

MAYOR PETER KELLY  
TAKES "BACK TO TABLE"  
LITERALLY

▲ | Illustration: Alisha Morris

► On Valentine's Day, almost 700 members of ATU local 508, out on strike since Feb. 2, marched from the Dartmouth Sportsplex across the bridge to Grand Parade Square, asking city hall to "have a heart" and accept binding arbitration. |

Photos: Miles Howe



## High Tide!

GRASSROOTS NEWS FROM NOVA SCOTIA ►►

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# Greenwashing Sustainable Seafood

By PALMIRA BOUTILLIER

Sustainable seafood certification announces to consumers that the fish they are buying is caught using ecologically sound practices and ensures species conservation. The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is a not-for-profit organization that runs the world's main seafood certification program with a corporate vision of "[t]he world's oceans teeming with life, and seafood supplies safeguarded for this and future generations."

But not everyone feels the MSC is doing its job ensuring the "sustainability" of the fisheries within its certification program. Various environmental NGOs, such as the David Suzuki Foundation, the Sea Turtle Conservancy and Nova Scotia's Ecology Action Centre (EAC) have been sounding the alarm about the certification of one fishery in particular: the Atlantic Canadian pelagic longline fishery for swordfish, which has been going through the MSC assessment process since 2009.

"Personally I am very frustrated by the thought of consumers being misled by eco-labels or not being able to trust sustainability certifications," says Jordan Nikoloyuk, sustainable fisheries coordinator for the EAC. "[The longline swordfish] fishery kills two sharks as bycatch for every one swordfish they bring in... that fact alone should mean that people shouldn't spend more for it at the stores."

Pelagic longline fishing is a large-scale industrial approach to fishing. Pelagic longlines have upwards of 1,500 individual baited hooks coming off a central line up to 60 kilometres long. The technology is non-selective, meaning that anything that bites a hook will get caught.

Around 20,000 swordfish are caught annually in the Atlantic Canadian longline fishery. But the catch of other, incidental, or 'non-target' species is much higher.

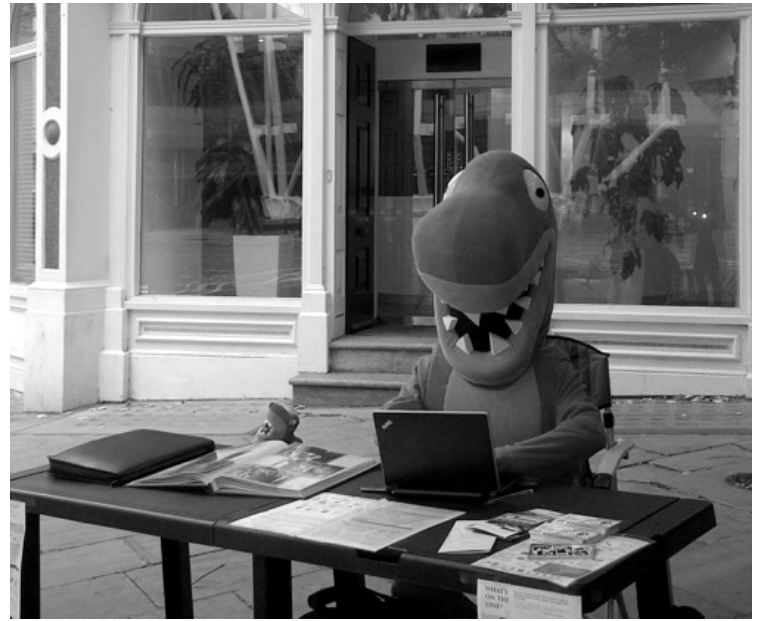
Department of Fisheries and Oceans estimates 100,000 sharks are caught annually by the fishery along with 1,400 sea turtles. Most sharks and turtles are released alive, but approximately 35,000 sharks and 200 to 500 turtles die annually.

"Blue sharks are the ones they catch most of," says Nikoloyuk. "[D]o we have to wait for those sharks to be endangered before you can stop catching so many of them?"

