



the Tide

Vol. 6, No. 2

March 2014

*"I am a fighter, and I will
continue to grow and persevere."*

— LORETTA SAUNDERS

In Honour of Loretta

page 10



Letter from the editors

*Welcome to the Tide,
the monthly news magazine of the Halifax Media Co-op.*

Thanks for picking up this copy of The Tide, the print publication of the Halifax Media Co-op.

We dedicate this issue to Loretta Saunders and all missing and murdered Aboriginal men and women across Turtle Island. The vulnerability of these communities, that leads to disproportionate levels of murdered and missing peoples, is no accident. Rather it is one more modern day symptom of the impact of colonialism, the theft of land and genocidal policies.

It shouldn't take the disappearance and murder of a promising young woman to elevate these issues to the level of daily discourse. Loretta, in her life's work, was trying to shed light on this social travesty. It is the least we can do, in our own way, to carry her work forward.

Within these pages you'll also find the efforts of a wide range of dedicated grassroots journalists. If you see yourself amongst them, know of an issue that isn't getting coverage, or simply want to know more about the Media Co-op, get in contact with us at: hmc@mediacoop.ca.

We hope you enjoy The Tide as much as we enjoyed making it, and be sure to check out The Tide podcast at halifax.mediacoop.ca.

In solidarity,

The Halifax Media Co-op editorial collective



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February *in review*

A look at what the Halifax Media Co-op and others covered during the month of February. Visit halifax.mediacoop.ca to read the full stories and more.



Jesse Laufer, VP External for the King's Student Union: "All we ask is for a good night sleep without bugs and mice joining us in our beds." | Photo Miles Howe

February 2

Fifty people march to the Provincial Supreme Court in Halifax to protest the criminalization of Amanda Murphy, a 34-year-old woman with intellectual disabilities who allegedly struck a support worker at her institution. They also called for an end to the type of institutionalization that perpetuates problems with the law.

February 3

The Ecology Action Centre takes the federal government to court for approving the manufacture of genetically modified salmon by AquaBounty, an American biotechnology company growing GM eggs in P.E.I. The EAC says government failed to assess whether GM salmon would invade local ecosystems.

February 4

A poll commissioned by a coalition comprised of the Canadian Federation of Students – Nova Scotia, the NSGEU, and the Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers finds that Nova Scotians support increased funding, lower tuition fees, and replacing student loans with non-repayable

grants. Eighty-five per cent of Nova Scotians believe that tuition for university is too high.

February 6

Zach Gallant, president of the Mount Saint Vincent University Students' Union, talks to the Media Co-op about his #Love is Love campaign for opening the dialogue on love equality.

February 7

NOFRAC applauds Environment Minister Randy Delorey's commitment to consult with communities affected by the fracking wastewater stored in the Kennetcook ponds.

February 12

Mayor Mike Savage makes an appearance at a February 12 rally for tenants' rights outside city hall, saying he was prepared to review rental bylaws. Jesse Laufer, VP External for the King's Student Union, asks: "When did being a student come with rats?" in reference to the students who were forced to leave their building at Duncan Street due to poor maintenance.

While the Sochi Olympics generate its

share of buzz – and controversy – reporter Geordon Omand spotlights Halifax-based 24-year-old sprinter Jackie Marciano as he trains for the 2016 Paralympic Games in Brazil.

February 13

On February 13, police announced the disappearance of Loretta Saunders, a 26-year-old Inuk woman who had been completing her thesis on missing and murdered aboriginal women in Nova Scotia. She was found dead on February 26. The Media Co-op published a tribute to her from her professor, reprinted on page 10.

February 15

The Chronicle Herald reported that NuStar Energy LP has approached TransCanada with a proposal to extend the Energy East pipeline to the Point Tupper petro terminal on the Strait of Canso, Cape Breton. The proposal raises the spectre of increased oil tanker traffic – and the risk of oil spills – in the Strait of Canso.

If approved, the Energy East pipeline is slated to move 1.1 million barrels/day of tar sands crude from Alberta and Saskatchewan to New Brunswick.

February 19

Home support staff at Northwood, members of NSGEU local 34, vote in favour of strike action to obtain wage parity with hospital workers. They go on strike February 28.

February 24

Minister of Health and Wellness Leo Glavine comes under fire for his comment in the King's County News that people should prove they practise a healthy lifestyle – i.e., diet and exercise – before receiving health care assistance. A Gottingen Street rally is organized, calling his comments ignorant of social determinants of health.

February 26

The province announced that it will no longer fund the eleven Employment Maintenance Workers (EMWs) that operate province-wide to support people with disabilities at their jobs.

Two hundred people with disabilities may lose their jobs if funding for EMWs are cut off on April 1.

► Turn the page for more grassroots news.

READERS' COMMENTS

LABOUR

Just Us?

“It would be very interesting to hear what the co-op members-owners and managers have to say about all this (*re: Just Us! Coffeehouse baristas ratify first collective agreement, by Rana Encol*). They start off with this good idea of a co-operative, but it seems that their principles got watered down eventually.

– *Klaipėda, via internet*

I've worked for this co-op for over five years now, and while that may lead you to accuse me of bias, I have been here this long BECAUSE of the ethics of this co-op. It's why I've committed myself to it. As a worker, and a member-owner, and a member of the executive committee (which we have elected by members instead of a traditional managerial structure), I can attest that our principles are stronger than ever ... Mistakes will happen and feelings will get hurt along the way. It's regrettable, but we don't deserve ill-informed unilateral condemnation as a result.

– *Nandhi, via internet*

ENVIRONMENT

Big hydro

This project has been a source of immense controversy here in Newfoundland, and the risks involved (simply from an economic perspective) mean there is a possibility for catastrophe in 2017-2020 when the new rates will be in full effect for NL ratepayers (*re: The true cost of Muskrat Falls' renewable Energy, by Robert Devet*).

Oddly, the Labrador market and the Newfoundland market are not under the same company, and the rates in Labrador will remain relatively stable, whereas the rates on the island portion of the province will skyrocket.

If it comes to pass that people in Newfoundland are unable (or refuse) to pay their bills, it becomes more likely that the publicly owned utility (NL Hydro) will be sold off into private hands, much like Emera.

But aside from this question of economics, the primary concern for many people in Labrador, and for some small few of us here on the island, is that this project will destroy the Grand River. The dam itself and the area cleared for the facility are a scar, but as you note the mercury levels associated with these sorts of dams will essentially poison the river.

– *dashe, via internet*

Occupy the black hole

poem by Andrew Mills

I've started a little ritual when I'm downtown
of shouting into the abyss.

It's best at night where the darkness is bright
to spit sparks at the void you won't miss,

and read poetry to the cavity
where Grafton street used to be.

I tell the abyss to be a good abyss
to somehow bring life to this city,
give jobs to the young and provide creative spaces,
but in the end I only get dizzy--

when cranes sprout suddenly a thousand feet,
and developers have become the new elite.

Black holes solicit curiosity,
the weird gravity of the dollar
blindsides politicians, warps city laws
while taxpayers inherit the squalor.

Big money goes to work, digs holes too big to fill
and people foot the financial and existential bill.

