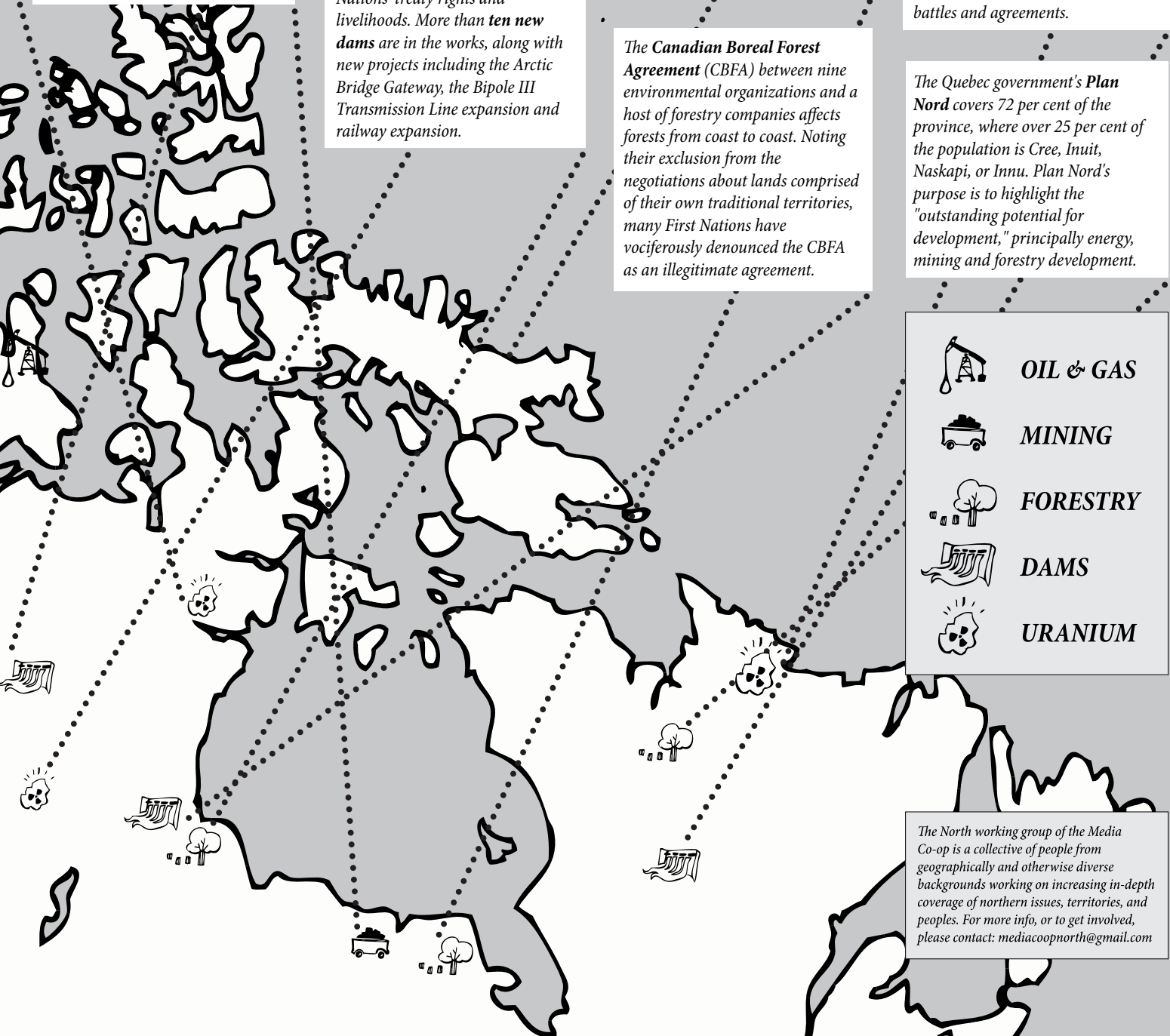
Despite opposition, in 2010 the Ontario government passed Bill 191, the "**Far North Act**," covering 225,000km<sup>2</sup> of boreal forest covering approximately one-fifth of the province. The Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), which represents 49 First Nations, has declared its members will use "any means necessary" to protect Treaty rights.






The **Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement** (CBFA) between nine environmental organizations and a host of forestry companies affects forests from coast to coast. Noting their exclusion from the negotiations about lands comprised of their own traditional territories, many First Nations have vociferously denounced the CBFA as an illegitimate agreement.

The 2008 Nunatsiavut government's bill banning **uranium mining** on Inuit-owned land in northern Labrador for three years is up for review this spring. The ban has applied to extraction and production but not to exploration. The Nunatsiavut government—formed in 2005—is developing its land use and environmental assessment policies and legislation.

Built by Hydro-Quebec, Bechtel, and SNC-Lavalin in the 1970s, the James Bay Project **hydro-electric development** located in the La Grande watershed covers 11 per cent of Quebec and produces almost half of Hydro-Quebec's total output. Decades of intense Cree resistance has led to cancelled dams, court battles and agreements.

The Quebec government's **Plan Nord** covers 72 per cent of the province, where over 25 per cent of the population is Cree, Inuit, Naskapi, or Innu. Plan Nord's purpose is to highlight the "outstanding potential for development," principally energy, mining and forestry development.



-  OIL & GAS
-  MINING
-  FORESTRY
-  DAMS
-  URANIUM

The North working group of the Media Co-op is a collective of people from geographically and otherwise diverse backgrounds working on increasing in-depth coverage of northern issues, territories, and peoples. For more info, or to get involved, please contact: [mediacoopnorth@gmail.com](mailto:mediacoopnorth@gmail.com)

## Fueling Climate Injustice

### Tar sands, emissions and US-Canadian militarization

by Maryam Adrangi  
& SK Hussan

TORONTO—Over half of Alberta's tar sands oil goes to the US, making Canada the single largest foreign supplier of oil to the United States. As popular uprisings unfold across the Middle East, Prime Minister Stephen Harper is trying to facilitate oil

*"Reduced tar sands production would force the US to reduce growth in energy consumption, including for their military."  
—Ricardo Acuna, Parkland Institute*

exports to the US by making them tax-free, arguing that the US needs "secure" oil from its stable northern allies. Over the past forty years, exploration and production of crude oil from Alberta's tar sands have spiked in tandem with various wars and occupations involving Canadian and US military.

"[Former US Vice-President Dick] Cheney's National Energy Policy identified expanding Canadian tar sands production as critical to US security," says Ricardo Acuna of the Parkland Institute, an Edmonton-based progressive think tank. "Reduced tar sands production would force the US to reduce growth in energy consumption, including for their military."

Acuna has chronicled spikes in Alberta's oil production in 1973 and throughout the last decade, which correlate to US (and in some cases Canadian) military involvement in the Yom Kippur war, the Iraqi oil embargo and the ongoing occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq. Pressure from the US has prevented Canada from developing any type of climate change policy, says Acuna, because an ever-expanding imperial military force in turn requires an expanding source of fossil fuels.

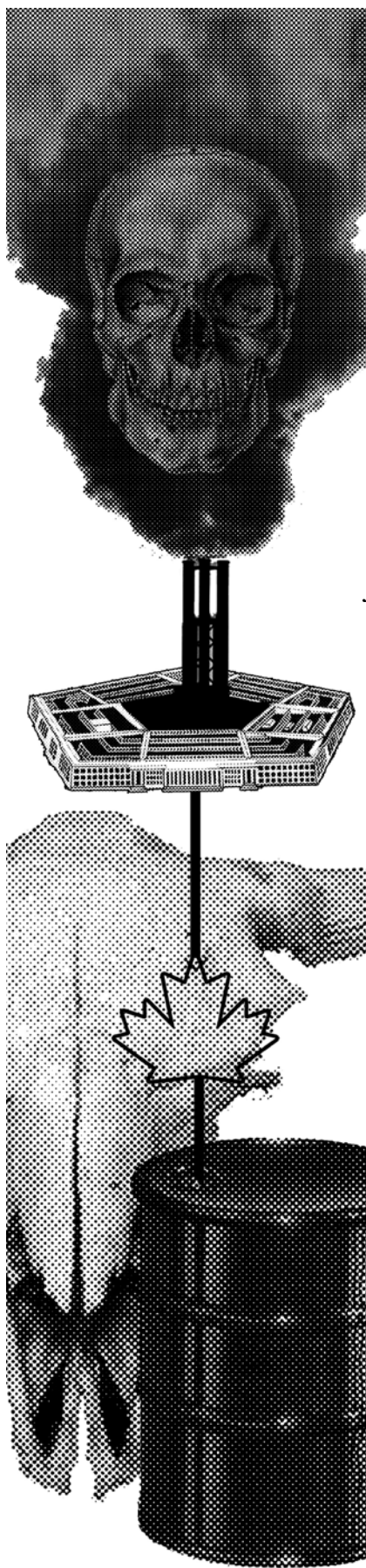
According to the World Watch Institute, emissions from military operations cause six to 10 per cent of global air pollution and contribute significantly to global warming. The Pentagon is the largest institutional user of petroleum products in the world, burning through 395,000 barrels of oil a day. Emissions from fighter jets and planes cause disproportionately high impacts on the climate because of the way they mix with atmospheric gases at high altitudes. Much of this fuel comes from tar sands oil.

The US Air Force consumes about 2.5 billion gallons of aviation fuel per year and accounts for more than half of the Pentagon's energy use. "Only about 20 per cent of tar sands crude can be refined into oil for a conventional car," says Macdonald Stainsby of Oil Sands Truth, "but it is almost identical to jet fuel." This helps explain the demand for tar sands oil, which is costly to extract and refine.

The Pentagon highlights its initiative to "green" its operations by building environmentally sustainable and energy-efficient buildings, but emissions due to military activity are still increasing. The Pentagon consumes approximately 22 gallons of oil per on-duty soldier each day, a figure expected to grow by 1.5 per cent every year.

Facts about the Canadian military's carbon footprint are difficult to come by. The most recent environmental reports released by the Department of National Defence (DND), including from the Army Environmental Programme and the National Defense Sustainable Development Strategy, fail to discuss the impact of overseas Canadian military operations, domestic naval operations and air force operations.

These reports do, however, comment on the DND's organi-



Jesse Purcell



zational footprint: it is the largest single consumer of federally procured goods, holds seven per cent of federal land inventory, owns the greatest proportion of federal government buildings (43 per cent), and has a fleet of over 11,000 vehicles, 11,000 military pattern trucks, 100 ships and 300 aircraft.

The expansion of Canada's military operations abroad parallels increased domestic militarization.