The EAC and the other NGOs were official stakeholders in the certification process for longline swordfish, providing advice and information to the third-party certifier, Moody Marine, throughout the fishery's assessment. They recently filed a formal objection against the recommendation that the swordfish fishery receive its MSC certification.

"Our objection was very wide ranging; it was about bad data, monitoring the fishery and very high levels of bycatch," says Nikoloyuk.

The objection was dealt with by MSC-appointed adjudicator Wylie Spicer. In his decision, Spicer said he did not see it as his role to give the evidence and subsequent conclusions by Moody



**Hector the Blue Shark raising awareness on the plight of his species outside the MSC headquarters in London, England. | Photo: Ecology Action Centre**

Marine a thorough second look. Rather, he chose to submit to the authority of the certifier, limiting his task to determining whether the certifier's decision was "so unreasonable that no certification body could have come to that conclusion."

This limited view of adjudication meant that there was very little within the objection that Spicer would actually comment on.

"I established the objections procedure around ten years ago... It was designed to give stakeholders a final opportunity to present their case against a proposed certification," says Brendan May, former CEO of the MSC from 1999 to 2004. "To my knowledge, however, no objection has ever been upheld, which must lead to some asking why it exists at all."

Nikoloyuk and the EAC are asking that very question. "It makes us wonder why a group like ours would put all the effort into participating in this if we are not going to be able to affect the outcome at all," says Nikoloyuk.

Jay Lugar, MSC's fisheries outreach manager for the Americas, says that the MSC standard reflects global best practices. But Nikoloyuk says that Canada's longline swordfishery is far from a global best and advocates looking at what some other longline fisheries are doing that Canada is not.

"What the Hawaii longline fishery for tunas has done is set a hard cap on the number of endangered sea turtles that can get caught every year," says Nikoloyuk. "So in Hawaii it is 18 loggerhead and 18 leatherback turtles. Combined with that, they have 100 per cent observer coverage, which is key because when the fishery as a whole goes over 18 it gets shut down for the season."

Canada's observer coverage ranges from five to eight per cent since 2004 and has no hard caps or legally binding limits for bycatch.

Despite the issues with the MSC process, Nikoloyuk says: "We would really like to see a strong, viable Marine Stewardship Council labelling system. It's enormously valuable to have one really good, really dependable certification... I don't think it helps anyone to have a Marine Stewardship Council that got watered down, got some bad fisheries in it, and isn't reliable."



# The State of Our Unions

On Feb. 22 the Halifax Media Co-op hosted *The State of Our Unions*, a panel speaker event on a range of labour perspectives across Nova Scotia. Representatives from five labour organizations spoke with passion and expertise about the challenges faced by working Nova Scotians today. Speakers included Suzanne MacNeil from the Cape Breton District Labour Council; Archie MacLachlan and Steve MacDougall, NewPage mill workers from the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Local 972 in Port Hawkesbury; Donna Mendes from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers Nova Local; Judy Haiven from the Saint Mary's University Faculty Union; and Silver Donald Cameron from the Writers' Union. These are their stories. | Photos: Palmira Boutillier

By MILES HOWE and STU CALDWELL

## RELIVING HISTORY

2012 sees an increasingly post-industrial Cape Breton and the days of large-scale coal extraction and steelworks are becoming the thing of folk song. Now, many jobs are centred on low-paying positions in the service sector.

This labour climate creates a new battlefield in a region soaked in union struggle, says Suzanne MacNeil, recording secretary of the CBDLC.

"I see this increasingly coming back to that time period before the big labour wars of the 1920s," says MacNeil, "where there are a lot of people really struggling, and there are a lot of workplaces that provide jobs that are not stable, jobs that pay poorly ... it's at this point in history where we have to say 'Okay, what can we do to get some type of economic justice back on the table?'"

MacNeil sees a renewed role for unions and young organized workers in Cape Breton: "As young trade unionists we're heading into some really tough times, and we're going to have to rediscover what it means to walk picket lines, and organize each other, and fight for what we think we deserve." - MH

## WHEN THE WOODCHIPS ARE DOWN

Port Hawkesbury rides the fortunes of its mill. And fortunes are currently down.