Kimber decried the money-from-away strategy,
the auditor general reported how numbers are askew.
Bousquet lamented the review committee tragedy,
council acquiesced and some tried to save the view.

Still you can see another world through the dull heat of this vortex,
creative work, small business, local markets are the heart of
Halifax.

Convention is exactly what got us here,
the word synonymous with death.
Economics as usual is precisely the scourge
bringing earth to the precipice.

So bring a tent down with me,
we'll light a candle or two,
no rush to be somewhere else,
this is my abyss too.

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Purcell's Cove Backlands face possible rezoning

Popular hiking and swimming area under review

by ERICA BUTLER

ΚΥΡΙΟΤΙΚΟΝ (Halifax) – A group of landowners along Purcell's Cove Road have asked for Regional Plan changes to allow for development of their properties, and local area residents are voicing their concerns.

Council voted to delay approval of the revised Regional Plan (RP+5) until May, in order to consider the Purcell's Cove proposal along with several other controversial, last-minute amendments.

The largest of the Purcell's Cove properties is 394-acres surrounding part of popular hiking and swimming spot, Williams Lake.

Currently, the property can't be developed. It was designated Urban Reserve under the 2006 Regional Plan, five years before current owners Clayton Properties purchased it.

Urban Reserve lands are to be kept free for higher density urban development at some point in the future, outside the life of

the 25-year plan. The owners have asked HRM to revert the lands to their pre-2006 designations and zoning, allowing some low density development.

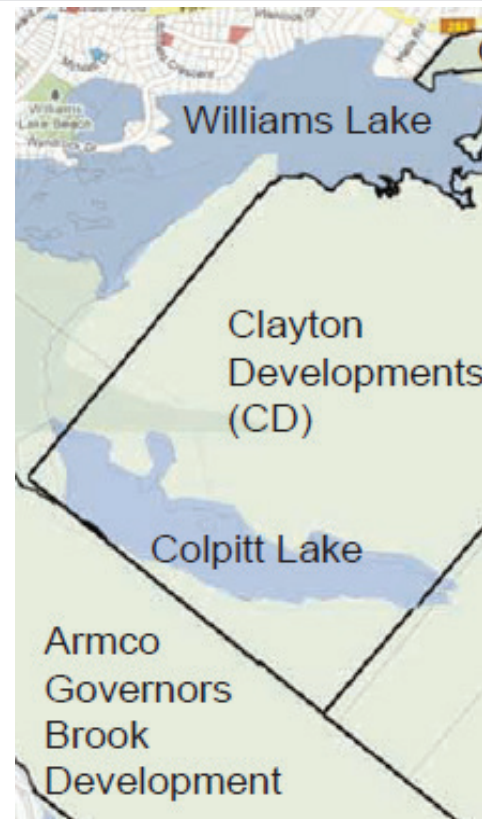
City planning staff recommended against the request, citing a host of concerns including traffic and environmental considerations, and the supply of land for future high density urban development.

Kathleen Hall is a local resident and member of the Williams Lake Conservation Company.

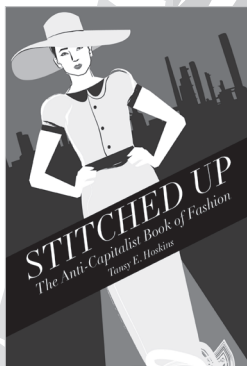
"We're very upset for a number of reasons," says Hall. "We all participated in RP+5 process, and we trusted the process.

"These developers are trying to sideswipe the whole process by having this last minute request put in."

Council will discuss all the controversial requested amendments in May.



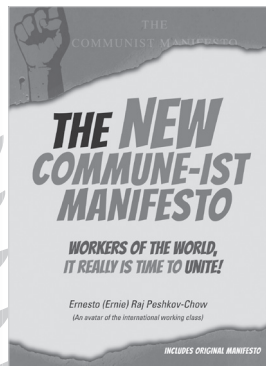
Map shows Clayton Developments land parcels along Purcell's Cove Road | courtesy of Williams Lake Conservation Company



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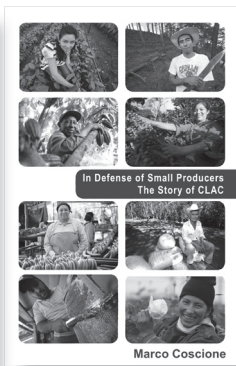
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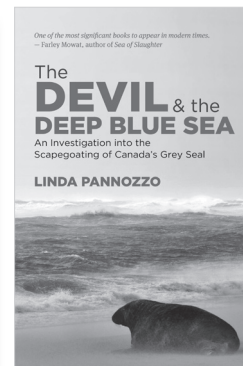
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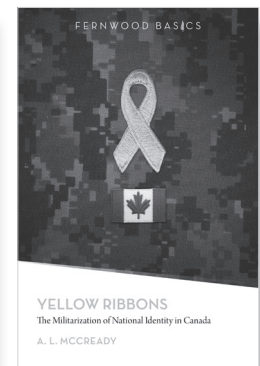
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Striking Home Support Workers surround Province House

Essential Services Legislation curtails workers' bargaining power

by ROBERT DEVET

K'JIPUKTUK (Halifax) – Five hundred angry and noisy Northwood Home Support Workers and sympathizers surrounded the provincial Legislature on February 28.

The workers, who went on strike that day, are protesting proposed essential services legislation introduced by the Liberal government. The legislation takes away their ability to bargain with their employer without constraints.

The Northwood Home Support Workers, most of whom are women, visit clients at their homes, where they assist with personal care, provide nursing care, do light housekeeping, and more.

They are demanding wage parity with workers who perform the same duties in a hospital setting.

The new legislation requires that during a strike, a significant portion of home support workers stay on the job to perform "essential services."



The 440 striking Northwood workers will be forced back to work early next week. An additional 1200 workers province-wide who would have been in a legal strike position in March are also affected. | Photo Robert Devet

"I don't want to be on strike, I want to do my job.
I care very much about my clients. That is why I do what I do.
I just want to earn enough to get by and support my family."

— Ian Vanderberg, Northwood Home Support Worker

When the legislation was passed one day later, all workers were forced to resume work while the union and the employer negotiate the 'who' and 'what' of essential services.

The legislation affects 1,200 home support workers belonging to 13 locals province-wide, who all voted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action.

"This is the most bizarre, draconian piece of legislation that I have ever witnessed, and I have been around for a very long time," said an angry Joan Jessome, President of the Nova Scotia Government Employees Union.

Jessome is puzzled by what constitutes an essential service.

"The government is talking about light housekeeping and laundry as essential

services," said Jessome.

"Every single home support worker does that. There is such a wide scope to this language that it is never going to be dealt with. This can go on for months and months."

Jessome says she is particularly upset because an offer by the union to avert a strike through arbitration was rejected by Premier MacNeil.

Ian Vanderberg was one of the workers protesting at Province House. The decision to strike is not one he made lightly and he is offended by the suggestion that he doesn't care about his clients.

"I don't want to be on strike, I want to do my job," said Vanderberg. "I care very much about my clients. That is why I do what I

do. I just want to earn enough to get by and support my family."

