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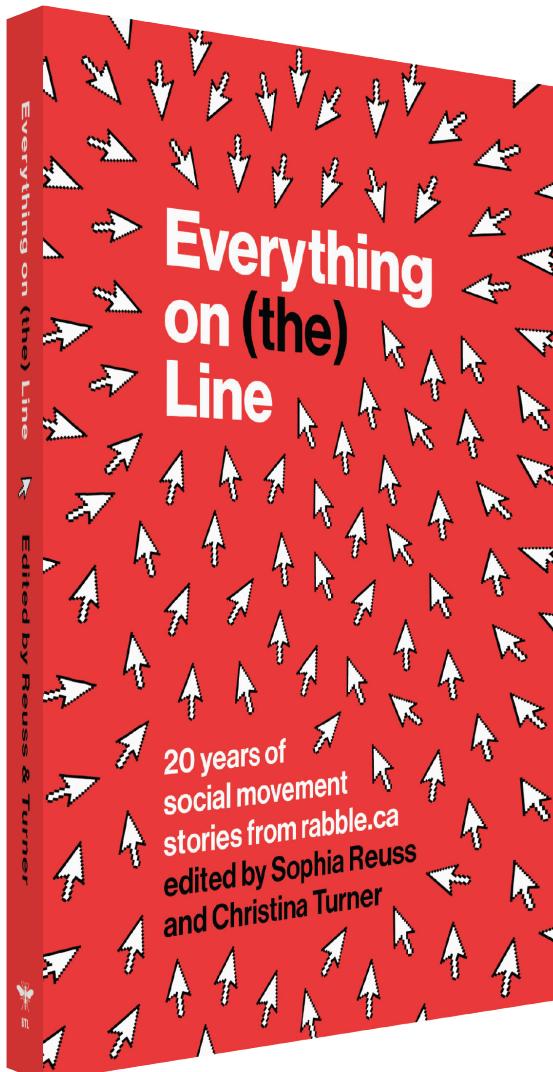


"Consider this book a thorn in the side of complacency."

**WAYNE MACPHAIL**, former director of Southam InfoLab and founder of the rabble.ca podcast network

"This collection is both a history of recent social movements in Canada and the story of how rabble.ca, one of the country's earliest online media startups, navigated life on the internet through twenty years of tumultuous change."

**APRIL LINDGREN**, Professor and Velma Rogers Research Chair, Ryerson School of Journalism



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Or by mail:

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"You may get large amounts of funding here and there, but in the end, capital will never work to undermine capital. So, the way to fund a strong, independent, progressive media is through the grassroots, one person, one member at a time." - Noam Chomsky

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# WELCOME

## LETTER FROM PUBLISHER

Dear readers,

Those of us who work in independent media dedicate our careers to this vocation because we know whole sectors of Canadian life are suppressed, ignored or neglected by the mainstream media. Rarely is there unbiased reporting on labour and social issues.

*rabble.ca*'s non-profit journalism has proudly maintained a focus on labour and worker rights, grassroots activism, and a progressive analysis of national politics, for two decades. Launched April 18, 2001, on the eve of the Summit of the Americas, we've been at the frontlines of grassroots journalism since that time. At 20, we look back at being at the forefront of an extraordinary history of the evolution of Canadian online journalism. Always doing so without a paywall.

The last year has been one like no other. Over the past months, *rabble* has focused on sharing critical information and analysis about the pandemic, while telling stories about the spectrum of essential workers through Chelsea Nash's labour journalism. We've amplified the work of grassroots activists across the country through our "rabble rousers to watch" series, curated by our Activist Toolkit editor, Maya Bhullar. Jack Layton Journalism for Change writer Lidia Abraha last summer dug into the role of policing in Black communities. Award-winning federal politics reporter Karl Nerenberg shared incisive analysis of the happenings on Parliament Hill. We've kept our focus on the future of the planet, with our series Climate Hope in the Time of Pandemic, and in our upcoming Courage My Friends podcast series coordinated by Victoria Fenner with the Tommy Douglas Institute. And of course, babbler's have been busy dissecting the news on *babble*, *rabble*'s discussion board, moderated by Meg Borthwick.

As we look ahead, Canada's pandemic recovery must be inclusive, forward-looking, and transformative. It's one thing to "build back better," as many levels of government say they will do. But for whom are they building? How transformative are they really willing to be?

