

## GAGGLE



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Le *Leveller* s'efforce de produire du contenu en français dans son journal, et cherche des collaborateurs(trices) qui pourraient aider à étendre l'envergure des *Sans-Culottes*, l'encart du *Leveller*. Contactez-nous à [gaggle.the.leveller@gmail.com](mailto:gaggle.the.leveller@gmail.com) pour soumettre des articles, photographies, caricatures et autres pour notre quotidien spécial du Forum social des peuples. Prenez part à la presse écrite alternative!

The *Leveller* strives to produce French language content in its journalistic efforts, and is looking for people to help expand the current insert in our newspaper - les *Sans-Culottes*. Get in touch with us at [gaggle.the.leveller@gmail.com](mailto:gaggle.the.leveller@gmail.com) to submit material to our special PSF daily broadsheet and get involved with alternative print media!

PEOPLES' SQUARE  
PANEL:  
BRIDGING OUR  
MOVEMENTS

By Andy Crosby

Three of Turtle Island's prominent activists held a panel discussion in the Peoples' Square on Friday. Harsha Walia, Clayton Thomas-Muller, and Brigitte DePape discussed various inspirations and challenges in inter-connecting social movements.

In particular, Walia pinpointed the importance of recognizing and confronting the root causes of issues and consistently maintaining that focus. This involves putting "capitalism and colonialism at the forefront." Walia acknowledged the Idle No More and Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movements for their success in doing so.

In teasing out some of the challenges of bridging movements, Walia spoke of a generational divide contributing to a lack of institutional memory. She also stressed the importance of taking leadership from those on the frontlines on struggles, in particular Indigenous communities.



Thomas-Muller emphasized the importance of fighting for our children's future. "We have a moral obligation to politicize and educate ourselves and to put our bodies on the line in order to confront the psychotic economic paradigm called capitalism which has created catastrophic climate change." He also acknowledged challenges, including the "disproportionate battlefield" when it comes to the environmental movement versus

the resources of the oil industry, who have incredible influence when it comes to governmental policies and legislation.

However, Thomas-Muller also said he draws inspiration from a number of movements, including the Quebec youth who helped educate the country on the global austerity agenda during the 2012 student strike, Idle No More, which shut down six Canada-US border crossings and halted every train in Ontario, and the international Indigenous movement against the Tar Sands, which galvanized the US environmental movement to action on aggressively opposing pipelines.

Finally, he emphasized the importance of alliances. "I don't give a shit about Nascar dads or soccer moms, they're comfortable," he said. "We need to reach out to others whose struggles are linked with ours, Nascar dads and soccer moms will follow the laws that we change."

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- CLAYTON THOMAS-MULLER*

## STUDENTS, WORKERS, SAME FIGHT!

SOLIDARITY BETWEEN STUDENTS AND WORKERS IS NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER

By Francella Fiallos

In an age of austerity, alliances between students and workers are absolutely necessary in order to instigate change, according to the speakers of a Friday workshop. The four speakers were from notable groups and unions such as Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante (ASSÉ), Association of McGill University Support Employees (AMUSE), and Immigrant Worker Centre.

Each of the presenters referenced the 2012 Quebec student strikes as the catalyst for a movement bringing students and workers together.

One idea that gained traction throughout the workshop was the notion that students are valuable workers for the university - teaching, preparing research, and participating in classroom activities.

Since students pay tuition, universities are ultimately "making people pay to work," said Amber Gross from AMUSE. As a consequence, students leave school in "massive debt and can't take risks" to organize as a union, Gross added. This point was also stressed by ASSÉ spokesperson Benjamin Gingras.

Mostly discussing past experi-

ences with mobilizing students and workers during the student strikes, Gingras explained how students are important for activist movements. "Students are an integral part of the education system, but they're also part of society as workers ... as users of the health-care services, as parents," he said. "Our condition as students is not exclusive to being a student." Both students and workers experience the material consequences of austerity.

Alain Duguay from CUPW and Mostafa Henaway from the Immigrant Worker Centre addressed the crowd from workers' perspectives and reiterated

the significance of students' involvement in union activism. Duguay, a long-time member of CUPW, even pointed out the intergenerational unity between students and workers, telling the audience in French that the 2012 strikes gave older workers hope for the future.