For example, the Innu people of Nitassinan have long opposed low-level flights near the NATO air force base at Goose Bay in Newfoundland and Labrador. Their resistance began in 1979, when the government moved to expand the low-level flights from 8,000 to 100,000 per year. For the Innu people, resisting NATO's air force base was a fight for environmental justice, including the protection of caribou and other species on which the Innu people depend, as well as a fight for their traditional ways of life.

In 1989, several women were arrested for occupying the base's runways. The women served 19 days in a provincial jail before being acquitted of charges. The provincial court ruled that they were not trespassing, as they were occupying their own land.

By the summer of that year, 250 people had been arrested while opposing the NATO proposal. The opposition ultimately forced the military base to be shut down in 2008, according to the International Campaign for the Innu and the Earth.

Other examples of militarization and resistance in Canada include the Oka Crisis of August 1990, and the secret use of Canadian military at Ts'Peten (Gustafsen Lake) in central BC in 1995.

"The Indigenous people in Canada are surviving prison-like conditions on reservations controlled by the RCMP and the Canadian army," said Elaine Thomas of the St'at'imc Native Youth Movement. "Every year Indigenous people are criminalized or intimidated off their original homelands by force, such as the incident at Gustafsen Lake where land mines, grenades and

assault rifles were used to attempt to slaughter native people holding a sacred ceremony."

Ellen Gabriel, community spokesperson during the Oka Crisis, described the extreme force used against the Mohawk people in 1990 as nothing new. "For two and a half centuries, the colonizers have criminalized Indigenous peoples to justify the illegal theft of our lands," she said. "The state authorities had more weaponry and resources than the small communities of Kanehsatake and Kahnawake. The Government of Canada and Quebec condoned the hundreds of human rights violations by both the SQ [Quebec provincial police] and Canadian Army."

In February 2010, Canadian military and police forces were brought in to provide security for the Vancouver Winter Olympics, decried country-wide as an environmentally destructive project, which siphoned public funds and was held on unceded Indigenous territory.

Similarly, Canadian military and police displayed a massive show of force in Toronto during the G20 meeting in June 2010, repressing grassroots activists and arresting more than 1,100 people. "The policing of protest in Canada has gradually militarized, but this summer's G20 protests launched police tactics to a new level with the use of 'less-lethal weapons' (Tasers, sound cannons, rubber bullets), military formations, and pre-emptive arrests," according to Lesley Wood, Professor of Sociology at York University.

Increasing militarization at home and Canada's expanding military presence abroad are intimately linked with increased state-sponsored violence against people and the land.

The G20 has been widely criticized for being a non-democratic self-appointed body whose member governments and corporations are responsible for over 90 per cent of the world's wars and 80 per cent of the world's greenhouse emissions. The anti-G20 mobilizations saw environmental justice, anti-war and migrant justice organizers working together in a rare show of cross-pollination that is becoming

increasingly necessary.

"Wars and climate change are inextricably connected, working together to push people out of their homes," said Farrah Miranda from No One Is Illegal-Toronto. "And while countries like the US and Canada profit from these wars and environmental disasters, they also militarize their borders, only allowing in those they displace as temporary workers, [who are] exploited and easily deportable."

Forced migration due to climate change is on the rise. Professor Norman Myers of Oxford University has argued that by 2050, "when global warming takes hold there could be as many as 200 million people displaced by disruptions of monsoon systems and other rainfall regimes, by droughts of unprecedented severity and duration and by sea-level rise and coastal flooding." If the world population rises to nine billion by that time, the 200 million people who will be displaced represents one in every 45 people on the planet.

"Environmental justice activists in Canada and around the world are increasingly... organizing against local and global militarization," said Sakura Saunders of Toronto's Mining Injustice Solidarity Network. "In many of the communities that Mining Injustice Solidarity Network works, such as Tanzania and Papua New Guinea, we have seen state forces partner with mining companies to forcefully evict people from their land. In other areas, we see military aid undermining struggles for the self-determination of Indigenous

peoples [who] happen to live in resource-rich areas."

Activists say that as environmental movements, and anti-war and occupation movements enter into conversation, an analytical shift is required.

"Connecting issues of militarization and environmental injustices requires looking at environmental issues in more complex ways, and to understand that environmental issues do not impact everyone in the same way," said Ilaria Giglioli, a PhD student at the University of California, Berkeley. Giglioli, a Palestinian solidarity activist, offered an example. "Israeli deep well pumping in the West Bank has lowered the water table; the settler land grab has resulted in over-exploitation and over-grazing of Palestinian lands; and human and animal migration has been negatively impacted by the construction of the Apartheid Wall—all these impact the Palestinians more."

This is just one example of how anti-war and social justice movements are beginning to understand and respond to the increasing deterioration of the environment, and how environmental justice organizers are recognizing and reacting to the impacts of war, colonization and immigration policies on communities around the world.

*Maryam Adrangi is an environmental justice and Indigenous sovereignty activist in Toronto. SK Hussain is a migrant justice, anti-war and Indigenous sovereignty activist in Toronto.*



# DEGREES of DISASTER

by Dru Oja Jay

"If warming is not kept below two degrees centigrade, which will require the strongest mitigation efforts, and currently looks very unlikely to be achieved, the substantial global impacts will occur, such as species extinctions, and millions of people at risk from drought, hunger, flooding."

—Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Atmospheric concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> and predicted changes in global average temperature\*:

## 550 PPM

Limit advocated by economist Nicholas Stern

## 500 PPM

Emissions would have had to peak in 2010 to achieve stabilization at 500 ppm.

## 450 PPM

IPCC's "dangerous warming" limit

## 400 PPM

**390 PPM:** concentration in 2011

## 350 PPM

Target endorsed by 350.org and other ENGOS

## 300 PPM

Cochabamba Declaration target; level required to prevent major climate change according to many scientists

### 355 PPM

1988: Scientists declare that emissions must be reduced 66%.

### 315 PPM

Atmospheric concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in 1955

Tar sands production in 2010:

## 1.5 million

barrels per day

Projected tar sands production in 2025:

## 3.5 million

barrels per day

Current annual growth rate of oil consumption:

## 1.5 million

barrels per day

As oil reserves are depleted, continued growth of oil consumption will necessitate accessing oil that is harder to extract and more energy-intensive to refine. The anticipated result is a tandem of increasingly destructive impacts at the local and global levels. Local impacts include riskier and more damaging extraction processes such as tar sands and offshore drilling. Global impacts result from higher atmospheric concentration of CO<sub>2</sub>, accelerated by increased energy use in fuel processing, extraction and transportation.

Current rate of oil consumption globally:

## 87.8 million

barrels per day

\* predictions based on MIT climate temperature increase, which includes thermal lag. PPM estimates are based on current models, which show a range of concentrations that could result.

Sources: International Energy Agency, Reuters, Pipeline and Gas Journal, Wikipedia, Petroleum Producers, James Hansen. The climate modelling data and Cory Morningstar.





• Sea level rise threatens major cities

**4° C**

Predicted result of current policies by 2100

- Risk of total loss of Arctic sea ice in summer
- Sea levels 0.5 to 2 metres higher
- Major decreases in tropical rainfall
- Widespread desertification
- Drying of Amazon River under certain scenarios



Military confrontation may be triggered by a desperate need for natural resources such as energy, food and water... it seems undeniable that severe environmental problems are likely to escalate the degree of global conflict. —2003 Pentagon Report

• Increasing risk of feedbacks and large-scale abrupt climate shifts.

**3°**

- Up to 2 billion people face water shortages
- Agricultural production in sub-Saharan Africa could drop by 50 per cent
- European and North American crop yields will increase; water availability will decrease
- 30 per cent of plant and animal life at risk

**2° C**

"Ceiling" set in Copenhagen in 2010

- Small mountain glaciers disappear
- Falling crop yields

**1°**

"Safe limit" declared by UN in 1990

**0° C**

Global average temperatures have increased 0.74° C during the 20th century. The IPCC predicts an additional increase between 1° and over 6° before 2100.

Current rate of oil consumption of the US military alone:  
**1 million** barrels per day

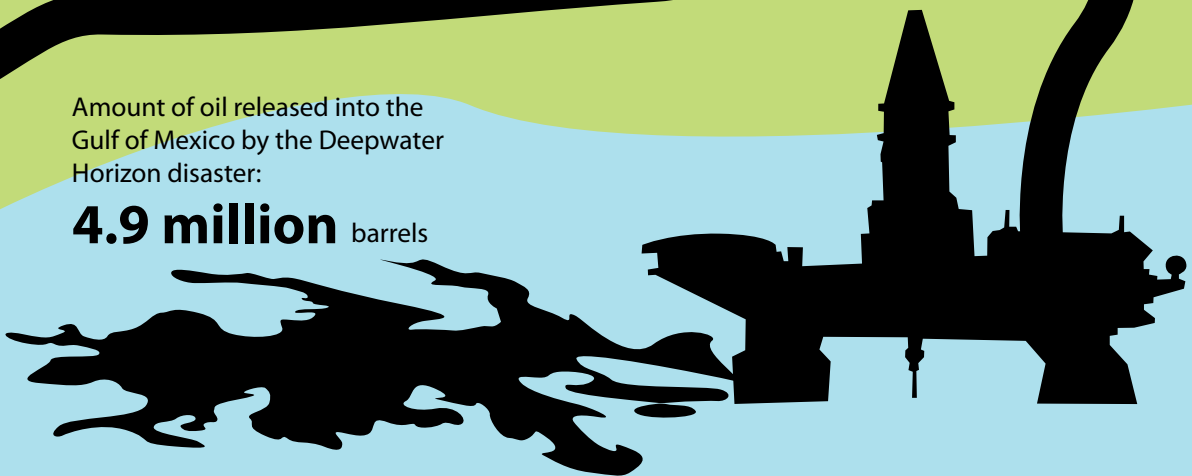
Pipelines planned or under construction as of 2010:  
**145,845** km, over 3.5 times the circumference of the earth