"Building back" onto systems that are not working is simply building on failure. We need to pivot. That's why at *rabble.ca*, we're focused on what it means to build forward — not back. You'll find this analysis in our journalism, among our roster of Canada's best opinion writers, and in our live "Off the Hill" current politics panels", hosted by Libby Davies and Robin Browne, with regular panelists including Winnipeg Centre MP Leah Gazan, Paul Taylor — and special guests such as Pam Palmater, Jim Stanford, and David MacDonald.

We are focused on holding governments accountable for the systems that have failed us, and featuring the stories of activists and changemakers who are fighting for that accountability, whether they speak to a feminist analysis of economic recovery; to genuine reconciliation with Indigenous peoples that is centered in Land Back; and to why the Black Lives Matter movement and calls for defunding the police are a central component of dismantling systemic racism, anti-Black racism, and patriarchy.

The challenge to transform organizations into anti-racist ones — not simply "not racist" — was raised to all sectors of society, including to the media. 2020 launched a time of stock-taking that includes community and independent media. As an organization that incorporates both a traditional, editor-directed journalism project, together with a community journalism model that creates space for volunteer bloggers and podcasters, we've looked inward at how our editors spend our journalism resources, and how we create and manage community spaces on the site. Last June, we responded to the call to action by the Canadian Association of Black Journalists and the Canadian Journalists of

Colour to address the systemic racism that is pervasive — part of the fabric of capitalism and Canadian society. This vital work has been taken on by many community and media grassroots organizations, and for rabble has included taking on regular equity audits of our content, beginning in spring 2020, to better understand not just who is producing content and what issues are covered, but where specifically our editors are investing resources. We've been reviewing our internal systems, including our website architecture and promotion strategies.

This is what media democracy is made of. This is why we need *rabble.ca*'s independent media.

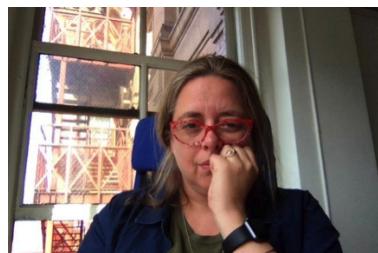
*rabble.ca*'s exceptional writers and multimedia contributors bring powerful and innovative voices to the site. *rabble.ca* exists because of people — writers, video and podcast contributors, videographers, donors, readers and workers — who share a vision of what an independent media can and should be, and what the future is for media democracy in Canada. Our staff work daily to bring the best in progressive coverage to Canada.

Over the coming months you will see new faces at *rabble*, including new columnists like Evelyn Lazare and Chuka Ejeckam, while we continue to share some of the most powerful voices you need to hear in Canada -- from Monia Mazigh, to Duncan Cameron, to Pam Palmater, to David Climenhaga, and so many more. We have big plans in the works to bring and share coverage with you in vital and creative ways.

*rabble.ca* continues to grow and push the boundaries of online media. As we move further into our 20th year, we have extraordinary memories and successes to look back on, as well as exciting times and challenges ahead. In a time of transition, we are grateful and honoured to have you, all of our readers and financial supporters. You prove time and time again, with your support, that independent and reader-funded media is a sustainable model.

In solidarity,

*Kim Elliott*



Kim Elliott

# NEWS, FEATURES & COLUMNS

2020! What a year. Like all independent media outlets, we had our work cut out for us in keeping up with the critical moments of everyday life, on a shoe-string budget. But we think we fared well! *rabble*'s team works collaboratively, and pulled together to support some of the best coverage of workers' stories, of grassroots activism, and of federal politics — as you will see in the coming pages. We even introduced two new columnists: Chuka Ejeckam and Evelyn Lazare. Welcome to our team of insightful thinkers that include Monia Mazigh, Duncan Cameron, Matthew Behrens, Lois Ross, June Chua and the multi-author, award-winning, Pro Bono column by the team at Iler Campbell LLP!

2020 news coverage began with all eyes on Wet'suwet'en, as RCMP officers launched a raid against Indigenous land defenders in Wet'suwet'en territory. Solidarity movements came out in droves all over the country to show their support for the land defenders. And they haven't stopped.