After the speakers wrapped up, audience members were invited to ask questions. The question-and-answer period soon turned into a discussion regarding the possibility of including police officers, who are facing pension cuts in Quebec as part of Bill 3, in the anti-austerity movement.

## CRITICAL MASS BIKE BLOC AT THE PEOPLES' SOCIAL FORUM

A few dozen cyclists took to the streets as a critical mass early Friday evening. The group met at Confederation Park near Elgin and Laurier for a quick orientation before pedalling into the downtown. Organizers briefed the crowd on safety and tactics of a critical

mass, including traffic protocol. "Corking" refers to a method where cyclists stop cars during a traffic light change to ensure that cyclists remain together. The bike bloc zigzagged through the downtown, the Market area, and the Glebe for over an hour before returning to the

park. The police attempted to direct traffic during the first ten minutes but then disappeared. Participants briefly halted traffic at the intersection of Bank and Somerset, flooding into the crosslane and lifting their bikes in the air to cheers and bicycle bells.





# GRAND CHIEF DEREK NEPINAK FOCUSES ON SOLUTIONS COMING FROM INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

By Miriam Katawazi

Grand Chief Derek Nepinak from the assembly of Manitoba Chiefs spoke at the Peoples' Square about Indigenous rights. Nepinak's talk covered education investment, sustainable development and the plight of missing and murdered Indigenous women. But Nepinak's discussion focused not only on issues but also solutions.

He echoed calls for a national public inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women. On March 2014, in a parliamentary report, the government made 16 recommendations on the subject but did not include the launch of a national public inquiry. This sparked outrage from communities across Canada.

"There's real people impacted and families are suffering across the country," he told the crowd at the Peoples' Social Forum. "I'm no exception to the trauma and the grief of the loss of our loved ones to the violence that we are experiencing."

Society needs to move from a culture of denial to a culture of acceptance, Nepinak said. "We have a significant social problem that we must overcome together." He also noted that it's important that systems and resources

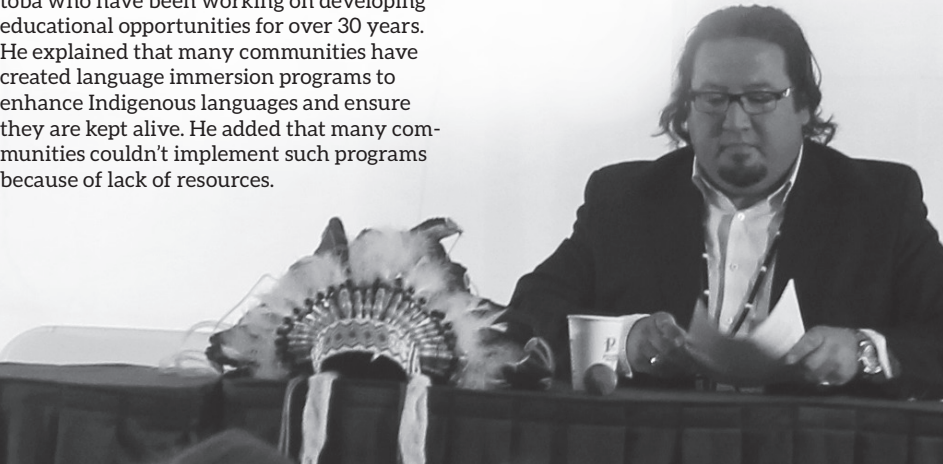
target the needs of vulnerable community members who have minimal resources of their own to succeed. In his talk, Nepinak strongly criticized the federal government's *First Nations Education Act*. The government introduced the draft legislation last fall to alter the way education is funded and controlled. "We have to reflect on the fact that we are coming out of a residential school era," he said, "It was in the 1970's when our people fought hard and produced the new policy of 'Indian control for Indian education' and we stand by that." Nepinak explained that Indian control over Indian education meant that Indigenous communities have a treaty right to education. "When I say there is a treaty right to education, what I'm really saying is that we have a jurisdiction as families and as communities to design and implement the best opportunities we can for our children to learn and to be global citizens."