Number of pipeline ruptures in Canada since 1992:  
**36**

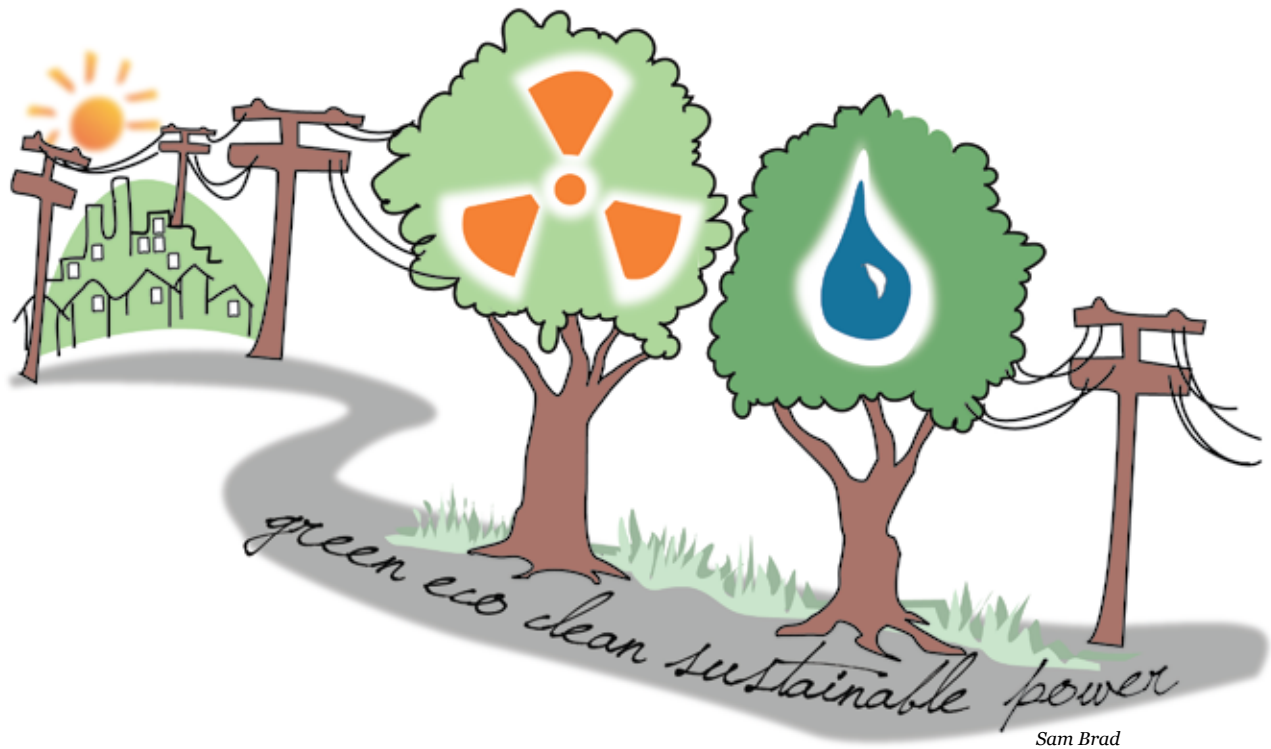
Climate model. Increase refers to "equilibrium" can take decades to take effect due to ocean in thermometer in bold refer to "best guess" the range in grey refers to the possible range result in the given temperature increase.

Amount of oil released into the Gulf of Mexico by the Deepwater Horizon disaster:

**4.9 million** barrels



CO2now.org, Royal Society, Wikipedia, Canadian Assn of Scientists thanks to Peter Carter for MIT research and to Peter Carter for MIT research and to Peter Carter for MIT research and to Peter Carter for MIT research.



## It's Not Easy Being Green! Unraveling myths of sustainable power

by **Sandra Cuffe**  
& **Justin Saunders**

VANCOUVER & TORONTO—As the climate crisis worsens, the Canadian public is being told that new developments in “green energy” are helping reduce the carbon footprint of our energy needs. The PR push around green energy comes as the fossil fuels sector in Canada is plowing ahead, extracting heavy crude from the tar sands, pulling coal from open pit mines, and opening up remote territories for natural gas extraction.

While the idea of cleaner energy resonates with many, provincial governments have increasingly undermined the concept of “greener” energy production. Today, high impact hydro-electric and nuclear power projects make up a significant percentage of so-called clean energy targets in Ontario and British Columbia.

“The climate argument is being used as a justification for lots of new dams around the

world. It’s being used to greenwash dams,” Patrick McCully, Executive Director of the International Rivers Network (IRN) told *The Dominion*. He highlighted hydro-kinetic turbines, and wave and tidal energy as potential alternatives in the ongoing redefinition of hydro potential.

“There’s a possibility of getting electricity out of flowing water in an environmentally benign way, but not by building big dams everywhere,” added McCully. “And lots of small dams on lots of small rivers - that could also do a lot of harm.”

As with large-scale hydro-electric dams, the greening of nuclear power is dependent on the omission of economic externalities: costs or benefits that affect a third party and are not accounted for in market transactions. Nuclear power generation offers a clear example of the externalities potentially overshadowing the direct impacts of a nuclear power plant itself.

Along with hydro, wind, and

solar, nuclear power is considered by the Canadian government to be “clean energy,” defined as “energy that is produced, transmitted, distributed and used with low or zero greenhouse gas (GHG) and other air emissions.” The government of Canada has indicated that by 2020, 90 per cent of the country’s electricity will come from these “non-emitting sources,” including nuclear power.

“The nuclear power industry has latched onto global warming as an argument for its renaissance,” wrote Karl Coplan, a Law Professor, in 2008. “[Put] simply, the nuclear industry, with government complicity, has transferred and deferred the most expensive part of the cost of the nuclear fuel cycle to future generations and civilizations unknown,” he wrote, addressing the contentious externality of nuclear fuel waste over its lifespan of at least hundreds of thousands of years.

Communities across Canada have been negatively impacted all the way along the nuclear fuel

cycle.

On the front end is uranium, of which Canada is the world’s number one supplier. According to the Canadian Nuclear Association’s Nuclear Facts, “In 2008, the uranium mines in Saskatchewan accounted for approximately 21 per cent of the world’s total uranium production.”

Canada’s uranium deposits and mines are concentrated in the Athabasca Region in northern Saskatchewan, in First Nations territory. Strong resistance to uranium mining across the country over the last several decades has resulted in uranium mining bans in different provinces and regions.

“Mining companies came and robbed us of our country, where we lived, fished and hunted,” said Annie Benonie. The 88-year-old from Wollaston Lake near the Saskatchewan uranium mines was interviewed by Swedish journalist Fredrik Loberg last year. “The land will never be restored again [for] future generations,” she said.

Canadian uranium powers



nuclear plants in a number of provinces, including Ontario. Today, Ontario's energy grid stands at a crossroads. According to the Ontario Power Authority, by 2025 80 per cent of the province's aging energy-generating infrastructure, traditionally powered by nuclear, hydro and coal, will need to be replaced to

pleased with the LTEP, pointing to the fact that it puts a greater emphasis on Ontario's Feed In Tariff (FIT) program, which compensates wind and solar generators for energy they produce and feed in to the grid. Such programs have been successfully adopted over the past 20 years throughout Europe. "Ontario added more solar

those who are optimistic about the province's expansion of FIT. "LTEP didn't move us away from nuclear. We're actually paying other jurisdictions to use the surplus electricity at night from reactors that can't be throttled down," Mike Brigham, Chairperson of the Toronto Renewable Energy Co-op [TREC], told *The Dominion*.

TREC helps incubate locally owned solar and wind projects such as Windshare, a 100-metre-high turbine located

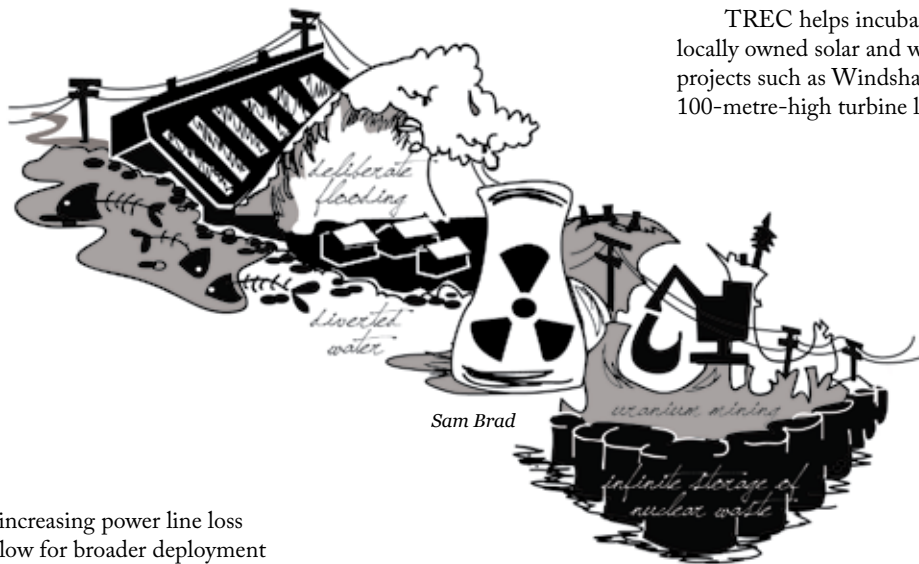
Atlantic organizations joined forces with the Nuclear Out of Quebec Movement (MSQN) to denounce Hydro-Quebec's plans to remodel the Gently-2 Nuclear Generating Station in Becancour, 100 kilometres northeast of Montreal. They point to the controversial Point Lepreau reconstruction, slated to go back online in 2012, as reason enough for their opposition.

A joint press statement released by the MSQN and Atlantic organization representatives on January 26, 2011, the same day as the NB protest, said Gently-2 will be "far more costly than anticipated, and will create entirely new categories of radioactive waste that will have to remain in Quebec for permanent storage because the federal government takes no responsibility for such wastes." The release also noted that the upgrades would add approximately 100 tonnes of high-level waste to the existing stockpile for every year of continued operation.

In terms of policy at the federal level, the "Creating the Economy of Tomorrow" budget document on the Canada's Economic Action Plan website outlines investments in science and technology, as well as in universities and research. While improving infrastructure at universities and colleges has the highest stimulus value for 2009-10 out of the 13 categories included, "Strengthening Canada's nuclear advantage" is in second place at \$351 million. Right behind it is "Transformation to a Green Energy Economy" at \$200 million. The budget allotment for nuclear development is over ten times more than the amount designated for the Canada Graduate Scholarships program.

The development of sustainable technologies is constantly redefining the potential for "green" energy in Canada; however, as of yet, the term has not captured much real meaning.

*Justin Saunders is an information technologist and journalist based in Toronto. Sandra Cuffé is a freelance writer, a contributing member of the Vancouver Media Co-op, and a coffee-lover.*



Sam Brad

avoid increasing power line loss and allow for broader deployment of renewable energy projects. By 2030, the province plans to spend an additional \$87 billion on overhauling the power grid.

"The constraint in increasing the installation of renewables is currently in transmission and distribution," Adam Scott, Renewable Energy Coordinator at Environmental Defence, told *The Dominion*. "Ontario needs dramatic upgrades to the transmission and distribution systems."

Yet, at this critical moment, the province's recently released Long Term Energy Plan (LTEP) is focused primarily on the rapid elimination of coal-fired generation—using increases in nuclear, hydro and natural gas generation—in order to meet the modest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change targets of 450ppm atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> by 2045.