Just a few weeks later, by the time the WHO determined COVID-19 to be the cause of a worldwide pandemic on March 11, everything changed for every single one of us. We pivoted our plans for the year to ensure we had up-to-date COVID-19 commentary and coverage; the kind of analysis no one was getting from mainstream media. Our coverage contained biting takes on cuts for a public medical lab that could have helped to fight the pandemic in Canada; the expressions of solidarity and mutual aid that emerged in the wake of the crisis; how Covid-19 transcends identity politics, social distancing exacerbating the digital divide; and Covid-19 reveals a divided country. In addition, our analysis looked at the housing crisis, both Canada and world-wide, and how COVID-19 should be an opportunity to ensure that the new normal in future years includes housing for all.

Our major series plan for 2020 was to focus on climate hope and climate grief — to address the generational anxiety caused by the urgency of the climate crisis, and our governments' slow response. When the pandemic was announced we adapted our series to become Climate Hope in the Time of Pandemic. This series tackled tactics for activists struggling with the emotional fallout of climate grief and burn-out, and how we can plant hope for the future. Our series intertwined with Earth Day, and our 2020 Vegan Challenge, which encouraged people to give up animal products for a week, considering the ethical and environmental impacts.

Over the year we published a climate series of over 20 pieces, including:

- Rejecting the death instinct in a pandemic age by Matthew Behrens, which covered issues of activism, mutual aid; gendered violence; arms trade; and Wet'suwet'en.
- Could the shocks from COVID-19 lead to a new food system? by Lois Ross.
- After this Earth Day, let's never go back to normal by Joel Harden.
- COVID-19 an opportunity to build a low-emission economy by Monia Mazigh.
- Human interventions in the environment as art experience by June Chua.
- It's time to repurpose dying retail spaces for community housing by Duncan Cameron.

- [\*\*Bailing out on the old normal\*\*](#) by Penney Kome, a piece that addressed the economy, the Green New Deal and renewable energy.
- [\*\*Will there be a silver lining to this pandemic?\*\*](#) by Jim Harding looked at bio-diversity and greenhouse gases.
- [\*\*Twenty-first century ‘eco-grief’ is nothing new for the world’s underprivileged\*\*](#) by Khadijah Kanji.
- [\*\*After the COVID-19 pandemic, older generations should reflect on the need for climate action\*\*](#) by Bill Blaikie.
- [\*\*Politics after the pandemic:\*\*](#) can good follow bad? by Duncan Cameron.

And finally we were proud to carry one of the final pieces by legendary journalist and rabble contributor Ed Finn, who passed away at the age of 93 in December 2020: [\*\*As pandemic restrictions ease, Canada should replace its capitalist system with a Scandinavian-style alternative.\*\*](#)

Our focus throughout this pandemic has been on how we can build forward — not build back systems of inequality founded in colonialism, patriarchy and white supremacy — as [\*\*Pam Palmater\*\*](#) summarized in coverage of the RCMP. Building forward means elevating the social supports and calls for mutual solidarity that emerged during the pandemic into real progressive labour and social policies.

After the unconscionable murder of George Floyd in the U.S by police officer Derek Chauvin (since convicted), global movements emerged declaring once and for all that #BlackLivesMatter and no one is backing down on this inalienable truth.

As calls to [\*\*defund the police\*\*](#) were finally given [\*\*credence\*\*](#), we witnessed a spectacular movement, led by Black activists in the US [\*\*and Canada\*\*](#), saying that is enough is enough when it comes to police violence, and the state of policing. Jack Layton Journalism for Change writer [\*\*Lidia Abraha\*\*](#) joined rabble.ca at the beginning of May with the intent to “focus on some of the issues most urgently affecting racialized and marginalized communities, notably racism in the criminal justice and policing system.” Her inaugural piece would be on how the death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet mobilizes thousands in Toronto.

Social movements were the catalyst that willed rabble into being, and 20 years later, we continue to provide a space to speak truth to power and behave as a platform for struggles for social justice.