In August 2011, Ohio-based owners NewPage announced the mill would be closing indefinitely. About 1,000 people (in a 3,000 population town) were laid off.

NewPage, filing for bankruptcy, owed money to creditors all over the map. But members of the CEP Local 972 were at the back of the line when it came time to divvy up assets.

"[T]here were secured and unsecured creditors, and unfortunately our group was with the unsecured creditors ... secured creditors would have to be paid first," says Steven MacDougall of Local 972.

At stake were union members' pensions and benefits, and while a purchaser for the mill has been found, members are prepared for pension cuts of at least 30 per cent.

The new purchaser, Stern Partners from Vancouver, is currently negotiating the deal, and so far Local 972 isn't at the table.

"[Stern] is heavily involved with negotiations with the power company and the provincial government, and he's told us ... that unless he could come to an agreement with those people, there would be really no reason to talk to us," says MacDougall.

It has been made public, however, that the workforce at the mill stands to be at least halved when it does re-open. - MH



Suzanne MacNeil



Silver Donald Cameron

## TOUGH TIMES FOR POSTIES

A proud single mother of five, Donna Mendes has been a postal worker for 14 years and a shop steward on the work floor for more than seven. She is currently the First Vice President of the CUPW Nova Local.

Since they returned to work last June following the Harper government's back-to-work legislation, posties have had it rough, says Mendes.

The "postal transformation," as Canada Post management has called it, has made the hard job harder. In the first five weeks following its implementation, Mendes says one out of every four postal workers reported work-related injuries. Longer hours (between 10 and 12 for most routes), a doubled workload and constant harassment by management have become the norm.

"Every week I'm submitting ... human rights and workplace bullying complaints," Mendes says: from pregnant women being sent home without pay to one case where a worker was suspended for singing on the job.

"It's not about wages or benefits anymore; it's about being able to get up and go to work for eight hours with a peace of mind." - SC

## UNIONS 'THE GREAT EQUALIZER'

Silver Donald Cameron, the Governor-General Award-winning author, wants the public to look beyond the short-term inconvenience of the current transit strike in Halifax.

"One of the things that I would love to see would be a real focus on helping people to understand ... why it is that that kind of action is something that the unions ... occasionally have to do," says Cameron. "I think that most people don't understand what's at stake."

In a system in which history is often used as propaganda or justification of the status quo, unions are frequently vilified, if not forgotten.

One of Cameron's books, *The Education of Everett Richardson*, deals with the historic fishermen's strike of 1970-1. The story itself is fascinating, but it is important to note Cameron's motivation in chronicling this event: if he didn't do it, nobody else would.

"[W]e remember for example on Remembrance Day the number of people who have made huge sacrifices to preserve our freedom by fighting in foreign wars. Well, these guys made huge sacrifices to preserve our freedom by fighting in the streets of Glace Bay, and somehow we don't seem to have the same honour for them." - MH

# Roberts Street Social Centre Hauling Anchor

FOLLOWING EVICTION NOTICE, COMMUNITY GROUP ATTEMPTS TO RELOCATE

By NATASCIA LYPNY

Pitney Bowes is the newest member of the Roberts Street Social Centre.

"Who would like to do a photocopier challenge?" Capp Larsen asks the seven people crammed into the centre's front room Anchor Zine Library.

Larsen is hosting the Photocopier Launch Party. During the Centre's three open hours, visitors will squeeze between the rows of alphabetized and categorized zines just to see this Pitney Bowes Sharp MX-2600N photocopier in action.

At four cents per black and white copy and 20 cents for colour, the People's Photocopier offers a deal otherwise unheard of in the city. The Centre, too, is an anomaly in Halifax: a not-for-profit organization that aims to provide free or affordable services for alternative media, art and education.

But an eviction notice dealt to the Centre in December means that Larsen will have to pack up Bowes and all the do-it-yourself creativity 5684 Roberts Street is home to, and relocate before May 1.

"It drove home this kind of feeling of powerlessness that comes with being a tenant," said Larsen at yet another meeting of the Roberts Street Social Centre Collective to discuss the centre's future.