Of the forecasted \$87 billion in capital investment, the LTEP estimates \$33 billion will be spent on nuclear power compared with \$9 billion on solar, \$14 billion on wind, \$4.6 billion on hydro and \$4 billion on biomass.

Scott, however, is generally

power in its first year than [any FIT program in] Spain, Germany [or] France," added Scott.

However, not everyone agrees that the LTEP was a step in the right direction. Criticism from environmental organizations has focused on the potential of a nuclear disaster, coupled with the long-term commitment required to re-invest in the technology.

"[Ontario] exempted its nuclear electricity plan from an environmental assessment," said Shawn Stensil, a Nuclear Analyst at Greenpeace Canada, in a news release. Stensil stated that nuclear re-investment "will limit the long-term growth of cleaner, safer and more affordable energy options." A recent study commissioned by Greenpeace, the Pembina Institute, and the Canadian Environmental Law Association claims that renewable investment with a larger wind portfolio would be cheaper than re-investing in nuclear power.

The enormous cost overruns of nuclear power continue to be a point of contention even among

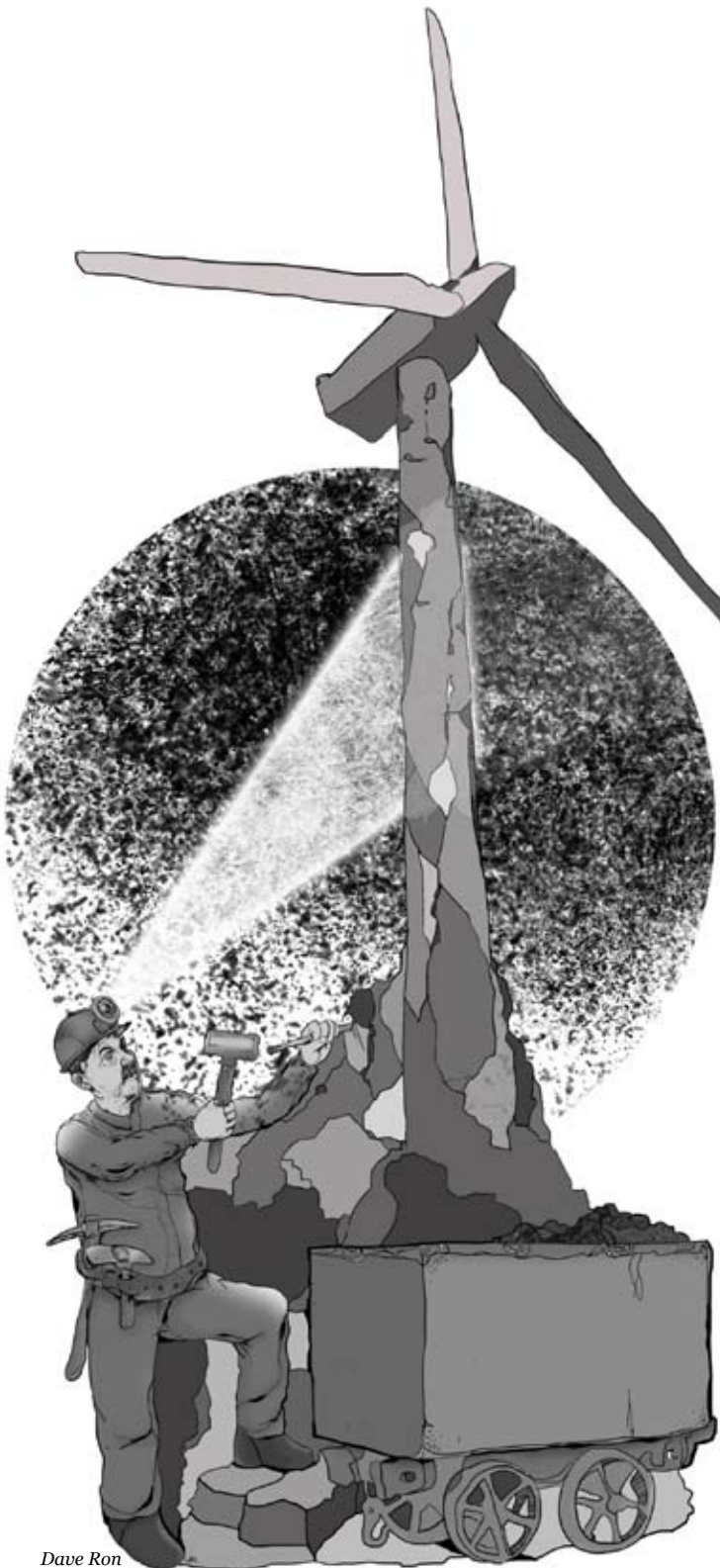
along Toronto's waterfront that produces enough energy to power at least 100 homes per year. An urban project like Windshare could never be built today, said Brigham, because of recent legislation prohibiting the construction of turbines within 500 metres of residential areas. As a result, groups like TREC have invested a significant amount of resources in solar installations, which can be deployed in both rural and urban areas.

At the other end of the fuel cycle is nuclear waste. In late January, New Brunswickers held a rally outside the NB Power headquarters in Fredericton, protesting the costly and potentially hazardous errors made in the ongoing reconstruction of the Point Lepreau Nuclear Generating Station. Located along the northern shore of the Bay of Fundy, only some 20 kilometres west of Saint John, Point Lepreau has a history of controversy, including a 1997 leak in the reactor core that produced a 75-day shutdown.

# Small Town Power

## A community with energy to spare

by Ben Sichel



Dave Ron

HALIFAX—"I can get quite overwhelmed and pessimistic at the state of the world, and I get incredibly angry at our government, which seems to be intentionally ignoring its moral responsibility for the state of Canadian industry," says Wilf Bean, a resident of Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia. "With [federal environment minister] Peter Kent saying that he's not going to pass any legislation which restricts tar sands development...It's absolutely irresponsible."

Bean, a veteran social justice campaigner and adult educator with the Coady International Institute, explains his decision to become the secretary of Colchester Cumberland Wind Fields (CCWF), a small, community-owned company on Nova Scotia's North Shore.

"Getting involved in something locally, with local people, and trying to build a community that is attempting to live out some alternative...It's necessary to my own sanity," says Bean.

With 125 local sharehold-

ers, CCWF has raised the capital to build its first 0.8-megawatt wind turbine, scheduled to be up and running by August of this year. It will produce "about the amount of power Tatamagouche [population 900] uses," says Bean.

Through an arrangement with electricity provider Nova Scotia Power (which has a monopoly in the province), the wind energy produced by the turbine will feed into Tatamagouche's substation, which provides electricity to the community. This means that once the turbine is functioning, the company's "vision of community-owned renewable electricity generation" will be a reality, Bean says.

The community-based aspect makes the project distinct, explains David Stevenson, CCWF's president. "It's very rewarding for individuals to have a sense of connection to their own power, and I think we'll value it more in the long term," says Stevenson. "All of our power will stay within this area."

Bean and Stevenson say the North Shore community, already close-knit, is being brought together on yet another level by the wind project.

"There is that pride, that sense of...being part of something," says Stevenson. "We had a public meeting at the hall in September...There were people

## The Coal in Our Veins

### Nova Scotia's addiction to dirty, bloody power

by Angela Day

HALIFAX—Wind farms aside, Nova Scotia is coal country. Approximately three-quarters of the province's electricity is derived from this fossil fuel and all of it is imported—but not without conflict.

"Indigenous peoples [in Colombia] have been displaced from their traditional lands for multinationals to access resources that are then exported to us for our energy needs," according

to Garry Leech, author and professor at the University of Cape Breton.

Cape Breton, a rugged island off the northeastern tip of Nova Scotia, used to be the home of coal mining in the province, and is where miners joined the first trade union in North America—the Provincial Workman's Association (PWA). The PWA was incorporated in Springhill, NS, in 1881 by coal miners demanding better wages and living conditions.



there from the Department of Energy, along with local people, and the expression that was given back to us [by the Department] was, 'Boy, you sure had people on your side.'

Stevenson and the directors of CCWF raised money through

### *The town of Tatamagouche, already close-knit, is being brought together on yet another level by the wind project.*

a CEDIF (Community Economic Development Investment Fund), a tax-incentive mechanism created by the provincial Department of Finance to promote investment in local business. As more than 90 per cent of Nova Scotians' investments into RRSPs leave this province for the Toronto Stock Exchange, a CEDIF means people have better incentive to "[put] their retirement funds in our company," says David Swan, engineer and manager of the turbine project.

The community-based structure and cleaner-than-coal energy are what led Renate Hempel, a local heritage interpreter, to invest in the wind turbine project. "I was very intrigued by the idea to support sustainable energy that at the same time wouldn't be owned by a big corporation," says Hempel.

Today, at the Sydney port not far from the union's origins, coal is unloaded from Colombia.

Nova Scotia began importing coal from the US in the 1950s and 60s for reasons of quality, since the coal mined here was a dirty, low-grade fuel. "Then, taking advantage of...neoliberal economic policies in the late 1990s, the province began to import coal from Colombia instead," said Leech.

He explains that over the past 20 years, globalization has had a huge impact on Colombia, "opening up Colombia's resources to foreign investment, particularly in mining and oil." Cerrejon, a coal mine in northern Colombia, is now the largest open-pit coal mine in the world, and is the

Hempel admits to having some reservations about the project. For instance, the tax-credit mechanism that financed the project means that the incentive to invest is only there "for people who pay a certain amount of taxes,"—high-income earners, she

says. "It's community-owned, but for people who pay high taxes.

"For some of my neighbours in Tatamagouche, it wouldn't make any sense for them to invest... their taxes are minuscule" because of their low incomes, says Hempel. "I'm having a little bit of a hard time with that...It's not for everybody."

Tracy Glynn, a lecturer in environmental studies at St. Thomas University who campaigns against the environmental and social effects of importing "blood coal" from Colombia to the Maritime provinces, sees the project as a positive step toward cleaner power in Nova Scotia.

But, she adds, it's important to look beyond small-scale projects like this one and work toward "replac[ing] the capitalist system, which is inherently anti-environment." Profit, she says, cannot be

reason many Nova Scotians (and New Brunswickers) can turn on their lights, heat their homes and eat toast. All of the coal mined at Cerrejon is exported to Canada, the US and Europe.

Leech dismisses the common argument that Cerrejon's profit trickles down to Colombians. "While, on paper, this mine contributes to the country's GDP, most of the wealth generated from the mine leaves the country as profit for foreign-owned multinationals. The people in the affected areas are often living in poverty, and their homes have been devastated."

MiningWatch cites ongoing damage to homes and severe skin and respiratory diseases suffered by people in the area.

the only motive driving solutions to the climate crisis.