"We won't let go because we need to be involved every step of the way," he added. He said that each Indigenous child has a right to identity, the right to learn who they are,

the right to learn the history of their people, their language, culture, and ceremonies. "We need to preserve our children's right to this by making sure that we do not allow a prescribed *First Nations Education Act* to be applied to our people," he noted.

Nepinak said that along with others he is working on a report regarding First Nations education. He said there are people in Manitoba who have been working on developing educational opportunities for over 30 years. He explained that many communities have created language immersion programs to enhance Indigenous languages and ensure they are kept alive. He added that many communities couldn't implement such programs because of lack of resources.

Nepinak also criticized development projects in Canada that are harming the environment. "I come from an understanding and place that if we leave the world in a natural state it's already as perfect as can be," he said, "We cannot make improvements to an already perfect ecosystem that sustains life, no matter who we think we are."



## CANADA'S CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY: LYNN GEHL ON THE TRUTH THAT WAMPUM TELLS

By Andy Crosby

Algonquin Anishinaabe Lynn Gehl held a book signing and workshop at the Peoples' Social Forum on Friday. *The Truth that Wampum Tells: My Debwewin on the Algonquin Land Claims Process* was published this year in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the Treaty at Niagara. Gehl referred to the three Wampum belts associated with the treaty as "Canada's constitutional documents" which "codify an Indigenous understanding of Canada's relationship with us" based on peace and sharing. However, Canada's colonial history and present have attempted to render this historical treaty irrelevant, propagating the mythology of the British and French as the only founding nations. Gehl placed special emphasis on important dates, which can be found in Appendix B of the book. These include 1772, when the Algonquins first petitioned for land rights; the 1839 *Crown Lands Protection Act* that declared "all Indian lands Crown lands;" the 1853 *Public Lands Act* granting free land to settlers and settlers only;

and the 1927 *Indian Act* amendment that made it illegal for Indigenous peoples to hire lawyers on land claims issues. Although some Indigenous nations did enter into (unfair) treaty agreements with Canada, Gehl believes that the Algonquins have historically been denied access to the process as a result of the House of Commons squatting on Algonquin land. Speaking in reference to recent optimism surrounding the Tsilhqot'in Nation's Supreme Court victory affirming their title to their territory, Gehl was less hopeful that this might lead to tangible gains for Algonquin nations. She pointed out that there have been favourable decisions in the past, but time and again the language of the bills was merely tweaked and nothing substantive really changed. She placed the onus on Canadians to create change, which, she maintained, will not come from colonial institutions such as the Supreme Court.