Over seven years, the collective has rebuilt the centre to suit its needs, transforming the space from a house to a home.



Katie Kurwyn listens attentively to the photocopier tutorial in the Anchor Zine Library on Feb. 12. | Photo: Natascia Lypny

"We don't live in a world where the notions of building a home is supported. We live in a world where housing is commodified," says Jean Steinberg. "It's really hard to find a place where any of us can set down our roots."

The collective's concern is that with rents rising in Halifax, members will eventually be unable to afford living in the same neighbourhood as the Centre.

"I really feel like underground those streets there's all these sharks that are circling," says Larsen of development on Roberts Street. "They're just under there waiting to jump up with their big teeth and swallow it all ... it leaves very little opportunity for people who aren't interested in large-scale building, who aren't interested in profit ..."

The Collective has appealed to its users for financial donations and suggestions as to where to move. For the Collective, to consider the Centre closing May 1 is out of the question.

"With crisis comes opportunity," says Larsen. "So, the idea of moving, as heartbreaking as it is in some ways, can be a really good sign of new horizons."

## "AUDIBLE quotes

"We want Peter's butt!"

*Amalgamated Transit Union Local 508 workers at a Feb. 14 rally demanding binding arbitration to end the Metro Transit strike. The chant refers to HRM's chief administrator, Richard Butts, hired in March 2011 at \$300,000 annually and accused of making city council more secretive.*

"We put ourselves on the line, because ultimately human solidarity means being ready to share in the oppression of others. To not participate in the oppression ultimately means that I stand in the way of that oppression."

*David Heap from the Canadian Boat to Gaza Steering Committee was in Halifax on Feb. 15, speaking about his experience on the Freedom Flotilla II and Freedom Waves.*

"I refuse to internalize fear, irrelevance, and insignificance."

*Dr. Vandana Shiva, speaking at Dalhousie University on Feb. 27, when asked where she gathers strength to continue campaigning on the enormous interrelated problems of climate change and the global food and water crises.*

"The youth today sleep with each other much less problematically. At that time it was a statement... that our fornication was revolution; no one says that anymore."

*Herb Gamberg, on being a Haligonian Marxist in the 1970's. Gamberg compared the experience to today's Occupy movement.*

"It's upsetting to see that people feel that transit workers, or workers in unions, or any workers, don't deserve to earn a decent living... We cannot have a race to the bottom. Some people begrudge transit workers decent wages and working conditions. Why is that?"

*Dr. Judy Haiven on public reaction to Nova Scotia's numerous labour disputes. Haiven spoke at St. Mary's on March 5.*

"We thought we should look into the mail-order bride thing because that sounds a little exotic, a little different, a little unusual."

*J.C. Douglas, program director at Q-104 FM, speaking at the Kempt Road station during a protest on International Women's Day, March 8, against the station's mail-order bride contest, known as "The Male is in the Czech."*

# Pay Up or Power Down

## NOVA SCOTIA POWER TACKS SEEMINGLY ARBITRARY "SECURITY-DEPOSIT" CHARGES ON CUSTOMERS

By MILES HOWE

Having trouble paying your power bill? Be careful: Nova Scotia Power (NSPI) may add a lump sum equal to up to three months' service, known as a security deposit, to its customers' power bills.

The decision to add a "security deposit" to a ratepayer's bill is measured on a vague series of guidelines, which no one at NSPI appears able to explain fully.

What is clear, however, is that a customer with errant bill payments has a good chance of being slapped with an added charge worth up to three months of average power consumption.

Receiving these startling bills in the mail has roused some Nova Scotians to take action against NSPI, with mixed results.

Take Deborah Anthony. To Anthony, the relationship between power service provider and user seemed fairly straightforward.

"I've had a power bill for thirty years plus," says Anthony. "It hasn't always been paid on time, but it's always been paid.

"If I chose not to send what you're looking for by a specified date, you have the right to charge me a late fee, which I take the responsibility to pay."

But it didn't sit well with Anthony when in 2008, a tidy sum of \$385 was added to her monthly power bill.

For close to a year, Anthony lived with the \$385 surcharge on her monthly bill. Indeed, she watched the exorbitant fee collect interest.