The job of a home support worker is not an easy one, he said.

Workers travel from client to client anywhere in the Halifax Regional Municipality, in all weather. They work alone and worry about going into places that may not be safe.

Many Northwood workers must be available for two additional unpaid hours per day. Elsewhere in Nova Scotia, workers may have to be available as much as sixteen hours a day, and still only get paid for five hours of work.

Meanwhile, they perform a service that is vital to many Nova Scotians, and that saves the government money as well.

Vanderberg believes that the new legislation is really about breaking the union.

"All of us workers are in this together. How can we say to somebody you only get strike pay while others [who are deemed essential] get paid full time?"

Hunt for oil in the Gulf of St. Lawrence intensifies

Oil spills could affect Nova Scotia shores

by ROBERT DEVET

Mary Gorman thinks she knows why it is difficult to get people to pay attention to the perils of offshore oil and gas exploration.

"It's like my husband used to say when he still fished," Gorman says. "He'd go out, he'd haul traps, he'd come in at the end of the day, and look behind him at that vast ocean, and it would be as if he hadn't been there at all."

Gorman is a spokesperson for the Save our Seas and Shores coalition (SOSS), a group pushing for a ban on all oil and gas activities in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

She understands that oil exploration can cause a lot of damage, no matter how vast that ocean may seem.

She also knows that although it may be difficult to get people to pay attention, it can be done. It just takes patience, stamina, and real savvy for getting out the message.

The Save our Seas and Shores coalition formed after the Canada Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board (CNSOPB) awarded two inshore oil exploration licenses in the 1990s.

One license was for exploring in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Both licenses were close to the shores of the Cape Breton Highlands National Park – too close for comfort, as it turned out.

The risk of spills caused an outcry among fishermen, First Nations, tourism operators and environmentalists. After many public hearings and reports, the companies withdrew and the leases expired.

Mary Gorman and the Save our Seas and Shores coalition were instrumental in galvanizing the opposition. Because of this organized effort, there are currently no plans to re-open the Nova Scotia sector of the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the oil and gas industry.

But for Gorman, when it comes to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, a battle won in Nova Scotia only goes so far.

When asked what is critical about the Gulf, Gorman points to the way it "flushes like a toilet." Water originating from the Great Lakes and brought to the Gulf via the



St. Lawrence River does not exit neatly into the Atlantic Ocean – just like a flushed toilet, it swirls and moves around.

That means all five provinces bordering the Gulf of St. Lawrence could be affected if an oil spill happened anywhere in the Gulf.

A victory for environmentalists in Nova Scotia is only a partial victory as long as Quebec, Newfoundland or any other province continue to engage in oil exploration in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

If drilling occurs anytime soon, it will most likely happen in an area in the Gulf known as 'Old Harry', which is about 80 kilometres east of the Magdalen Islands and right on the cusp of the territorial boundary between Quebec and Newfoundland.

Company and government geologists estimate the area contains two billion barrels of oil, which makes it almost twice the size of the Hibernia oil field. It also holds seven trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

Business and political forces in Quebec and Newfoundland are pushing hard to open the area up for exploration.

It is expected that the Canada Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore



Mary Gorman, shown with writer Farley Mowat (top), is a tireless defender of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Remnants of earlier oil exploration (bottom) on a sandy shoal on the west coast of Newfoundland. After natural erosion, leaks and pipes sticking out of the water are all that remain.

Photos: Save our Seas and Shores coalition (top), Bob Diamond (bottom).

Petroleum Board (CNLOPB) will release a Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Newfoundland sector of Old Harry. The CNLOPB is a joint federal-provincial body that regulates the offshore oil and gas industry.

The assessment would provide a framework for oil exploration in the Newfoundland sector of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Newfoundland environmentalist Bob Diamond believes there is a fundamental flaw in the process – no matter what the SEA framework looks like once revealed.

Any kind of environmental assessment must transcend a narrow provincial approach by looking at the big picture, Diamond says.

"After all, marine and coastal ecosystems don't care about provincial boundaries."

Indeed, an Environment Canada report finds that a spill in the Newfoundland sector of Old Harry would likely affect the southwest coast of Newfoundland and Cape Breton. Simulations developed by the David Suzuki foundation indicate that oil spills could affect all five provinces bordering the Gulf.

Nonetheless, in Quebec, just as in Newfoundland, politicians are eager to fill provincial coffers with oil and gas revenue from the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Once again, Old Harry is the most prominent target. But there are some hurdles development in Quebec, according to a recently completed Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) by the province, which

"The gulf is a unique and fragile area. Our peoples have depended on it since time immemorial and we will not allow the government of Quebec to destroy it."

— Chief Claude Jeannotte, of the Mi'gmaq community of Gespeg

defines conditions for offshore drilling.

Sylvain Archambault, spokesperson for a conservation group called the St. Lawrence Coalition, believes the assessment sets the bar quite high.

The Quebec assessment "points out that there is a lot we don't know about the Gulf's ecology," Archambault tells the Halifax Media Co-op. "For instance, we don't know what to do if a spill were to occur, especially when there is ice present."

The SEA additionally warns that an accident like the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill is "plausible" if exploration were to happen in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. In other words, an oil spill could happen.

Archambault thinks that, despite this



Five provinces border the Gulf of St. Lawrence, which all could be affected by an oil spill no matter where it occurs.

risk, Quebec politicians will find a way to jump regulatory hurdles. A small cadre of businesspeople and former politicians have already urged the Parti Québécois government to hurry up and start drilling.

Nations in Quebec intend to take their role as guardians seriously and make their unceded treaty rights count.

Salmon fisheries are vital to many of the First Nations communities among the Gulf, so concerns around oil spill damage run deep.

Chief Claude Jeannotte, of the Mi'gmaq community of Gespeg, is a spokesperson for the newly formed First Nations coalition.

"The gulf is a unique and fragile area," Jeannotte said in a press release. "Our peoples have depended on it since time immemorial and we will not allow the government of Quebec to destroy it."

Mary Gorman hopes that one day, her beloved Gulf of St. Lawrence will be free from the threat of oil and gas development.

"I am so fed up with the irresponsibility of our business CEOs and our government leaders," she says. "They don't protect the public interest, and they narrow their roles to be simply promoters of business development. They are willing to throw protection of our air, water and global food supplies to the wolves."

Follow Robert Devet on Twitter @DevetRobert



In honour of Loretta

by DARRYL LEROUX

Trigger Warning: On February 13, police announced the disappearance of Loretta Saunders, a 26-year-old Inuk woman who had been completing her thesis on missing and murdered aboriginal women in Nova Scotia. She was found dead on February 26. The following is a tribute from her professor, and may be a trigger for some readers.

I woke up early this morning, unable to fall back asleep. As you may imagine, the past 10 days or so have been extremely difficult, for a number of reasons that I never could've predicted.

After hearing about Loretta's murder, I walked home, the loneliest walk of my life, braving onlookers who were no doubt puzzled at the tears streaming from my eyes and the sounds emanating from my body. I came home, lay in bed, and ignored all attempts to communicate with others for several hours. I couldn't move. I ended up speaking with a few friends and family members before falling asleep from exhaustion, my heart heavy with sorrow and my head aching.