# NEWS CONTRIBUTORS, BLOGGERS, COLUMNISTS

BLOGS	COLUMNISTS	NEWS
Brent Patterson	Amy Goodman, Denis Moynihan	Maya Bhullar
David Climenhaga	Bill Blaikie	Tania Ehret
David J Climenhaga	Brian Iler, Pro Bono	Alexandra Valahu
David Suzuki	Celia Chandler, Pro Bono	Anika Nykanen
Dennis Gruending	Claudia Pedrero, Pro Bono	Anna Bianca Roach
Doreen Nicoll	Duncan Cameron	Barâa Arar
Ed Finn	Edward M. Hyland, Pro Bono	Chelsea Nash
Ed Finn, Brian Arden	Erin Knight, Digital Freedom Update	Christina Turner
Emma Lui	Jim Stanford	Evelyn L. Forget
Gordon Laxer	Joyce Arthur	Jenny Ferguson
John Gordon Miller	June Chua	Jessica Rose
Judy Rebick	Karly Wilson, Pro Bono	Karl Nerenberg
Karen Rodman	Linda McQuaig	Lauren Scott
Kim Elliott	Lois Ross	Lidia Abraha
Lizanne Foster	Matt Hatfield, Digital Freedom Update	Marites N. Sison
Matthew Adams	Matthew Behrens	Meg Borthwick
Ole Hendrickson	Pam Palmater	Nathaniel G. Moore
Penney Kome	Michael Hackl, Pro Bono	Sarah Kurchak
Phillip Dwight Morgan	Monia Mazigh	Scott Costen
Robert Hackett	Pro Bono, Michael Hackl	Silvia Argentina Arauz
Thomas Woodley	Rick Salutin	Steven Heighton
Trish Hennessy	Rodrigo Samayoa, Digital Freedom Update	Zaid Noorsumar
	Safia Lakhani, Pro Bono	
	Victoria Henry, Digital Freedom Update	

## THE VIEWS EXPRESSED

Aaron Lakoff	Fernando Arce	Larry Haiven	Reem Bahdi
Abdul Nakua	Fiona Whittington-Walsh	Lesley Wood	Rick Arnold
Adam R. Houston	Food Secure Canada	Liette Gilbert, Anna Zalik	Robert Sweeny
Alfredo Barahona	Francis Carbonu	Lisa Lacoste	Robin Browne
Amanda Harvey-Sanchez	Gary Engler	Lorenzo Vargas	Robin Tress
Amy Tan	Greg Dwulit	Mark Hancock	Sandeep Prasad, Alba Onofrio
Archana Rampure	Heather Stewart	Mark Nykanen, Howard Breen	Sara Speicher
Beric German	Hisham Shokr, Nisha Kansal, Arnav Agarwal	Martha Friendly, Morna Ballantyne, Lynell Anderson	Shama Naqshbandi
Beth Lorimer	Jackie Hansen	Matthew Hayes	Shane Martínez
Bianca Mugyenyi	Jade Guthrie	Jan Malek	Shanese Steele
Bob Gallagher	Janet Malek	Mazdak Gharibnavaz	Sheryl Nestel
Bonnie Gostola	Jane Thirikwa	Meenakshi Mannoe, Viveca Ellis	Sid Shniad
Bruce Campbell	Jason Kunin	Mehdi Rizvi	Stacey Hannem, Christopher J. Schneider
Canadian Foreign Policy Institute	Jeff Shantz	Melissa Johnston	Stacey Wakelin
Cathy Crowe	Jennie-Laure Sully	Michelle Weinroth	Stefan Christoff
Chi Nguyen	Jim Harding	Naomi Lightman, Ted McCoy	Stepan Wood
Christopher J. Schneider	Joe Masoodi	Neela Hassan	Sunera Thobani
Chrystal Désilets, Gabriela Jiménez, Beth Lorimer	Joel Harden	Nicholas Erwin-Longstaff	Susan O'Donnell
Chuka Ejeckam	Jordan Grimsley	Olivia De Brabandere	Svend Robinson, Robert Hackett, Tom Sandborn
Daphna Levit	Justin Mohammed	Paul Salvatori	Tina S. Beier
Dariusz Dziewanski	Karri Munn-Venn, Brad Wassink	Paul Taylor	Toby Sanger
David Doorey	Kate Klein	Philip Lee	Tracy Glynn
David Kattenburg	Keira Kang	Pierrot Ross-Tremblay, Nawel Hamidi, Colin Samson	Vincent Collins
David McDonald	Ken Neumann	Raluca Bejan	Vivian Lee
David Taub Bancroft	Ken Stone	Rayne Fisher-Quann	Wyatt James Schierman
Emily Williams	Ken Theobald	Reakash Walters, Rachel Zellars	Yafet Tewelde
Eric Strikwerda	Khadijah Kanji	Reakah Walters, Rachel Zellars	Yves Engler
Ernie Lightman	Kit Dobson		
Farah Shroff	Krystalline Kraus		