Then, in December 2008 NSPI took her monthly payment, applied it to her security deposit, and promptly shut off her power. Anthony, the single mother, was left powerless in the Nova Scotian winter.

Anthony filed a complaint against NSPI and demanded an outside mediator examine her untenable situation.

But Don Farmer, NSPI's appointed "independent" mediator, himself a former NSPI employee, ruled that NSPI was "forbidden under law to treat any customer on a preferential basis," and thus could not remove the security deposit from her account.

Surely, however, there is a set of preconditions and indicators, coupled with warnings of ascending timbre, that precede the heavy-handed decision to tack an extra three months' charge on a customer's bill?

"There is no threshold to the process," says Mike from NSPI customer service. "It is entirely discretionary."

"But it's not meant to be Draconian," says Mike. "It's not meant to squeeze anybody."

Intentions aside, the notion that there is truly no precise

manner by which NSPI determines whether or not to add a three-month "security deposit" to a customer's bill merits at least one more call.

"It could be a combination of them not having paid their bill on time...them being asked to do so, and not having delivered on it, and sometimes the payment not going through...would be another scenario," says Neera Ritcey, media contact person at NSPI. "I couldn't give you all the scenarios, but it would be those types of things."

Of course, every now and again NSPI drops a security deposit into the wrong customer's lap, and by "wrong" is meant someone who is financially able to access private legal counsel.

"My case involved an individual who has been a long-term client of Nova Scotia Power, who has always paid his bills," says J. Gordon Allen, of Auld Allen Barristers Solicitors. "Nova Scotia Power never lost a cent.

"A couple months of the preceding year he had had some health problems. He was still paying his bills, but about every second bill was late.

"All of a sudden he got a bill and there was a very large charge added onto it," Allen says. "It was about five or six hundred dollars. It wasn't small. And that was shown as 'owing.' He'd

paid his power bill, but that was still showing, and there was interest building up on that."

Allen spoke with NSPI, who confirmed that the security deposit was perceived as required for their collection costs.

But when Allen suggested to NSPI that the justifications that they used to justify security deposits weren't really just, the monopoly backed off, and took

the security deposit off his client's account.

"As a consumer, and as someone who's been a lawyer now for nineteen years, I've never come across this circumstance," says Allen of security deposits.

"The sad part is, it would be those that would be struggling to make payments that would more than likely have this applied. And they're less likely to have the ability to dispute it."

So take heed. There are no guidelines by which NSPI determines whether or not you are in arrears enough, or whether or not you are enough of a security risk to merit a security deposit. One day it might just happen. Or, it might not. And if you can afford a lawyer, as in most things, it can all be made to go away, whatever Don Farmer might say.

*"As a consumer, and as someone who's been a lawyer now for nineteen years, I've never come across this circumstance."*

**J. Gordon Allen, lawyer with Auld Allen Barristers Solicitors**

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# North Enders Slam Proposed Telecom Tower

RESIDENTS VOICE CONCERN OVER HEALTH EFFECTS, LOSS OF GREEN SPACE

By BEN SICHEL

About 60 people gathered in the gymnasium of Highland Park Junior High School on February 17 to voice their opposition to a proposal to build a 99-foot telecommunications tower across the street from the school.

About one third of those present rose to express concerns about the proposal to representatives of HRM Planning Services, the Halifax Water Commission, and Bell Mobility, which put forth the proposal.

The project would also incorporate new communications equipment for the Water Commission.

Residents cited health and safety concerns, loss of one of the few green spaces in the community, and aesthetic damage in opposition to the project as presenters mostly listened quietly. No one in the audience spoke favourably of the proposal.

"I'm not a luddite," said Penelope Jackson, a nearby resident, in response to Bell representative Pamela Kennedy's assertion that the new tower is needed to meet customer demand.

"But I've never had any problem with any cell service," said Jackson, who also said she had polled nearly 100 of her neighbours on the issue and received similar responses.

Moderator Dali Salih of HRM's Planning Services department reminded the audience several times that HRM's jurisdiction on the project only applies to the question of zoning, and on that question it is only empowered to make recommendations to Industry Canada, which will make the final decision on the project.