CCWF is a for-profit business, but one that bills itself on its website as part of a "response to the challenges of the centralized energy systems that resulted from neo-liberal philosophies"—that is, the philosophy that large-scale privatization is the most efficient (read: profitable) way to provide people with energy.

Many people in Tatamagouche glimpsed the impacts of that problematic system in 2008, when Jesus Brochero, a union leader representing workers from the Cerrejon mine in Colombia, visited the community. Cerrejon provides coal to the Maritime provinces via Nova Scotia Power.

Brochero spoke of the myriad hazards mineworkers in Colombia face. Earlier that year, a fellow union leader at the mine, Adolfo Gonzalez Montes, was "tortured and killed at his home," says Glynn. He was one of 2,510 unionists murdered in Colombia in the last 10 years.

"In the Maritimes, we clearly see how capitalism has merely shifted ecological problems... through the sourcing of cheap, dirty, blood coal in Colombia for our energy consumption," says Glynn.

David Swan is quick to note that those problems are catching up to us.

Alongside a deplorable track record of human rights protection and a decades-long civil war, these factors have led to Colombian coal being dubbed "blood coal."

Nevertheless, Nova Scotia continues to source mass amounts of coal from Colombia, and Brennan Vogel, Energy Coordinator at the Ecology Action Centre in Halifax, says he doesn't see the province moving away from coal anytime soon.

Nova Scotia's electricity provider—Nova Scotia Power Incorporated (NSPI)—is a private company that is guaranteed a 10 per cent return on investment by the provincial government. Changing its infrastructure to an energy source other than coal would be an expensive process,

"It's only in the last 200 years we've had this concept of 'I will live better than my parents,'" says Swan. "We may have to go back to a more steady-state lifestyle, a mindset of 'I won't have more than my grandparents.'"

Despite her reservations, Hempel is quick to note that she believes the positive aspects of the wind turbine project far outweigh the negative.

"Overall, I think it's great," says Hempel. There are "open meetings with everyone, it's very involved, very transparent."

And, despite the small scale of the project, Wilf Bean emphasizes its place in the bigger picture.

"At least we'll be using some clean power source," Bean says, "and cut[ting] down a little bit on Colombian coal."

*Ben Sichel is a writer and teacher in Halifax.*

This article was produced by the Halifax Media Co-op.



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says Vogel. Because of this, Vogel sees a need for a broader conversation about electricity.

"Is energy a commodity," he asks, "or is it a right like water or food, that people need to be assured of?"

Leech says energy doesn't need to be linked to human rights violations and can be more environmentally friendly. But, according to him, "this has never been the motive of NSPI. They have a monopoly in the province... So, as long as it's profitable, they'll keep doing what they're doing."

*Angela Day is a writer, educator, urban gardener and community organizer with roots in Halifax. She currently coordinates programs for young women across HRM.*

# Life's Too Short to Remain Powerless

by members of the Vancouver Media Co-op

VANCOUVER—It is clear that the environmental movement is against everything from cars to logging to the tar sands—but what is it in favour of?

Apart from industry-backed government reforms and massive "climate summits," and despite considerable anxiety among affected populations about immediately combating climate change, little has been done to institute systemic, lasting change. The need to address the root causes of ecological crises is widely perceived, though. A November 2010 Environics poll showed that 85 per cent of Canadians "agree the root cause of climate change is too much focus on economic growth and consumerism" and want "an economy that is in harmony with nature, which recognizes and respects the planet."

Faced with the ongoing failure of world powers and business leaders to take meaningful action, ordinary people have taken matters into their own hands. In April 2010, over 30,000 people met in Cochabamba, Bolivia, for the first World Peoples Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth (PWCCC).

The World Peoples Conference, along with other grassroots efforts like the World Social Forum, represent a tangible rejection of representational politics and, crucially, a powerful belief in the right of people to have a direct say in matters that deeply concern them. Compelled to revolutionary action in part by the same desire to allow people to decide their own fate, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) announced themselves to Mexico and the world alike over 16 years ago. Deeply rooted in Indigenous struggles, this autonomous movement provides a resounding example for resistance everywhere.



Zig Zag

In EZLN spokesperson Subcomandante Marcos's own words, "We do not want others... to decide for us. We want to participate directly in the decisions which concern us, to control those who govern us, without regard to their political affiliation, and oblige them to 'rule by obeying.'"

Here in British Columbia, where almost all lands are

unceded Indigenous territories, the ever-expanding drive to profit from private control over resources has continued unabated since the first waves of colonization and settlement. Backed by police and security forces, and often in contempt of the will and sovereignty of affected communities, every level of government has done its best to auction off

the ecologically diverse lands and resources between the coast and the Rockies to the highest corporate bidder.

Case in point is the vast array of energy and mining projects awaiting near-certain approval in the environmental assessment process, described by the government as a potential \$52 billion investment in BC. The proposed



Mount Milligan copper and gold mine in Nak'azdli and Treaty 8 territory north of Prince George was green-lighted in the fall of 2010. If it goes ahead, Mount Milligan will be the second-most expensive construction project in the province, coming in just after the \$966 million RCMP station being built in Surrey.

Resistance to these and other projects is ongoing. In late 2010, Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway oil pipeline, planned to "link the Tar Sands to Asia through [First Nations] territories and the [Fraser] headwaters," was loudly opposed by dozens of Indigenous nations. Asserting their own sovereign and collective vision for their lands and communities in the *Save the Fraser Declaration*, the signing nations stated: "This project... and the federal process to approve it, violates our laws, traditions,

By excluding others from access, private property empowers owners to compel others to labour on their property for a minimal wage, effectively enabling proprietors to live comfortably off the sweat of others. Crucially, as the Cochabamba Peoples Agreement observes, this vast system also transforms "everything into commodities: water, earth, the human genome, ancestral cultures, biodiversity, justice, ethics, the rights of peoples, and life itself."

Demanding nothing less than an "absolute rejection of the privatization, monetization and mercantilization of nature," the PWCCC called for forging "a new system that restores harmony with nature and among human beings," drawing from anti-oppression principles and based upon "complementarity, solidarity and equality [and] collective well-being."

*We want to participate directly in the decisions which concern us, to control those who govern us, without regard to their political affiliation, and oblige them to "rule by obeying."*

values and our inherent rights as Indigenous Peoples under international law. We are united to exercise our inherent Title, Rights and responsibility to ourselves, our ancestors, our descendants and to the people of the world, to defend these lands and waters. Our laws require that we do this."

In Cochabamba, PWCCC participants identified key features of the capitalist economy, including "free" markets and private control of the means of life for profit, as bearing the brunt of responsibility for the climate crisis.

Together with the market economy, which fails to account for so-called "externalities" (such as pollution) come the private property rights that underpin the entire economic system. These rights allow control over a productive resource which may not directly be used or occupied by its "owner," like a factory in China owned by American investors, or an apartment where people pay rent to an absentee landlord.

Imagining this new system and working to build it together with people in East Vancouver, across unceded British Columbia, and with people in struggle around the world, is the urgent task that we today have at hand.

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## Green Socialism's Road to Nowhere

by Franklin Lopez

VANCOUVER—It's been four months since I attended the protests against the 16th UN Conference of Parties (COP-16), where world leaders met to come to a consensus on the crisis of climate change. It was already known ahead of time that no significant agreement to determine the future of the planet was going to be reached. But I didn't go there to report on the closed-door meetings of the elites. I went with the hope of finding a more radical analysis of what activists need to do to save life on the planet. What I found instead was a divided movement where egos, dead political ideologies and media stunts ruled the scene.

The majority of activists who traveled to the Yucatan peninsula stayed in one of two camps, either at Via Campesina or Espacio Mexicano. Infighting between these two groups split the already small crowd.

I stayed at Via Campesina, where the Anti-C@P anarchists, an autonomous group not affiliated with the camp, were organizing and hosting events. The moment I entered the camp, I was greeted with the smiling faces of Fidel Castro, Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales printed on giant posters. No workshops or discussions were planned. In true socialist fashion, the conversation flowed in one direction: from the top down.

The day of the "big march," where the protestors were supposed to declare their demands, saw only two tiny marches that didn't converge. The Via Campesina demo was to walk towards Cancunmesse, where world leaders were

deciding how to cash in on the crisis. My mood brightened at the festive vibe in the streets and the diversity of groups from all over the world. Most people I spoke with agreed that capitalism has to be stopped in order to stop the destruction of nature. Many did not agree with the discourse being doled out from the stage at the Via camp, seeing the platform as a socialist version of "greenwashing." Hearing all this gave me hope.

Then the march stopped. A truck was blocking the highway, inexplicably put there by people from Via Campesina, still several kilometers from Cancunmesse. Protesters were warned about going past the truck. Then the speechifying that dominated the re-education camp resumed along this road to nowhere. While many people lay on the tarmac and went to sleep, I crossed the "line" only to find that someone had spray-painted the truck: "We will not be stopped."

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw a giant silver hammer moving towards the security fence. The 50-foot inflatable mallet was being carried by members of Anti-C@P, who slammed it against the wall creating a giant "KABOOM!" This symbolic act broke the spell conjured by the security apparatus and movement managers, and sent the strongest, clearest message of the entire convergence: in order to save the earth, capitalism must not just be stopped, but smashed.

*Franklin Lopez is a Vancouver-based filmmaker, activist and editor-member of the Vancouver Media Co-op. He is currently touring North America with his film END:CIV.*

# Changing the System

by Cameron Fenton

● Grassroots Organizing & Direct Action for Climate Justice

● Community-Based Projects

## Lhe Lin Liyin

*Wet'suwet'en Territory*

The Lhe Lin Liyin is a grassroots organization made up of members of the Wet'suwet'en nation whose traditional territory is located in Northwestern BC. Organizers with the Lhe Lin Liyin have been at the centre of the fight against the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline project, along with a number of other natural gas and diluent pipelines. In July 2010 they organized a training camp to develop campaign and action skills on their territory, delivered a notice of trespass to Enbridge, and have participated and organized numerous actions in their community and across the country.

## Gwaii Hanaas

*Haida Territory*

In 1985 the Haida Nation declared Gwaii Hanaas – an area the federal and provincial governments were hoping to open to clear-cut logging—a Haida Heritage Site. That same year, to stop logging on their lands (including Gwaii Hanaas), the Haida established lines blocking logging companies from accessing timber leases on traditional Haida territory. These actions, and legal challenges by the Haida, forced the federal and provincial governments to sign the South Moresby Memorandum of Understanding in 1987 and, eventually, the South Moresby Agreement in 1988. In 1993 the Haida and the Canadian government signed the Gwaii Hanaas Agreement, establishing a system of co-operative management of the land and officially designating Gwaii Hanaas as both a Haida Heritage Site and a National Park Reserve. In 2007 the Haida signed the Haida Gwaii Strategic Land Use Agreement with the BC government, which formalizes the inclusion of the Haida, and traditional knowledge in land use decision-making. In 2009 the British Columbian government agreed to rename the Haida's homeland by its Indigenous name, Haida Gwaii; until then it was officially known by its colonial moniker, the Queen Charlotte Islands. In 2010 the Canadian government announced Gwaii Hanaas would also become a National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site extending protection to all of Haida Gwaii, and the coastal areas.