## JOURNALISM FOR CHANGE FELLOWSHIP

The Jack Layton Journalism for Change Fellowship was created in 2017 to honour the memory of the NDP leader. In 2011, Canada lost a great social justice champion. Layton inspired people by example, demonstrating that working together for social and economic justice is possible and achievable. The fellowship supports emerging writers and journalists who are passionate and engaged in developing unique voices in social change reporting. The fellowship is a one-of-a-kind opportunity for strengthening media democracy in Canada, while affording excellent mentorship and growth for new voices in our community.

*rabble.ca* has been fortuitous in its roster of fellows, beginning with Phillip Dwight Morgan, a Toronto-based journalist, poet and researcher. During his time at *rabble* Phillip was instrumental in getting to the heart of issues, in particular, systemic racial and economic inequality in Toronto. **Olivia Robinson** 2019's fellowship recipient, curated a series on the importance of public libraries in furthering social justice. The series documented how libraries across Canada are re-imagining these public spaces and contributing in new and innovative ways to improve the social fabric of their communities.

Following this trend of exceptional young journalists, 2020's Fellow was freelance Toronto journalist, Lidia Abraha. Her contributions focused on some of the issues most urgently affecting racialized and marginalized communities, notably racism in the criminal justice and policing system, such as how black youth are disproportionately criminalized.

"This fellowship provides the unique opportunity for young journalists to take a critical lens on social justice issues. As a young woman of colour, I rarely find room for these stories in mainstream media. Racism in the criminal justice system is a complex issue that deserves thorough research and reporting. As the 2020 fellow, I look forward to further exploring these issues, while shining a light on how Black Canadians in conflict with the law are treated in our criminal justice system," says Abraha.

Read her series:



For more information about how to support the fellowship, please see:  
<https://rabble.ca/about/JournalismForChange>

[\*\*Death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet mobilizes thousands in Toronto\*\*](#)

[\*\*Toronto community advocates resist more police surveillance\*\*](#)

[\*\*Defunding the police is only the first step to abolition\*\*](#)

[\*\*Racial data gaps in the criminal justice system: Where do we start?\*\*](#)

[\*\*Police violence is a public health crisis, so why aren't there health-based solutions?\*\*](#)

[\*\*How do Black youth find their voice in the criminal justice system?\*\*](#)

# PARLIAMENTARY REPORTER

## NATIONAL POLITICAL REPORTING AND ANALYSIS ON RABBLE.CA IN 2020

Political coverage on rabble in 2020 was, like everything else in Canada, divided into two periods: pre-pandemic and after the pandemic began.

For rabble's parliamentary reporter, Karl Nerenberg, the year started with a story headlined "Do not reduce the lessons of Auschwitz to pious clichés". It dealt with an Ottawa event commemorating the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the largest Nazi death camp, where 1.1 million people, most of them Jews, were murdered.

Next, rabble reported on a far-reaching report from the special federal advisory group on broadcasting and telecommunications. Key (and much contested) recommendations of that document aim to guarantee Canadian news and other content on the internet.

This was followed by the Wet'suwet'en crisis in northern British Columbia. Indigenous peoples resisted a planned pipeline through their territory. The reverberations of that confrontation, which included solidarity actions in Ontario, consumed rabble's attention for several weeks.

By mid-March, COVID-19 loomed large. rabble's political reporter's first piece on the pandemic dealt with the need to protect the most vulnerable, especially First Nations.

From that point on, the politics of the pandemic became a constant preoccupation for rabble. There were many national political stories on COVID-19 which dealt with:

- pandemic-related income supports
- the vast contrast between U.S. and Canadian approaches to the pandemic
- guaranteed paid sick leave
- the impact on women
- the safety of schools

Pandemic coverage took a short break when the WE charity scandal hit in July. rabble's political reporter gave context to that complex mess. It started when the Trudeau Liberals awarded the politically connected WE organization a sole-source contract for hundreds of millions of dollars to manage a youth volunteer program.

rabble's political reporting and analysis over this period also examined the policy options for a post-pandemic world.

rabble provided accounts of the competing visions of free-market fundamentalists such as former prime minister Stephen Harper and progressives such as economist Jim Stanford. Among the major policy initiatives some proposed for Canada were a universal drug plan and a wealth tax. NDP's Peter Julian championed those and rabble gave them their full due.