I'm still in shock at the news, and especially

of her final resting place. That image hurts beyond anything I could say in words.

And I refuse for that to be the last image I have of Loretta, given her remarkable spirit.

Even as I write this, as the tears wrack my body and the letters on my keyboard blur, none of this seems real. I was always so worried about Loretta. She presented all of the vulnerabilities to which indigenous woman are prone, through no fault of her own. I reread her thesis proposal last night

of my mind. So many friends want to discuss the details of the case with me, they want to dissect it like they were the lead characters in a crime drama, the same ones that actually promote the incarceration and elimination of indigenous peoples and peoples of colour from society. What in the world makes somebody think that I want to listen to them piece together Loretta's murder. "Darryl, do you think they did it? C'mon, you must know." This is not a crime drama, she is

"...our society has discarded indigenous women and girls in much the same manner for generations. These people were playing out a script that we all know intimately, but never acknowledge."

and was reminded of how deeply she was aware of being a product of a Canadian society intent on destroying and eliminating indigenous peoples. That last word, "eliminating," may seem extreme to some, but it is now so charged, so raw, so very real. Elimination. [Deep breath] [Deep breath] [Deep breath] Elimination.

Lying in a ditch along the Trans-Canada Highway. I simply cannot get this image out

dead. Murdered. What is wrong with those people? What were they thinking? If it's not friends acting like sleuths, it's the media acting like buzzards, circling and waiting for somebody to surrender like fallen prey. No more than five minutes goes by between the police announcement of Loretta's murder and my inbox and voicemail being filled with requests.

If you're reading this, take it as my statement.

I refuse to speculate about Loretta's death. What I do know is that our society has discarded indigenous women and girls in much the same manner for generations. These people were playing out a script that we all know intimately, but never acknowledge.

It's our doing, which Loretta articulated so clearly in her writing – theft of land base, legalized segregation and racism, residential schools for several generations, continued dispossession = social chaos.

It is a recipe for disaster for indigenous peoples, and especially indigenous women. Who suffers most when access to land, to the ecological order at the basis of most indigenous societies, is limited, controlled, or outright eliminated? Is that not what's at the basis of a settler society like our own, eliminating indigenous peoples' relationship to the land (and/or their actual bodies), so that can we plunder it for our gain?

All the while, through trickery and deceit, we convince our children that indigenous

peoples are to blame for their condition, that through no fault of our own, they simply don't understand how to live well in society.

When I discuss these issues with my non-indigenous students in an open, honest, and non-judgmental manner, I am continuously disappointed, though no longer surprised by their lack of knowledge.

Less than half of my second-year students have heard of residential schools, and among those who have, only a handful can imagine and articulate the impacts such a system would have had in their own communities. We are, for the most part, incapable of empathy.

I ask my students: who are you meant to care about in society? The answer is always clear to them – I have been taught in such a way that I'm mostly incapable of caring about indigenous peoples. It's not that they don't want to, it's that it takes years of hard work. And who has that much time or is willing to be vulnerable in the face of the seemingly

unending gulf that lies before them?

And so we continue to look to indigenous peoples like the savages we imagine them to be. Meanwhile, Loretta is dumped in a ditch in a province that once paid European invaders for the scalps of Mi'kmaq women, children, and men, repeating a centuries-old pattern in ways that are much too familiar to be a coincidence, to be irony, to be senseless. But these are the most common qualifiers I read about Loretta's life and death. Loretta herself expressed the patterned, structured ways of colonial violence very clearly in her work, which I reread last night before falling asleep.

It is an organized terror of the everyday. And it must stop.

Darryl Leroux spent many hours speaking with, advising, and reading Loretta Saunders undergraduate honours thesis research. He is an assistant professor of Sociology and Criminology at Saint Mary's University.

A letter for my beautiful friend, Loretta Saunders

by ANNIE CLAIR

Hi Loretta,

I'm so honoured, grateful and privileged to have had you as a friend for such a short time on our Journey of Life. I will cherish the memory I have of you on the first day we met. We shared so much that day about how we were going to go to the Mik'maw language classes at the Friendship Center on Thursdays, go to Sweats and go skating at the Oval.

You had asked me about the Mik'maq culture and our traditional ways as Mik'maq women; what were the roles and responsibilities for the Women and Men. I was so happy that you were interested to learn and I saw the excitement on your smiling face. You shared how you felt it was a missing element in your life.

Loretta, you were such a kind-hearted, caring and courageous person, who people looked up to and turned to for advice and comfort; dedicated to your academic studies, passionate about your culture.

We will keep your spirit strong and give each other strength. It will keep living in each and every one of us.



Mi'kmaq, Inuit, and other First Nations women have rallied together in Halifax to celebrate Saunders' life and ask for an end to violence against Aboriginal women. | Photo Miles Howe

Your friendship is so special to me and my daughter Shanelle. My daughter was just sharing with me that you are such an amazing and cool person, and she was so excited to become your new friend.

You told Shanelle that it wouldn't matter if she was nine years younger than you, and that you were willing to help her out when she graduated this summer, and that you were going to help her out with her university during her first year.

We will miss you dearly, and we will be praying for you and your unborn child night and day. I know that you will protect us and watch over us in heaven.

I would like you thank you, Loretta, for sharing the wisdom that you carried with

you and now I will be doing the same when I make new friends and give them what you gave to me. I will keep the light going, and brighten everyone's hearts as you did when I first met you that day.

Love you Loretta.

Rest in Peace Sister,
xoxox

Your friend,
Annie Clair

Annie Clair is from Elsipogtog First Nation. Loretta Saunders and Annie became quick friends during the winter of 2014.

Loretta Saunders' death latest in a growing epidemic

As the number of missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada continues to rise at an alarming rate, people, human rights groups and politicians strengthen the call for a national public inquiry

by JUSTIN BRAKE

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It's Wednesday, Feb. 26, and the mood is sombre inside the St. John's Native Friendship Centre (SJNFC). Moments ago, the members of women's drum group Eastern Owl, Inuit drum group Kilautiup Songuninga and a handful of children had learned police in Nova Scotia were now treating Loretta Saunders' disappearance as a homicide.

The drum groups separate into different rooms so they can practice their songs. After singing the Women's Warrior Song, the five members of Eastern Owl take a short break. Moments later, one of them returns to the room and announces Loretta Saunders' body has been found. There is silence as they look at each other with saddened but unsurprised expressions on their faces.

Saunders, who was working on her honours thesis on missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, and who is said to have been three months pregnant, became the 95th victim on a list of missing or murdered women or children in or from Newfoundland and Labrador, compiled by staff at the friendship centre.

Amelia Reimer, a women's outreach worker at the centre said she felt sick to her stomach when she heard the news of Saunders' murder Wednesday evening. "Just a big pit, like a rock in the bottom of your stomach."

In an interview with *The Independent*, Reimer flipped through several pages of the long list of names, explaining the SJNFC included all missing or murdered women and children in the province on its list.