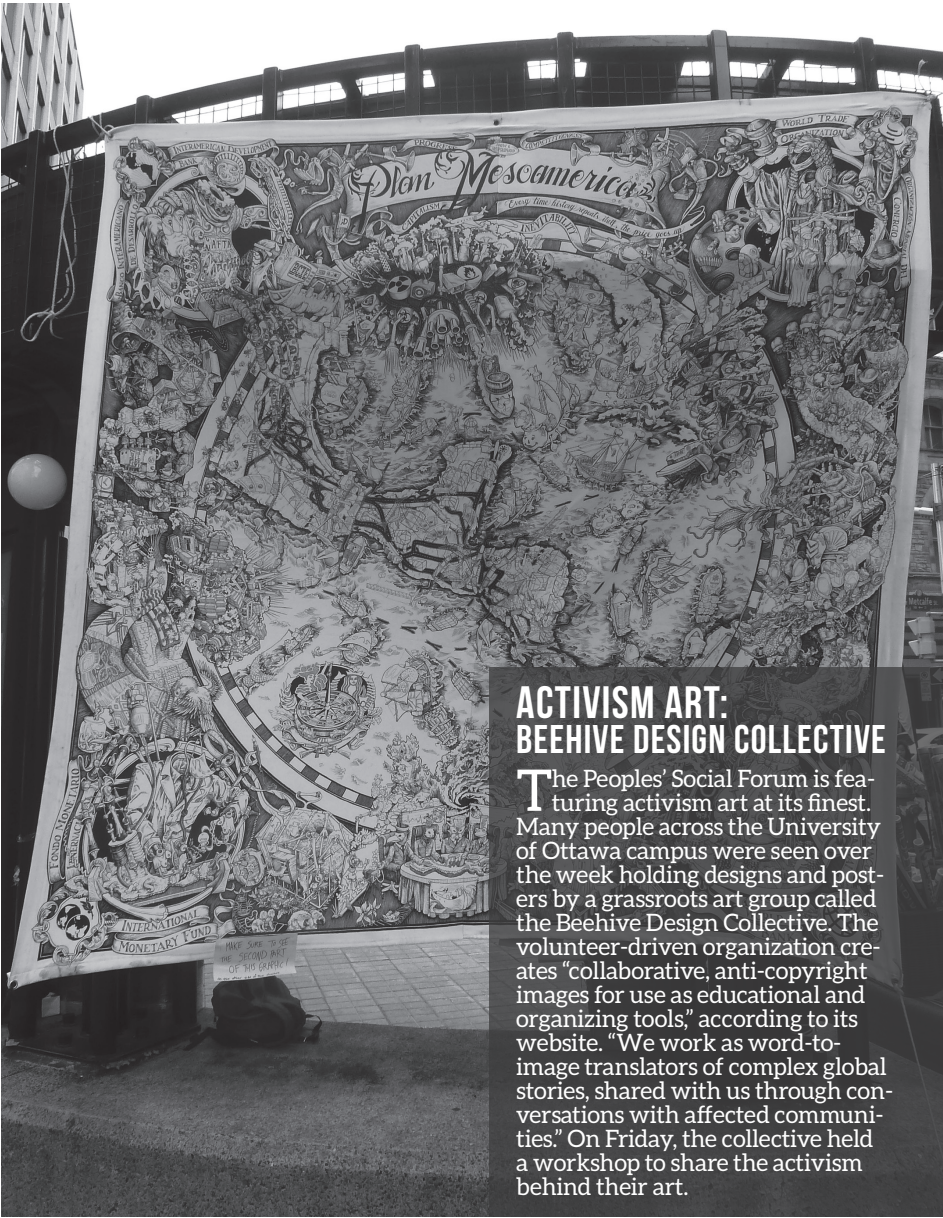
## WORKING TOGETHER TO ORGANIZE FOR JUSTICE

By Miriam Katawazi

ACORN Canada hosted a workshop at the Peoples' Social Forum (PSF), entitled *Organizing for Justice*, focusing on how to gather momentum and organize for local and national justice issues. ACORN Canada is an independent national organization of low- and moderate-income families with over 59,000 members fighting for economic and social justice.

The workshop was steered by Jill O'Reilly, Head Organizer of ACORN's Ottawa chapter, and Judy Duncan, Head Organizer of ACORN Canada. O'Reilly and Duncan taught attendants how to effectively create sustainable and momentous campaigns. O'Reilly gave the audience a demonstration on how to knock on doors and communicate in a dynamic, engaging way. "We've spent a lot of time using our phones and knocking on doors, talking to people. It's not easy to meet your goals. A lot of work and effort is needed," she added.

It is vital that communities build alliances between one another, said O'Reilly. Workshop attendant Yolanda McClean said that ACORN's workshop was not originally on her radar. At the end of the day, however, she said she chose to attend because she wanted to learn more about how to organize people and share her own experiences organizing. "I put in my mind that I would attend workshops about something outside of my box," McClean said. "But by the end of the day, I decided that I'm going to do something I'm comfortable with and maybe I can add some input to the discussion." "The most important things I learned at this workshop were about organizing, targeting, creating actions and all the [other] things that are important in getting people involved," she said. She added: "More importantly, I learned more about how communities and unions can work together to make these organizing campaigns really work on the ground."



### ACTIVISM ART: BEEHIVE DESIGN COLLECTIVE

The Peoples' Social Forum is featuring activism art at its finest. Many people across the University of Ottawa campus were seen over the week holding designs and posters by a grassroots art group called the Beehive Design Collective. The volunteer-driven organization creates "collaborative, anti-copyright images for use as educational and organizing tools," according to its website. "We work as word-to-image translators of complex global stories, shared with us through conversations with affected communities." On Friday, the collective held a workshop to share the activism behind their art.

### The Leveller

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