## Gateway Sucks!

*Vancouver, BC*

The Gateway project is a major mega-highway development project in the Greater Vancouver area; Gateway Sucks is the organization that has come together to stop it. A network of grassroots organizers and residents, Gateway Sucks has organized numerous creative direct actions, including digging trenches across proposed freeway construction sites and using sand from the construction site to blockade office towers in downtown Vancouver.

## Indigenous Garden Project

*Vancouver, BC*

The Urban Aboriginal Community Kitchen Garden Project is a half-acre urban farm located on the campus of the University of British Columbia on Musqueam Nation land. It aims to connect urban agriculture and sustainability with Indigenous knowledge in the production, consumption and cultural relevance of food.

## No Tanks

*Vancouver, BC*

Plans by tar sands corporations to ship bitumen overseas by using Vancouver Harbour as a shipping port have been met by province-wide calls to ban supertankers along the entire BC coast. No Tanks has organized actions and events to build the movement against tar sands tankers in Vancouver. There are also plans for a supertanker port in Kitimat, BC, the end point of the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline project.

In the past few years the call for "System Change, Not Climate Change" has echoed across the growing movement for climate justice in Canada and around the world. The response from the political arena has been that changing the systems of production and consumption that fuel our economic and political systems is an impossible task, and a fool's errand. Yet across Canada major steps are being taken to transform this call into action. The system is changing, and it is the power of communities coming together that is driving this change. On one hand, groups are assembling to transform crucial parts of their lives, from food systems to transportation networks. On the other, communities are standing up to fossil fuel brokers and other destructive enterprises, saying no to the destruction of their homes.

## Northern Climate Exchange

*Whitehorse, YT*

Established in 2000, the Northern Climate Exchange works to provide information on the impacts of climate change in the Yukon. They work with communities across the Yukon to develop adaptation strategies. Currently, they are involved in three projects in Whitehorse, Dawson City and Mayo to develop local resilience to the impacts of changes in the arctic climate.

## Inuvik Community Greenhouse

*Inuvik, NWT*

Formed in 1998, the Community Garden Society of Inuvik began the process of transforming a decommissioned arena into a community greenhouse. Today, the greenhouse contains 74 plots, rented seasonally to members as well as producing food for markets throughout the spring and summer months. The Community Garden Society also runs a community recycling centre and a weekly farmers' market.

## On Borrowed Ground

*Edmonton, AB*

On Borrowed Ground is an innovative urban agriculture project in Edmonton that transforms residential gardens lent to the project by community members into intensive vegetable plots, essentially transforming decorative gardens into high-yield urban farms. The project began in 2009, with four gardens, jumping to 10 in 2010, and aims to double both the number of gardens and its membership each year.

## Garlic Self-Sufficiency Project

*Saskatoon, SK*

We Are Many, a youth run environmental organization in Saskatchewan, began planting garlic in Saskatoon in 2010 with the goal of making garlic self-sufficient by 2012. If successful this project would stop the importation of one million heads of garlic into the province each year.

## Genesis Land Conservancy

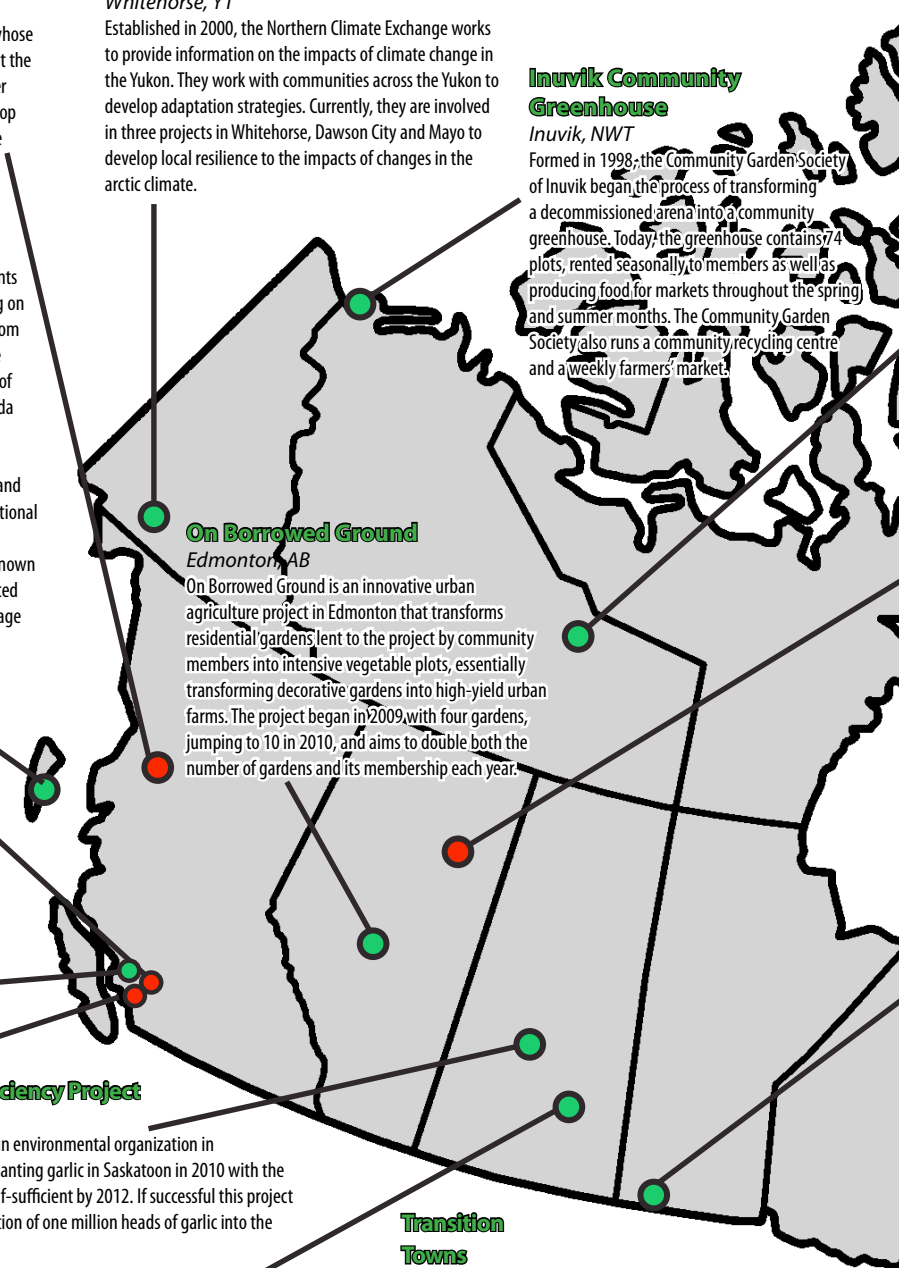
*Across Saskatchewan*

Founded in 1996, the Genesis Land Conservancy manages over 3,000 acres of land across Saskatchewan with the goal of creating an alternative land ownership model for farms. The project provides a method for farmers to transfer their lands to the trust which then makes it available to young farmers. The land stewardship model works towards developing long-term, multigenerational and multi-stakeholder sustainable agricultural projects.

## Transition Towns

*Peterborough & Guelph, ON*

Peterborough and Guelph were the first two communities in Canada to adopt the transition town model. This initiative is a global movement helping communities confronting peak oil and climate change, looking to transform cities and towns into low-carbon, resilient and self-sufficient communities. Nearly 30 communities across the country have started transition town initiatives, adopting a development model based on creating infrastructure that mimics natural, regenerative systems.





## People's Assemblies for Climate Justice

### Across Canada

On June 23, 2010, the first People's Assembly for Climate Justice in Canada was held during the G8/G20 convergence in Toronto. The assembly was inspired by the model of non-hierarchical, participatory processes promoted by the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in April 2010. People from across Canada came together to discuss real solutions to climate change and how they could be implemented in their communities. They discussed everything from the tar sands to a global referendum on climate justice, from increasing the number of bike lanes in Toronto to implementing alternative economic models to capitalism. Following the success of this first assembly, the Council of Canadians launched a campaign to hold assemblies across the country to coincide with, and serve as an alternative to, the 2010 United Nations Climate Conference in Cancun. Assemblies were held in 14 cities across country, bringing hundreds of people together to start working towards community solutions to the climate crisis. The Toronto People's Assembly has since become a long term project, holding a full day teach-in and a full day assembly in late 2010 with plans to continue assemblies into the future.

## People's Food Policy Project

### Across Canada

During the late 1970's a group of activists held discussions in 75 communities across Canada to better understand how food is produced, distributed and consumed in Canada, and published a report urging the creation of a national food policy in Canada. Over the past two years, the People's Food Policy Project has restarted the campaign for a food security policy in Canada. Throughout October and November 2010 the group held Kitchen Table Talks across the country collecting input and feedback that will be used to draft proposals for Canada's first food security and food sovereignty program. The group is aiming to create a cross-Canada campaign pushing for a national food policy to protect land and people, and create food systems which are under community control for community benefit. In late November 2010, Food Secure Canada held its 2010 Assembly in Montreal with the theme of, "Weaving Together Food Policy and Community Action: an agenda for change." The conference looked at food policy, how it affects communities, as well as the potential negative impacts of developing biomass energy and the push by corporations for control of land, which has been referred to as an "earth grab".

## Lutsel K'e Community Garden

### Lutsel K'e Dene Territory

Founded in 2008 by local volunteers, the community garden project provides plots and support for residents to grow food. The garden hosts workshops and skill shares, such as "Composting North of 60", and is part of the NWT's Small Scale Foods Program, established to foster market gardens in 25 communities across the NWT.

## Tar Sands Resistance

### Fort Chipewyan, AB & Beyond

Over the past years the Alberta tar sands have continued to expand, violating treaty rights, poisoning communities and pushing Canada's greenhouse gas emissions higher. Campaigns against them have been growing too. The community of Fort Chipewyan has continued to shine a light on the devastating impacts of the tar sands, using visits from the likes of James Cameron to push the global campaign against the tar sands. This work has transformed the tar sands into a global issue, with groups across Canada and around the world taking action against tar sands infrastructure and financing. In 2010, the United Kingdom Climate Camp targeted the Royal Bank of Scotland for its investment in tar sands projects. On the European mainland, campaigns have been launched against Norway's Statoil and French oil giant Total. The groundbreaking work by frontline community members and their allies in Canada has helped to fire up resistance to proposed tar sands projects in Utah, refineries in East Chicago, equipment shipments in Montana and pipelines across the United States.