"With the unique background of Newfoundland and Labrador we've decided to extend our list to people who may not be known as aboriginal...but so many people



here have aboriginal background, have a history," she explained. "It may have been spoken about, it may not have been spoken about, because once again there's the shame and marginalization that happens, especially over the last couple hundred years."

Through its Sisters in Spirit project the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) documented the names of 582 aboriginal women who went missing or were murdered between 1990 and 2010, when the federal government cut funding to the initiative.

Earlier this year, Maryanne Pearce, a doctoral student of law at the University of Ottawa, released the details of her research on missing and murdered vulnerable women in Canada between 1990 and 2013. Of the 3,329 names she compiled, 824 are aboriginal, a substantially higher number than NWAC, though Pearce's data included three extra years.

Though only about four per cent of women in Canada are aboriginal, both NWAC and Pearce's numbers show that aboriginal women account for almost one quarter of the country's missing or murdered women. Estimates vary, but it is believed aboriginal women in Canada are five to eight times

more likely than non-aboriginal women to be murdered or go missing.

According to a press release issued by NWAC, in the last six months alone at least eight aboriginal women have been murdered in Canada. That number does not include Bernice Rich, a 21-year-old Innu woman who was murdered in Sheshatshiu last June.

"[The] numbers are just going up really dramatically, and they're...younger and younger, the women who disappear or who get killed," NWAC President Michele Audette told *The Independent* on Wednesday, prior to the news of Saunders' death. "So it's getting worse."

Audette acknowledges violence against aboriginal women is a complex issue with deep roots, but she says the Conservative government's attitude toward First Nations, Inuit and Métis is making matters profoundly worse.

"We have more people in prison now, more aboriginal women in prison. We have more poverty in our communities, we have more poverty in the urban settings because of different programs or policies that this government cut or ended or created to—you know, it's not helping our people," she said. "And the discrimination is just growing and growing."

Indigenous rights groups, the United Nations, the premiers of all 13 provinces and territories and both opposition parties in Ottawa have called on the federal government to launch a national inquiry on missing and murdered aboriginal women.

"We here, the elected representatives of the people, have a duty to act," said Cleary. "Will the government agree to call a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women?"

Conservative minister Kellie Leitch, who holds the status of women portfolio, responded to the NDP members' questions by offering condolences to Saunders' family and reminding Canadians the government

has committed \$25 million over five years to missing and murdered aboriginal women.

Money is not enough, said Audette, who has been leading the call for a national inquiry and action plan. She also argues racism toward aboriginal people in Canada is on the rise, referencing a “hate crime” against an aboriginal woman in Ontario in Dec. 2012 when Idle No More was inspiring indigenous actions from coast to coast.

Two men kidnapped an aboriginal woman in Thunder Bay, then allegedly drove her outside the city, sexually assaulted and strangled her, leaving her for dead. She survived to tell the story though, and has remained unnamed out of fear her attackers, who have not been caught, will find and kill her.

“[T]hey said to her, ‘We hate Idle No More. You’re not the first Indian woman, and you won’t be the last,’” said Audette.

“So it was a hate crime, two men raping her, thinking that she was dead. But she survived. And so we have more incidents like this, and of course we have more...people that

will take our young girls [into] the sex trade, or human [trafficking]. So there’s more and more problems like this in our communities or urban cities.”

In 2007, after two decades of consultations with indigenous groups around the world, the United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which sets out minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of indigenous peoples around the world.

At the end of his nine-day visit to Canada last fall, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples James Anaya called the problem of missing and murdered aboriginal women here an “epidemic”.

Anaya commended the federal and provincial governments for implementing “numerous programs, policies and efforts that have...achieved notable successes.”

However, he called the situation of Indigenous peoples in Canada a “crisis”, saying the steps taken by the federal and provincial governments are “insufficient,

and have yet to fully respond to aboriginal peoples’ urgent needs, fully protect their aboriginal and treaty rights, or to secure relationships based on mutual trust and common purpose.”

Among his top concerns though was the “disturbing phenomenon of aboriginal women missing and murdered.”

“I concur that a comprehensive and nationwide inquiry into the issue could help ensure a coordinated response and the opportunity for the loved ones of victims to be heard, and would demonstrate a responsiveness to the concerns raised by the families and communities affected by this epidemic,” he said.

In 2008, the Government of Canada issued an official apology to survivors and the families of victims of the residential schools system, and launched the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which has reported that of the accounted 150,000 aboriginal children who were taken from their families and placed in government-funded, church-run schools which operated from from the 1870s until the last one closed in 1996, at least 4,000 died while in the schools’ custody.

At the end of his visit Anaya concurred: “It is clear that the residential school period continues to cast a long shadow of despair on indigenous communities, and that many of the dire social and economic problems faced by aboriginal peoples are directly linked to that experience.”

St. John’s lawyer Ches Crosbie is involved in a class action law suit against the Government of Canada for excluding Newfoundland and Labrador residential school survivors and families of victims from its apology and compensation plan.

“[T]he federal government’s resisting based on the idea that they didn’t have any involvement in the day-to-day running of it,” Crosbie told *The Independent* on Friday, referring to the five residential schools in the case. Located in Cartwright, Makkovik, Nain, Northwest River and St. Anthony, the schools were first run by either Moravian missionaries or the International Grenfell Association, and later the Government of Newfoundland.

“[T]he Prime Minister’s apology five years ago didn’t include Newfoundland and Labrador, and they’re resisting the claim based on the idea that it’s a different constitutional situation,” Crosbie explained.

Reimer says residential schools played a significant role in the problems faced by Canada’s aboriginal peoples today. “These



Volunteers at the St. John's Native Friendship Centre have been working on a 'Faceless Dolls Quilt', each block representing a missing or murdered woman or child from Newfoundland and Labrador. This one was made for Loretta Saunders. The 'Sisters in Spirit' logo is pictured on the left page. | Photo Amelia Reimer

traumas and hurts were so systemic, so institutionalized in aboriginal society that you're looking at generation after generation of that impact happening again, where all the children were being removed from communities," she said.

"There were people who were sexually abused, and other types of abuse in those systems, and then they brought that type of abuse home to their communities. That type of violence, domestic violence, all those sort of issues are not traditional aboriginal values."

Crosbie said he didn't understand the magnitude of the impact residential schools had on the thousands of aboriginal people in Newfoundland and Labrador until he began speaking to survivors.

"Before the case I'm not sure that I did, but at this point I can appreciate that going through the experience of being in a school where the ethos was to strip you of your language and your culture, and your ties to your family and your cultural identity, has to be wounding in a lifelong sense.

"It was very regimented, it was a sort of 'total' environment," he continued. "And it was also brutal, perhaps more so in the earlier years and less in the later years. But one of the discoveries of a client that I went to, he told me how the Moravian Minister used the cat o' nine tails for discipline. That stays with you because, hey, you figure the cat o' nine tails went out with press gangs."

Back at the St. John's Native Friendship Center, Reimer said she and Pearce spoke after Reimer discovered Pearce's database contained the names of 19 missing or murdered aboriginal women from Newfoundland and Labrador the SJNFC did not previously have record of, bringing the Newfoundland and Labrador tally to 114 names. Conversely, the SJNFC had the names of at least 11 confirmed aboriginal women who were not on Pearce's list.