Still, many respondents spoke of uncertainties surrounding the potential health effects of prolonged exposure to low-level radiation.

"Living within 400 metres of this is clearly unsafe," said Kendall Arthur, a neighbour of the proposed site. Arthur cited the Naila Study, which found that cancer rates tripled in a community adjacent to a telecommunications tower in Germany over a 10-year period.

Pamela Kennedy assured the audience that the proposed tower's radiation levels fell well within Health Canada's safety guidelines.

However, several audience members countered that those guidelines are insufficient. "If this project was in Sweden, it never would have got through the door," said one speaker.

None of the presenters answered when asked if they would themselves live near the proposed tower.

HRM North End Councillor Jerry Blumenthal informed the audience that they should make their opinions on the project known to him through petitions or e-mails, which he would then put on the public record at HRM's peninsular community council meeting.

No public hearing will be held on the proposal.



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# FEBRUARY *in* REVIEW

By KEN CLARE

## IT'S STILL MUDDY IN THE WOODS

B.C.'s Stern Group, selected by NewPage trustees as the best option in the Port Hawkesbury pulp mill's restructuring, are tiptoeing towards a decision to reopen the plant. By month's end, no new power-rate agreement was in place and negotiations with the union had not begun.

Meanwhile, Liverpool's Resolute/Bowater-Mersey mill, recent recipients of considerable government and employee largesse, were compelled to declare a three-week market-driven shutdown beginning next month.

Deeper in the woods, things are getting even rougher. Bowater has announced a 10 per cent reduction in pulpwood prices, and imported crews are replacing Nova Scotia workers, who themselves are unable to make a living cutting pulp.

A Natural Resources spokesman admitted to AllNovaScotia.com in late January that the Department's knowledge of what goes on in our woodlands is always somewhere between two and 12 years out of date. A new land-use monitoring system will be needed before the province can begin to implement the long-awaited 50 per cent clear-cut rule.

## MANUFACTURING AND MOVING

The downturn in our pulp industry contributed to a sharp drop in Nova Scotia's manufacturing sales, Statistics Canada reported.

Does this slide represent a deep-running economic malaise, one that even the expected Warships-Start-Sometime boom in Halifax will be unable to mask for long? When the economy begins to rebound, will Nova Scotia and the rest of Atlantic Canada struggle to join the recovery, left behind with a weakened economy?

The extent of that challenge is revealed by Nova Scotia's static population growth. The 2011 census population data, published in early February, shows that in the last five years, Nova Scotia's population growth was the slowest in Canada at just .9 per cent provincially. During that period, more than 9,000 Nova Scotians left. The 4.7 per cent increase in HRM's population exactly matches the percentage loss in Cape Breton Regional Municipality. While a smattering of small towns saw marginal growth, most towns and all of our rural areas leaked people big time — out west or to Halifax.

Both the federal and the Nova Scotia governments, locked into a rigid austerity mindset, seem unable to imagine the broad strategy we will need to respond to demonstrably more difficult economic conditions.

The rest of us have some powerful thinking to do, some dramatic public policy repair work to perform, and political action to engage. We have no shortage of healthy starting points.

## ALL PETER KELLY, ALL THE TIME?

Not any more.

When the powerful decide to shake up their boardroom, they act swiftly.

The push that finally defenestrated Peter Kelly was the Tim Bousquet Coast article that revealed the mayor's remarkable mismanagement of the estate of a long-time friend. The Coast report put an end to what was left of the mayor's re-election hopes, but it was mostly delicious icing spread on a very stale cake.

Weakened by the Concert Cash scandal, Council's inability to control the pro-highrise bureaucracy (as evidenced in the St. Pat's-Alexandra fiasco) and his mishandling of Occupy, Kelly was already two-thirds out the City Hall window. The Mike Savage candidacy was polished and had

been announced with a range of new political backers (from McDonough to Younger to Andrew Black), who had an A-list of financial friends (Jim Spatz, Francis Fares, Victor Syperek) and support from the province's leading message-pollster (Don Mills).