## Tri-Lateral Agreement

### Barriere Lake Algonquin Territory

The Algonquins of Barriere Lake's desire to continue living off their vast traditional territory has clashed with what they view as the Quebec and Canadian governments' own agenda of ensuring unhindered resource extraction in the area and a quiescent local population. After international campaigning and sustained direct action, including logging and highway blockades, the small impoverished community of 450 forced the two levels of government to the negotiating table and signed the 1991 Trilateral Agreement. This pact, which covers 10,000 square kilometres of their territory, pioneered the practice of sustainable management. It was intended to give the Algonquin community a say in decision making surrounding development on their lands, a share in resource revenue, and to integrate Indigenous knowledge into the management of their territory without compromising the Algonquins' land rights. The provincial and federal governments have refused to fully implement the agreement, preferring to try to push the community to accept a comprehensive land claims agreement that would eliminate the Algonquins' title to the land. Most recently the Canadian government has tried to subvert the community's leadership by invoking section 74 of the Indian Act, a provision allowing the federal government to replace a First Nation's traditional government with an imposed band council system. The community's fight against section 74 is ongoing.

## Offshore Drilling in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence

### Quebec, PEI, New Brunswick & Nova Scotia

Communities in the Isle de Madeleine and Gaspésie regions of Quebec near the mouth of the St. Lawrence river have united in a campaign against offshore oil and gas drilling in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. In the fall of 2010, the Quebec government enacted a two year moratorium on offshore drilling projects; residents are continuing to push for a permanent ban. People across the Maritime provinces have also launched campaigns to protect their shores.

## Mobilization Against Shale Gas

### Across Southern Quebec

Communities across the St. Lawrence Valley in Quebec have begun organizing against government and industry plans to begin hydraulic fracturing (fracking) to extract shale gas located in the Utica Shale basin. Dozens of community groups have come together to protect their land, water and air, calling for a moratorium on current and future developments. Groups working to stop fracking have also started organizing in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, including a blockade of a shipment of drilling equipment in rural New Brunswick.

## Jardins de la Resistance

### Ormstown, QC

The Co-op Jardins de la Resistance is a worker's co-operative and organic farm dedicated to producing food using the most ecological methods possible, and participating in community projects to grow a sustainable food system, including a community-run farmers market in Montreal.

## Grassroots Climate Justice Organizing

### Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa

Climate Justice Montreal, Climate Justice Ottawa and Environmental Justice Toronto were founded over the past two years. These groups have been involved in organizing actions against the G20 in Toronto, creating the first Climate Camp in Canada, and have launched local campaigns targeting tar sands infrastructure, funding and government support.

## Harvest Moon Society

### Clearwater, MB.

The Harvest Moon Society is a farm, education and community centre in southern Manitoba. Working through participatory initiatives, they have developed long term plans for local sustainability, and are building ties with urban communities in Manitoba. The farm produces organic food, as well as switchgrass fuel.



Marie Zahradnik

# The Roads We Travelled

## Building the Toronto People's Assembly

**a report from the  
Toronto People's Assembly**

TORONTO—Copenhagen, December 15, 2010. The day before what CNN referred to as “the most hotly anticipated action of the summit,” nearly 1,000 activists huddled together in a Danish squat that became the focal point of grassroots mobilization against the United Nations annual Coalition of the Parties (COP) Climate Change Conference.

Lisa, an American activist and veteran of 1999 World Trade Organization protests in Seattle, delivered a final pitch for the plan of action while maps were distributed, blocs were formed and participants felt the growing anticipation of being part of a plan to change the course of history.

“We will use the combined mass of our bodies to push through the police lines and then break through the fence,” she announced.

“Once we are inside the UN grounds we will secure a safe space where delegates coming out from the conference can join us and together we will form a People's Assembly.”

As much as has been said about the day of December 16—the “Reclaim Power” People's Assembly in Copenhagen—the prior two weeks of frantic meetings, alliance building and constant striving to create an inclusive and horizontal process were critical in creating a new model for organizing that could be exported around the world. This action in Copenhagen was to inspire the Toronto People's Assembly, a global gathering held in parallel to the 2010 G8/G20 summits.

Cochabamba, April 2010. Bolivia hosted the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth. Toronto activists in Cochabamba

observed a conference that, while engaging the grassroots participation of 30,000 activists from across the globe, was largely organized from the top down. The Toronto People's Assembly drew much inspiration from Cochabamba, which also acted as a guide for the Assembly to be critical of its own process.

The main development to come out of Cochabamba was a collective understanding that the best way to answer the international call for justice is to build your struggle locally. One of the lessons drawn from Bolivia was the need to put in place impactful structures to build and maintain a movement that is substantial, consistent and long-term. The call from Cochabamba was to build a worldwide climate justice movement.

Toronto, May/June 2010. The weeks in May immediately following Cochabamba and in June prior to the G20 were a crucial and

transformative period for the social and climate justice communities. Ongoing talks and discussions evaluated which elements could be drawn from Cochabamba.

“The People's Assembly is an extension of the dialogue, organization, and mobilization that took place in Cochabamba. It's an instrument through which local activists can create new spaces, and generate new possibilities,” said organizer Raul Burbano, who is also active with Toronto's Latin America Solidarity Network.

As June 2010 and the G20 grew closer, a call was put out through the Toronto Community Mobilization Network for a day of resistance for climate and environmental justice during the G8/G20. Responding to this call, a circle of unaligned climate justice and environmental organizers started meeting weekly in a park on Church Street. Two plans for action emerged. One was a rally that



would become known as the Toxic Tour. The other was the People's Assembly on Climate Justice (PACJ).

The G20 hit Toronto like a storm, and the collective response was quick and widespread, with a resounding call to establish new relationships that was not only heard, but also understood.

In the aftermath of the G20, the organizing community would suddenly find itself in a new, highly charged environment. After the Toronto People's Assembly on June 23, 2010, and through July and August, the intensity of organizing would remain high, with

Assemblies, the starting point for participants to generate ideas was a "framing question"—a direct import from the Reclaim Power Assembly in Copenhagen.

The main innovation introduced in Toronto was a round of break-out groups, allowing more space for the Assembly's horizontal process both to generate ideas and also to orient itself for action by harnessing the intimacy and energy of small group work. Beginning with the December 2010 Assembly, Toronto activists took the working-group model that emerged from Cochabamba and re-framed it as a series of permanent action-oriented

### *The post-G20 realities of community organizing in Canada presented a challenge, and a new dynamic that calls for activists to develop, out of necessity, new methods of organizing. This requires ingenuity, responsibility, and a long-term willingness to sculpt a new grassroots paradigm.*

action camps across the country and groups in Toronto together emphasizing the immediate need for movement building. There would be no doubt that a second PACJ would take place.

Maxim Winther, a participant in the June 2010 Assembly, said, "I don't really know what the G20's like because it's behind two layers of fence and it's costing billions of dollars and I'm not seeing any of that. All I see is police roaming the streets."

Police from across the country turned the downtown Toronto hub into what the Ontario Ombudsman Andre Marin would later call "a time period where martial law set in the city of Toronto, leading to the most massive compromise of civil liberties in Canadian history."

Despite this atmosphere, the Toronto PACJ was vibrant and successful, and another People's Assembly was organized on December 4, 2010—the Worldwide Day of Climate Action. While the first PACJ focused on defining the meaning of climate justice, the second focused on the collective work of building a stronger movement for climate justice in Toronto. For both

bodies known as People's Councils. People's Councils included Movement Building, Outreach & Education, Group Coordination, Building Alternatives Spaces, Mass Action & Political Pressure, and Personal Development.

Both assemblies generated more than 200 participants and more than 40 endorsements from community groups in Toronto.

"It was very participatory and very open," said Alaynah Smith. The new activist who travelled to Toronto from Michigan said the People's Assembly was "unlike the G8 /G20 where we can't see stuff...and its really kind of almost a mystery. But this was open to the public; anybody could come and we all had a voice equally."

The Assembly is an open collective dialogue which organizers have termed "radical horizontality." Within the Assembly, radical horizontality is a two-pronged process which allows participants, through two rounds of break-outs and intermittent plenaries, to first generate ideas, and then to develop and synthesize them with the goal of establishing mandates for the People's Councils. Radical horizontality extends to everyday life, seeking to establish shared

responsibility and accountability in the entire community, making local resistance and organizing sustainable.

From its beginning, the Assembly focused on being a point of convergence inclusive to a wide range of organizations: women's groups, anti-poverty, food security and environmental and migrant justice organizations, cyclists, co-operatives, collectives, and so on. To transform communities, the Assembly posited closing the gap between activism and everyday life.

Raul Zibechi, a Uruguayan socio-political theorist, explained how "in the new pattern of action... mobilization starts in the spaces of everyday life and survival, putting in [motion] an increasing number of social networks or, that is to say, societies in movement, self-articulated from within." The People's Councils were modeled on the hope of establishing this sort of organizing on a permanent basis, to make the leap from activism to organized communities.

The post-G20 realities of community organizing in Canada presented a challenge, and a new dynamic that calls for activists to develop, out of necessity, new methods of organizing. This requires ingenuity, responsibility, and a long-term willingness to sculpt a new grassroots paradigm.

Small beginnings and creative examples were observed in Canada during the months following the G20.

Action camps took place throughout the country during the summer of 2010, themed around climate justice, Indigenous solidarity, non-violent direct action and tar sands/pipeline resistance. Organizers built links between cities and strengthened regional networks. Simultaneous People's Assemblies were organized in December 2010 across Canada; organizers in Montreal began to develop a climate justice co-op, and the climate justice community in Toronto established a permanent People's Assembly. Climate justice organizers have used momentum from the G20 to create their own grassroots infrastructure, without waiting for existing infrastructure to get on board, or being dependent on external funding.

The People's Assembly in Toronto rose on the tide of a

paradigm shift towards popular assemblies as an alternative to the failure of international institutions and nation-states to address the urgent global threat presented by the climate crisis.

At the same time, a global climate justice movement has grown organically, shaped by horizontal structures, and differentiating itself from mainstream environmental voices through a deep anti-capitalist analysis.

The year 2010 presented the organizing community in Canada with two major opportunities to mobilize—one in Vancouver to oppose the Olympics and one in Toronto to resist the G20. Toronto organizers took this confluence of factors as an opportunity, and the People's Assembly was one outcome.