"We're going to update each other's lists and collaborate there," said Reimer.

"So if right there contact with me just tripled the numbers for Newfoundland and Labrador on her nationwide project, it's really hard to gauge how many cases are out there that aren't being reported to anyone. How many cases were out there where nobody bothered to report it? Or it was reported as 'unknown circumstances' or just forgotten?"

The lists do not include the Beothuk, who were targeted in genocidal campaigns by European settlers in Newfoundland. Nor do they include any of the undocumented Mi'kmaq deaths resulting from clashes with Europeans who colonized the island. It is also unclear how many children died in the residential schools here.

Cheryl Maloney, President of the Native Women's Association of Nova Scotia, held a press conference where she tearfully addressed the murder of Loretta Saunders.

"I think Canadian society and especially our prime minister has been able to ignore the reality of the statistics that are against aboriginal girls," she said, surrounded by supporters.

"Every aboriginal girl is vulnerable, and for Canada to have ignored it for so long, it's disheartening. How many more families does this have to happen to before they take seriously the problem, the inequity of aboriginal people and the problems our girls face in this world growing up in Canada? We shouldn't be growing up in a country where we're at risk to be missing or murdered more than anyone else ... There's something wrong in Canada if aboriginal people have to live this fate."

Nunatsiavut President Sarah Leo also issued a statement. "At the time of her tragic death, Loretta was working on a thesis project on missing and murdered aboriginal women as part of her university studies," she said. "But she is not just another statistic. She is a daughter, a granddaughter, sister, niece, aunt and a friend. May she rest in peace, knowing that she left behind many loved ones who will always remember her for who she was,

and that her work will continue."

A special parliamentary committee on violence against indigenous women concluded last month and tabled its report on March 7. Audette said the committee "wasn't strong enough," and that it was totally partisan, where the Conservatives had the majority.

"I gave them an ultimatum on Nov. 21 [that] if we don't see in that report the real involvement of the native women of Canada, NWAC, we know that we won't see in any recommendation the urgency of having a national public inquiry," she said.

"So for me, I've said it's already biased. The exercise, it's not frank, it's not truthful, and it's already saying what the Conservatives would like to see, or wish to see."

The Native Women's Association of Canada delivered a petition to Ottawa last month with 23,000 signatures, calling for a national public inquiry.

"It's just playing with lives," Audette said of the government's satisfaction with the parliamentary committee in lieu of a public inquiry. "Women are disappearing. It's not helping the missing and murdered women, and families affected by that. Compared to the inquiry, where it's...independent, they have a mandate, a road where it's gonna be strong resolutions where it's not partisan. And it will tell the truth to the government."

After Saunders' death a new petition began circulating via change.org, this time calling directly on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to launch a national inquiry. It had almost 7,500 signatures as of press time

Loretta Saunders' sister Delilah Terriak has announced on Facebook she needed help organizing a nationwide vigil for March 27.

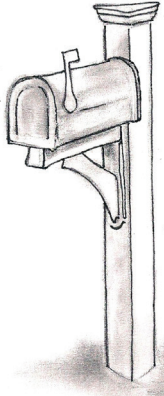
"While we found my sister, she and I know of too many stories of women who will not be laid to rest. This needs to change now. I plan on holding a country wide vigil and would love to have any help organizing actual gatherings in your community.

"This is for all women, not just you, me or Loretta."

"I take pride in the person that I have become. I've lived a life that the majority of people will never encounter, however, I am also aware that there are people who have been subjected to much harsher circumstances than myself, and I am aware that there is always room for improvement. I am a fighter, and I will continue to grow and persevere."

— Loretta Saunders

A nationwide vigil for Loretta Saunders will be held on March 27, 8pm (Grand Parade in Halifax).



Who's afraid of the public postal service?

Workers respond as Canada Post begins conversion from door-to-door delivery

by TONI MCAFEE

On February 20, Canada Post announced the 11 communities as the first sites to be converted from door-to-door delivery to community mailboxes.

Two Atlantic Canada communities are included on the list: Bedford and Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia. Both communities are part of the Halifax Regional Municipality. According to Canada Post, 9,950 addresses are slated to lose their door-to-door delivery, including over 500 business points of call. And while Canada Post appears to be proceeding full-steam ahead, opposition to their ill-conceived plans continues to grow.

Postal workers in communities across the country are holding public town hall meetings and hosting information tables in malls, farmers markets, and other community events where the cutbacks have been openly discussed. Judging from the feedback we have received, it's clear that the Canadian public are opposed to the cuts announced by Canada Post.

Canada Post and the Conservative government seem to have forgotten that our public postal service belongs to Canadians. How Canada Post operates and what services it provides should be determined by its shareholders, the public. The fate of this successful public institution should not be left to Canada Post or the federal government to mismanage and plunder.

As part of its "plan", Canada Post says it will hold public consultations in the communities slated for services cuts. However, as postal workers, we know all too well what "consultation" means to Canada Post; for Canada Post, consultation is anything but meaningful or productive. If they actually wanted to consult with Canadians, they ought to proceed with the Canada Post Service Charter Review which was scheduled to happen this year.

The reality is that neither Canada Post

nor the Conservative government want to hear from Canadians about these cuts in service because they know they are neither supported nor wanted by Canadians. The "public consultation" Canada Post CEO Deepak Chopra claims occurred in 46 communities prior to their December 11 announcement was by invitation only. We have learned since then that in many of these communities, local levels of government and even some Members of Parliament were not included in these "public consultations".

Canada Post has a requirement under the Canadian Postal Service Charter to consult with communities:

"Where Canada Post plans to change delivery methods Canada Post will communicate, either in person or in writing, with affected customers and communities at least one month in advance to explain decisions and explore options that address customer concerns."

The federal government and Conservative MPs are ignoring the needs and interests of their own constituents rather than holding Canada Post accountable for its actions. Instead of toeing the party line for their political leader, these MPs should realize that they are elected by the people in their ridings, not by Stephen Harper. Ignoring the desires of their constituents will come with a price.

As Canada Post moves forward with their plans, resistance continues to mount as pressure to reverse the cuts grows from all levels of government. Large and small, municipalities across the country are passing resolutions opposed to the cuts. Over 20 city councils have adopted resolutions and many more are examining ways of diminishing the negative impacts of these plans on their constituents. Cities such as Charlottetown,

Antigonish, Miramichi, Dieppe, and larger cities such as Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver have all adopted resolutions opposing the cuts.

The louder and more sustained the opposition, the harder it will be for the federal government to ignore. Make sure your voice is heard by doing one or all of the following:

- Sign a petition;
- Call, write, or visit your MP, MLA, city council, Mayor and let them know you oppose the cuts;
- Contact the CUPW Local in your community and offer to assist in the campaign;
- Write Canada Post and voice your opposition;
- Put a sign in your window or a lawn sign in your yard;
- Attend a town hall;
- Stay up to date on upcoming events in your community so that you can participate and lend your voice to the growing opposition.