Indigenous affairs took centre stage again in October, with a series of violent attacks on lobster fishers from the Mi'kmaq First Nation of Sipekne'katik' in Nova Scotia. rabble's coverage gave historic context to readers' understanding of that crisis.

For the rest of the year, rabble continued to cover and analyze the political and policy responses to COVID-19, and also reported on the importance of the 2020 U.S. election for Canada.

The year ended on a lighter note when Karl gave tips on what to watch on internet streaming services. The list included lesser-known Canadian options, and mega-hits such as The Crown.

rabble set the record straight on The Crown's portrayal of the 1985 Commonwealth conference, which imposed sanctions on the Apartheid South Africa. The British series failed to mention Canada's central role in that decision, inaccurately giving all credit to Queen Elizabeth.

Throughout the year, Karl was part of rabble's national politics live video panel. Off The Hill — a thought-provoking panel discussion on current issues of national significance from a progressive and critically applied perspective not covered in the mainstream media. Discussions centered on impacts of politics and policy on people and mobilizing to bring about progressive change.

## LABOUR BEAT REPORTING

This year the labour beat was all about how workers were navigating the pandemic.

Even before COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, our 2019-20 labour beat reporter, Zaid Noorsumar, carried on with his focus on the alarming concerns of working conditions in long-term care facilities. Canada's failure to protect those who live in care facilities would become one of the most revealing and disturbing stories to emerge in the pandemic.

From teachers, to food couriers, to migrant workers and grocery workers, here are some of the stories that contributed to the ongoing discussion about the many workers we call heroes. These are people governments and employers turned their backs on when they needed support most.

- In May, grocery stores across the country implemented a temporary \$2/hour wage increase for workers. The measure was criticized for being revoked so soon, as workers continued to put their health and safety at risk by working on the pandemic's front lines. rabble labour reporter Chelsea Nash first reported that the temporary wage increase would end on June 13. <https://rabble.ca/news/2020/05/loblaw-extends-temporary-pay-increase-june-13-workers-say-its-not-long-enough>
- Loblaw workers in Newfoundland would later vote to strike over the revoked \$2 wage increase, in addition to other complaints over the company's elimination of full-time jobs and low wages. The workers would be on strike for two months — during which time their pickets were broken up by police. Unfortunately the strike didn't win them much at the bargaining table, as Loblaw waited out its workers.

- Over the summer, poor and abusive treatment of migrant agricultural workers by their employers during lockdown came to light, with Justicia for Migrant Workers organizer Jade Guthrie writing about a leaked video showing workers sleeping on pallets in a crowded warehouse. Labour reporter Chelsea Nash later interviewed Guthrie and Chris Ramsaroop of J4MW about the importance of migrant workers having access to permanent residency status to ensure their rights. Later, Nash also covered the food crisis that migrant agricultural workers were experiencing.
- In September, the focus of the labour beat turned to education workers who were agonizing about the reopening of public schools during an ongoing pandemic. Chelsea Nash's story on the overworking and understaffing of school custodians was picked up by Global 640 radio. As well, she shone a light on the precarious situation facing Adult Day School teachers in Toronto, who didn't know if they had a job to go back to until one business day before the semester was supposed to begin.
- 2020 was a big year for gig workers, as Foodora workers successfully organized and certified a union. Gig work was a focus of labour reporting at rabble.ca, particularly given the precarious conditions and low pay gig workers were expected to work under during the pandemic. Chelsea Nash covered the inside story of the Foodora union drive, the successful certification, and the \$3.46M settlement that Foodora workers were awarded after Foodora pulled its operations out of the country after the Ontario Labour Board ruled in favour of the workers.
- One more ongoing conversation in the Canadian Labour movement this year was the role of police unions. Should they even be included in the Labour movement? Chelsea Nash wrote a historical breakdown of how police unions operate, their close ties to conservative politicians, and their shady tactics to protect their "workers" at all costs.