The fix was in and Peter Kelly was out.

Leading non-candidate Howard Epstein was left to ask the most sensible question: when Mike Savage can't run as anti-Kelly, what will he stand for?

## ON THE LINE

Several labour stories flashed across our screen in February: the beginning of contract negotiations at Capital Health, the employment of non-union labour to build the new airport hotel, the staff-and faculty negotiations at Dalhousie, the month-long Metro Transit strike, and a narrowly-confirmed seven-year(!) contract settlement at Oland.

At month's end, several are still in the balance, and all are harbingers of hot months to come for the labour movement. Several themes have emerged here and across Canada: miniscule raises are on offer, wherever pay cuts are not in demand; employers are keen to take back benefits already won, particularly for younger workers and new hires; and nowhere do bosses' hearts beat colder than when it comes to retirement benefits (but not their own).

## FOR BALANCE, A FORBES REPORT

Incomes of the filthy rich sustain pressures the rest of us can only imagine. The cost of a personal helicopter, with VIP options, rose a brutal 14 per cent in the past year, while the price of a thoroughbred racehorse was up by 16 per cent. Since 1976, the Cost of Living Index has risen only 400 per cent, reports the fabled business magazine, dwarfed by the Cost of Living Extremely Well Index, up a heartbreaking 900 per cent.



**Check out local, grassroots news at [halifax.mediacoop.ca](http://halifax.mediacoop.ca)**

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# Carlos Latuff on the Big Screen in Halifax

WORLD'S MOST PROLIFIC POLITICAL CARTOONIST ON PALESTINE SPEAKS VIA SKYPE AT ISRAELI APARTHEID WEEK IN HALIFAX

By MILES HOWE

Carlos Latuff credits the global appeal of his cartoons to their ability to transcend the barriers of language. The Brazilian cartoonist has drawn cartoons addressing struggles, unrest, and inequality the world over, but his cartoons on Palestine have earned him the greatest notoriety, and he is revered by Palestinians and their allies. Conversely, he is a prime target of the Zionist movement.

On March 7th, Carlos Latuff appeared via Skype at King's College. Latuff's presentation was part of Israeli Apartheid Week's activities in Halifax.

One of his frequently used motifs is blurring the distinctions between imagery depicting the horrors committed upon Jews and others during the Holocaust of World War II, and the travesties committed on Palestinians by Israelis in the Occupied Territories.

He draws Palestinians in Holocaust prisoners' garb, and Israeli soldiers with SS insignias. One of his most interesting cartoons depicts Ariel Sharon—former Prime Minister of Israel and in his time responsible for numerous war crimes, including the Sabra and Shatila massacres of 1982—locked in a deep and sensual embrace with Adolf Hitler.

Latuff has landed in the bad books of the Zionist lobby, which, beyond launching the standard catcall of “anti-semitic” has begun to label Latuff a Holocaust denier. But Latuff has never publicly denied the Holocaust, nor do any of his cartoons suggest that message.

“We can discuss how [the] Holocaust has been used for political purposes by Israel. This is one point,” says Latuff. “But to say that the Holocaust never existed? For me that's pretty ridiculous. For me it was a historical event, like the massacre of the Armenians, like Hutus and Tutsis. It's a massacre. It's a tragedy. I always say that.”

Latuff notes that Zionist pressure was put upon Code Pink, the women-initiated grassroots peace initiative, to not use Latuff's Occupy AIPAC cartoons, specifically made for the cause. Latuff remains unapologetic, and judging by his joyful countenance on the screen at King's college, unfazed.

“I'm not paid for these cartoons. I refuse to be paid for these cartoons. Nobody needs to pay me a single cent, and this artwork can be reproduced in many ways,” says Latuff. “As an artist, this is my way to support the cause...I think the role of a conscientious artist is to put your art at the service of the causes, of the service of people, of the service of change. So I hope my cartoons can serve good causes. And the Palestinian cause ... it's a good cause.”

► Cartoon by Carlos Latuff for International Women's Day 2012 to draw attention to the plight of Palestinian hunger striker Hana Shalabi, imprisoned without charge or trial.