Canada Post and the Conservative government need to be held accountable for putting our public postal service at risk. They cannot ignore the real owners of our postal service – the Canadian public – and the only way to ensure they hear us is to send our message loud and clear through our collective actions. Canadians are saying they want expanded services not less services. We must demand open and transparent consultations on the future of Canada Post.

Keep up to date at on the Save Canada Post campaign at www.cupw.ca or follow on twitter @cupw

Toni MacAfee is the Education and Organization Officer with the Atlantic Region chapter of the CUPW.

No spiritual elders for jailed Mi'kmaq warriors

New Brunswick lags behind federal programming

by MILES HOWE

K'JIPUKTUK (Halifax) – The spiritual health of Germaine (Junior) Breau and Aaron Francis, the two members of the Mi'kmaq Warriors Society who have been incarcerated since the RCMP raided the anti-shale gas encampment along highway 134 on October 17, appears to be overlooked by the New Brunswick department of Public Safety, Communities and Correctional Services.

The two men are jailed at the provincially-run Southeast Regional Correctional Center (SRCC), located in Shediac, New Brunswick, where they await their trial dates in mid-March and early April.

The SRCC has a paid chaplain on staff.

Suzanne Patles, who has visited Breau on numerous occasions during his months-long incarceration, relates that he has made “over a dozen requests” for an indigenous spiritual elder.

Breau and Francis have received one visit from an elder in over three months.

Deputy Superintendent John Cann initially refused to discuss the particulars of any one inmates' case, but did say the SRCC is always looking for “new volunteers” of the spiritual persuasion.

“Spiritual advisors of any faith are welcome on a volunteer basis,” says Cann. “We don't have a spiritual elder from the native community that would be willing to come in on a volunteer basis at the moment.”

In choosing to financially support a chaplain

and not support religious programming not fulfilled by a chaplain, the New Brunswick government may have disregarded Section Two of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which notes that freedom of conscience and religion is a fundamental freedom in Canada.

If Breau and Francis were stationed in maximum security Renous, New Brunswick, their spiritual needs would be regulated by the federal department of Correctional Services. And their situation would be far more comfortable, spiritually at least.

At the federal level a variety of documents are currently being developed to address the spiritual needs of the disproportionate number of incarcerated indigenous peoples in Canada. Amongst these is the 'Commissioner's Directive' policy on Aboriginal Offenders, which falls under the Safe Streets and Communities Act.

Within the context of prisons, the 'directive' is a relatively forward thinking document. Amongst other mandates, it notes that the institution head (read: superintendent) will:

“Ensure that Elders/Spiritual Advisors are afforded the same status as Chaplains...(and) ensure offenders are provided with the services of an Elder/Spiritual Advisor, in consultation with the Regional Administrator, Aboriginal Initiatives.”

This does not apply to provincially-run penitentiaries.

Another interesting document is the 2000 'National Overview of Programs, Services and

Issues Related to Aboriginal Offenders.' Amongst other things, the overview is a 'show all', where provinces highlight what measures they have taken within their own justice systems, including their penitentiaries, to serve the unique needs – including spiritual – of Aboriginal offenders.

New Brunswick, however, appears to have no indigenous-specific programs in place within its prisons.

Noel Milliea, from Elsipogtog First Nation, has received a variety of training from both federal and New Brunswick provincial correctional departments. He's seen the inside of both federal and provincial prisons within New Brunswick, providing spiritual guidance to indigenous inmates in both milieus. For Milliea, there's a clear difference to the spiritual services he offers and a definite benefit to those who receive it.

“Most of the time what I'd typically do with Aboriginal offenders is have a smudge and a prayer with them,” says Milliea. “I'd take the group, usually a unit at a time, and we'd have a smudge and a prayer and usually have a little bit of a talk about how things are, what are some of the main concerns that they're having, what are some of the things that they're worried about. Some of them are there for the first time and are scared shitless over what's happening. We have an opportunity to share a little bit, and bring a bit of peace to them.”

Milliea sees the plight of incarcerated indigenous peoples as being a completely unique experience. He notes that in the vast majority of cases their incarceration is related to drug and/or alcohol abuse, and that a stay in prison is often a sobering moment.

“What if we say: 'It's not so much about the addictions,’” says Milliea. “What if we say: 'Why does the person drink and do drugs in the first place?' Now we're starting to get into more of the social issues that our people have to deal with in Aboriginal communities. Could it be family violence, or trauma-based issues that they haven't healed from? That they're just numbing some of the pain as a coping skill?”

As for Breau's dishonoured requests, a social media campaign is calling for action on a variety of angles. Campaigns are urging people to call the SRCC and contact the New Brunswick Ombudsman.



Germaine Breau and Aaron Francis have received one visit from an indigenous spiritual elder.

| Photo: Terry Freedman

Black inmates' needs not being met in prisons

Incarceration rates of black Canadians are increasing; appropriate services are not

by RANA ENCOL

Since 2011, the Afrikan Canadian Prisoner Advocacy Coalition (ACPAC) have voiced concerns about the increasing overrepresentation of African Canadians in federal prisons, the rise of mental health issues, and the ongoing lack of culturally appropriate mental health care for African

racism policy and training and more specific research on the mental health status of blacks in prison.

In Canadian federal prisons, inmates first spend time in a classification unit to determine where they will be housed – minimum, low, medium, or high security.

security institutions where programming, employment, education, rehabilitative and social activities are limited.

This is a structural problem, Wright says. Why? “Because we don’t understand the life of a black guy living with poverty or racism on paper,” he says. He offers an example: while someone diagnosed with depression or anxiety might be eligible for treatment, a person who has anger management problems might be subject to discipline if it’s chalked up as a personality issue.

In his words, “the glasses by which we look at cases are not socially informed”;

“We don't understand the life of a black guy living with poverty or racism on paper.”

— Robert S. Wright, ACPAC member on prison placements and programming

Canadian federal inmates

The Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator (OCI), released by the federal government in late November 2013, confirms the need for action to address this disparity.

The OCI report found that there has been an 80 per cent increase in federal incarceration rates of African Canadians over the last ten years.

Cuts to prison chaplains, the ban on calling cards to allow foreign nationals to call home more cheaply, and overall lack of culturally appropriate programming affected black inmates especially, the report noted.

ACPAC says the report doesn’t address “the urgent crisis” of mental health issues for African Canadian inmates, even though the coalition developed an extensive literature review on the subject.

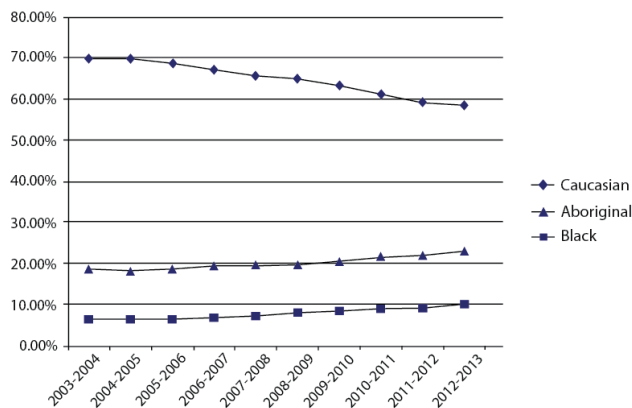
“Aboriginals and African Canadians are facing a crisis in prisons,” says Robert S. Wright, a member of ACPAC. “Aboriginals have a particularly tailored response [because they have a special status]. African Canadians need a particularly tailored response as well.”