By eschewing traditional hierarchies, the open and inclusive process of the Assembly is an invitation for communities and organizers to come together and build solidarity, share skills and coordinate efforts.

"The aim of the People's Assembly in Toronto," an organizer told *The Dominion*, "is for the climate justice community and its allies to utilize it as a vehicle or a space through which it can operate as a *movement*, a self-articulated space that will allow it to *remain* a movement."

Kimia Ghomeshi, an organizer of the June Toronto People's Assembly, told a Toronto Media Co-op reporter that the entire process was "highly participatory which we so rarely see in Canada...What will change things is the solutions being home-grown because then they're relevant to the local context and people feel more ownership in creating that change rather than it being imposed on them."

This article was produced by the Toronto Media Co-op.



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## MESOAMERICA RESISTE

### *The story behind the cover*

The Beehive Design Collective's Graphics Campaigns use images to communicate and educate, cross-pollinating the grassroots with stories of the realities of our times, their historical roots and potential futures. The cover of this issue and the smaller image to the left are part of a collaborative graphic design project by the Beehive to draw attention to stories of resistance to the Project Mesoamerica, formerly known as Plan Puebla Panama (PPP).

The name of this campaign, Mesoamerica Resiste, reflects our efforts to go beyond illustrating corporate globalization plans to illustrate, document and share diverse stories of survival, community development, collective action and inspiration. The cover image, adapted from a black and white drawing from the forthcoming Mesoamerica Resiste poster, links a history of resistance against colonial control of land and resources to contemporary climate justice struggles.

The image is part of a mobius strip scene that depicts:

- Troops forcing the resisting ants into a mass grave, to show the history of how social movements are repressed with mass arrests, forced disappearances and massacres.
- The Scorched Earth, or Tierra Arrasada, a military

tactic of terrorizing and attacking civilians, used in the genocidal war in Guatemala with backing from high-ups in the US administration.

- A monstrous machine that's half-tank and half-tractor, to link military violence with the violence of industrial agriculture. The tank-tractor is shown assaulting mother corn with pesticides and genetically modified seed.

The original drawing continues downward to show:

- Agrofuels spill from the corporate trojan horse. Disguised as a solution to climate change, production of agrofuels such as ethanol fails to address massive over-consumption of fuels by a minority in the Global North.
- "Cornquistadors" are used as a double metaphor: historically killing Indigenous people with smallpox, and now killing indigenous corn with gene contamination.

Ants are a symbol for popular resistance. While they are protesting at the top of the graphic, the ants underneath, with the spider, represent traditional knowledge, subsistence farming communities, sowing seed, saving seed, and building the soil.

—The Bees

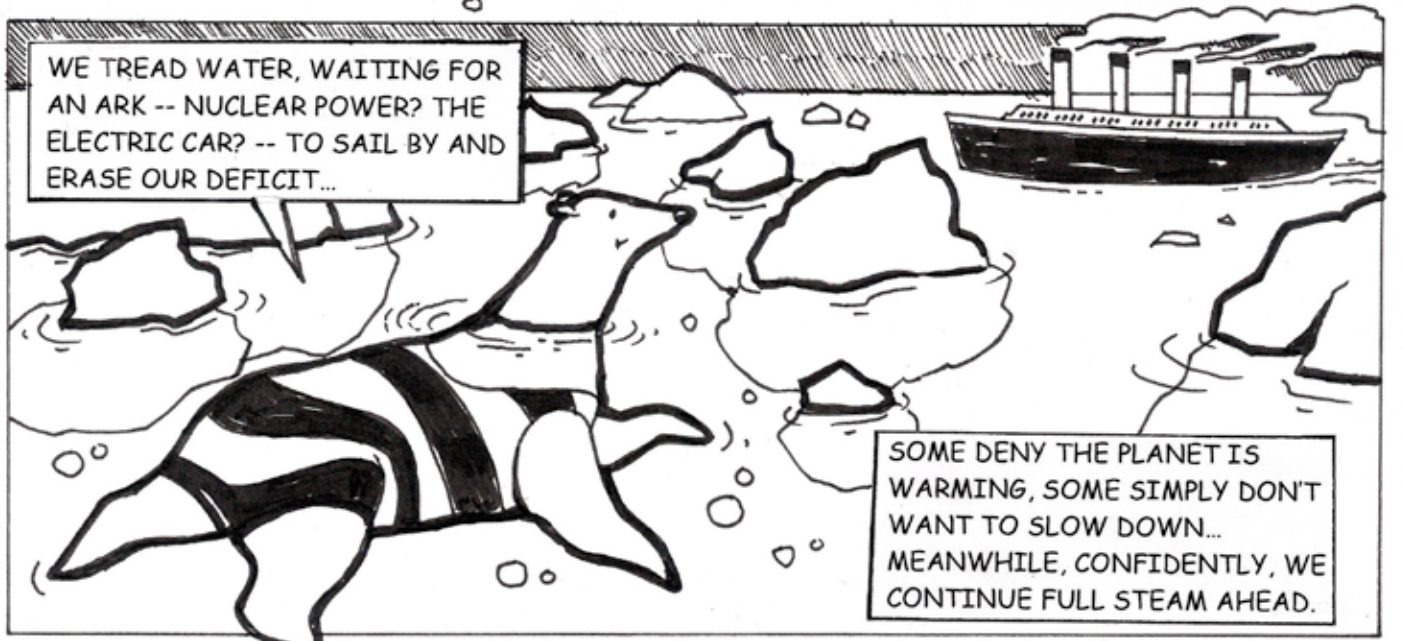
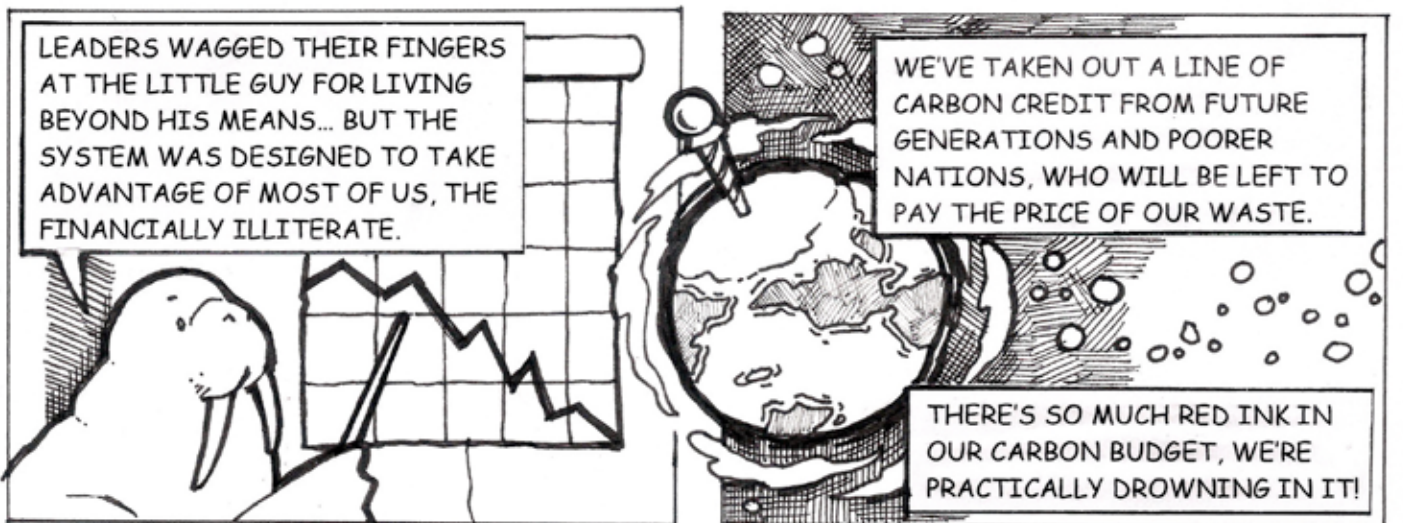
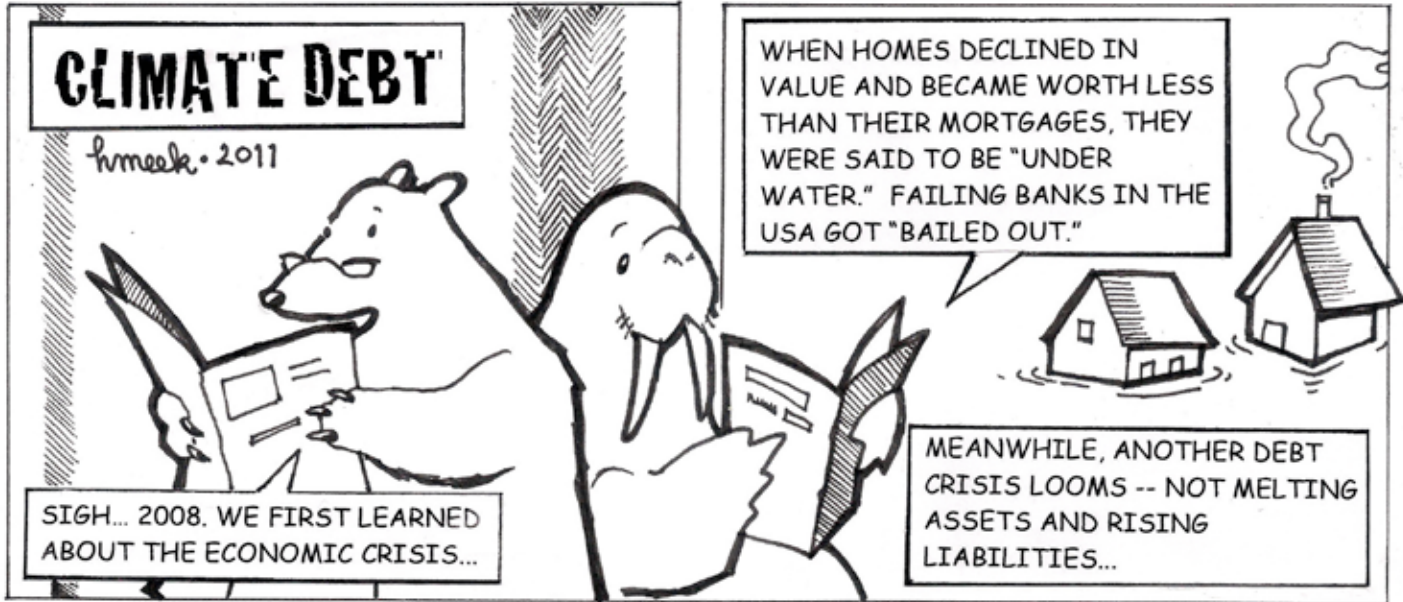
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news from the grassroots

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