Sapers made two recommendations for a National Diversity Awareness Training Plan and an Ethnicity Liaison Officer position, but neither of these recommendations directly address the problem, Wright says.

Wright has worked with black inmates in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and has been a Correctional Mental Health Specialist at Washington State Penitentiary.

ACPAC recommends stronger anti-

10 Year Offender Population Trends: (Incarcerated and Community)



There has been an 80 per cent increase in federal incarceration rates of African Canadians since 2003/2004. The graph shows that blacks constitute 10 per cent of the overall population, whereas they represented around five per cent ten years ago.

(Source: OCI)

“Administrative segregation,” like protective custody in American prisons, is where inmates who have either a high risk of being perpetrators or victims are housed.

These inmates spend more time locked in cells and don’t get to leave unless with an escort or in segregated groups.

African Canadians are more likely to be classed high risk, Wright says. They don’t get to the parole board as quickly as other inmates, despite the fact that blacks have lower recidivism rates. OCI’s report affirms this: Despite being rated as a population having a lower risk to re-offend and lower need overall, Black inmates are 1.5 times more likely to be placed in maximum

addictions, mental health, and education programs are not culturally specific.

What needs to be done?

Federal corrections “needs to host a national conversation with black leaders, federal corrections, provincial and territorial mental health specialists” in conversation with OCI and the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

“Anything else would be a reaction; we need a coordinated, organized, funded national conversation to develop a structured response. From arrest and conviction to reintegration, we need to develop richer resources” to meet the reality of black inmates, he says.



Photo: 'Film' Collins

“In Canada, every system of oppression is organized around settler colonialism”

An interview with Harsha Walia

by CANDIDA HADLEY

Harsha Walia is an activist, writer and founder of the Vancouver chapter of No One is Illegal. She has organized in migrant justice, Indigenous solidarity, Palestinian liberation, antiracist, feminist, anti-imperialist, and anti-capitalist movements and communities for over a decade. Naomi Klein called her “one of Canada’s most brilliant and effective political organizers.”

I spoke with Harsha in late November

*of last year when she visited Halifax to promote her book *Undoing Border Imperialism* (AK Press, 2013), a book about immigrants’ rights movements which seriously tackles issues of capitalism and settler colonialism.*

I began by asking her why Indigenous struggles, which are often ignored by migrant justice movements, are so central to her work.

Harsha Walia: Most, if not all, movements have ignored Indigenous sovereignty, and in fact historically one of the ways in which settler colonialism and white supremacy operates is to invisibilize a lot of the alliances that have been built historically between migrant communities and Indigenous communities. So there's actually a long and vibrant history, but often (it's) not known...

So the work that I'm doing is not new, it's built on a legacy of ancestral relationships between communities. It's central to organize our movements in solidarity with Indigenous struggles and to understand that we can't have any social or environmental justice movement that doesn't deal with the reality of settler colonialism because every system of oppression is organized, within Canada at least, around settler colonialism.

So if we look at poverty, it is deliberate in the settler colonial experience. Indigenous communities face deliberate impoverishment. It's not a coincidence that Indigenous communities and predominantly communities of colour face mass impoverishment.

Patriarchy within settler colonialism is organized around the destruction of Indigenous nationhood, Indigenous families and the deliberate targeting of Indigenous women. Obviously, land destruction and environmental degradation is also part and parcel of settler colonialism.

So we start to see that various, seemingly diverse issues and seemingly diverse social movements can actually strengthen themselves by understanding settler colonialism as a pillar of all of these forms of oppression.

Halifax Media Co-op: Feminism is another topic that's important in your work and I was wondering if you could talk about that.

H.W: I can speak broadly to the ways in which I think feminism needs to urgently re-imagine itself. There's certainly the waves of feminism that have been critiqued for being primarily white and middle class and being really colonial in their conceptions of feminism, so this idea that feminism means equality for women, and equality for women is prescribed to achieving greater economic success, and is essentially about being accommodated and achieving gains within capitalism and colonialism, for example.

But even within what people imagine as a radical feminism or third wave feminism or post-colonial feminism, or all these different

kinds of labels, even within those forms of feminism, there's a lot lacking. Those forms of feminism understand anti-oppression, for example – so the necessity to include the leadership of women of colour, of poor women, of trans women, of Indigenous women, of single mothers etc. – but I think what's lacking even still is that those forms of feminism don't understand how patriarchy is differently organized to affect and to impact these communities. So it's not simply about understanding feminism as having this universal impact, this equal impact across different communities of women, but actually understanding patriarchy as being actively differently organized.

In the context of colonialism, for example, patriarchy is organized in deep connection with violence against the land, yet feminism has not articulated the relationship between settler colonialism and patriarchy as organized around dispossession of land. And how colonialism very much deliberately

“There are lessons that we can learn from our failures and there's a critical need to share them ... It's not about how the world is operating out there and how we deal with it; it's how we deal with each other.”

targets Indigenous women and Indigenous women's bodies, not simply as a form of patriarchy but also as a form of colonialism, because dispossessing women from the land means removing the front line of defense from the land.

HMC: Why do you think reflection within social movements is so important?

H.W: Reflecting on social movements is important primarily for the reason that we just don't do it enough – and if we do it, it's within small, insular networks, like our own collectives, our own groups, our own friends. It's a strange thing, because there are lots of lessons that we can learn from our failures and there's a critical need to share them. I find for me, the best ways I've learned to organize have been in sharing of strategies, so we don't come up with these things in isolation. We do this work collectively. So if we recognize that we do this work collectively then we also need to reflect and share on this work collectively...

There's also varying layers of reflection that are needed – layers around strategy,

around tactics, around internal organization. The ones that I feel have been reflected upon most strongly have to do with forms of internal organization. And I think that's often the hardest one to reflect on, because those are the ones that are the most personal – it's not about how the world is operating out there and how we deal with it; it's how we deal with each other in our personal relationships and dynamics and organizing. So sometimes, coming up with things that work and stumbling and failing and falling but working through it, but I do feel hopeful particularly on that front.

On the left, there's been a lot of conversation about leadership and how do we understand leaders; we don't want any leaders, there are no leaders, and on the flip side there's the really hierarchical leader – and so within No One Is Illegal (Vancouver) we've spent a lot of time talking about leadership, recognizing that anti-oppression calls on us to actually encourage leadership rather than deny

it, because one of the things, particularly within anarchist circles, is that the denial of leadership has meant that it just reproduces systems of oppression.

So when we pretend that everyone is equal and there are no leaders, then we reproduce hierarchies around race and class and gender. So it's (about) understanding leadership as actually encouraging it from marginalized and frontline communities rather than denying those forms of leadership...

And to address the fact that a lot of burn-out comes from being jaded, and seeing the same mistakes being made over and over again. We may not be winning any war, but if we can at least see ourselves thinking more critically about how we're engaging in our movements, then I do feel we'll be more likely to be present within movements because we see some kind of shifts within our organizing.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.



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