## GRAB A CUP OF TEA AND RELAX IN OUR BOOK LOUNGE

Welcome to the Book Lounge, where the issues are hot but the takes are thoughtful!

Offerings in 2019 from rabble's Book Lounge include a plethora of reviews, such as of Vivek Shraya's delving into the subtweet and being vulnerable on the internet, a look at James Wilt and how big tech won't save our transit woes, Between the Line's organizing in a time of sickness, Billy Ray Belcourt's insight into queer love in the prairies, and so much more!

rabble's book lounge is not limited to reviews! We also go further into the work of esteemed authors and invite writers for interviews. In the interview How to Tear Down The House, Julie S. Lalonde speaks powerfully about her newly released audio book, Resilience is Futile: The Life and Death and Life of Julie Lalonde, exclusively at rabble.

The Book Lounge is always taking pitches for reviews and essays on progressive books. To pitch a story, please email [editor@rabble.ca](mailto:editor@rabble.ca)



# YOU WON'T BELIEVE OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

On Facebook, we have a dedicated audience of 27,000 combined fans and group members who regularly engage with our content and help it go viral.

**One such story** was labour reporter Chelsea Nash's October report that a long-term care home in Bowmanville, Ontario, was laying off 60 unionized workers only to rehire their positions with contract workers. That story garnered 1,064 reactions and reached nearly 10,500 people on Facebook.

On Twitter, rabble keeps up with major Canadian news competitors with nearly 43,000 followers. Not only are we part of the conversation, but we are driving it.

On February 10, freelance journalist Anna Bianca Roach was on scene when Crown-Indigenous Relations minister Carolyn Bennett's office was occupied by 20 youth who organized a sit-in to support the Wet'suwet'en First Nation as it protested a pipeline being constructed through its traditional territory. **A tweet** detailing that sit-in was our most shared of 2020, being retweeted 178 times and receiving 30,000 impressions.

On Instagram, @rabbleca has grown more than ever this year into a hub for the rabble community. We share news, feature stories, and post our book reviews to our 1,600 (and growing!) followers.

Check out [our Instagram page](#) to see unique profiles of rabble rousers to watch, catch up on the latest leftist books, and stay up to date on rabble news, events, and more. Our **most-liked post** on Instagram this year was a critical analysis of the neo-liberalism in Bell's corporatized "Let's Talk" day for mental health.

In an increasingly crowded news market, real clout in the social media sphere is absolutely essential. We are fortunate to have the support of great community minds and influencers, artists, activists and commentators alike.

**Top Follower** followed by 3.95M people



**Greta Thunberg**

@GretaThunberg

17 year old climate and environmental activist with Asperger's [#climatestrike #fridaysforfuture](#)

At rabble, we know there's more than one way to read the news. Not only do we ensure our social media feeds are topped up with the very best in progressive journalism, we also deliver general daily and weekly newsletters syndicating pressing stories and commentary directly from our site to your inbox.

Credit: screenshot rabble.ca twitter page

# JOURNALISM IN THE COMMUNITY

2020 led us to move our events indoors and virtual this year. With 20 years of experience in online media, we had a couple tricks up our sleeves.

Since its very inception in 2001 in Quebec City, rabble has been putting its money where its mouth is. We pay special attention to grassroots protest and social movements in our journalism — often because we're already there.

Our outreach team is an indispensable component of our work, as we seek to organize critical workshops and panels, and ensure that Canada's best radical artists and storytellers find audiences for their work. We continue to emphasize the importance of solidarity among social movement organizations through partnerships, including as media sponsors of Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion's on-going anti-racism conference which ran through 2020.. In lieu of an in-person conference they held virtual anti-racism seminars throughout the year, with speakers such as Desmond Cole and Lynn Ly. We supported our new friends at the Canadian Foreign Policy Institute with their event on Canada's silence on India's colonization of Kashmir.

We were delighted to work directly with the Canadian Foreign Policy Institute on the Green Party of Canada Leadership debate. **This event** drew over 500 people and was hosted by rabble founder, Judy Rebick, on Sept 10, 2020.

To get readers engaged as we all stayed home, we brought back our #Veganchallenge, a feature where staff, volunteers, readers, and viewers go vegan to raise awareness of climate justice and animal rights for one week to coincide with Earth Day. In 2020, we partnered with the Health Save Movement in Toronto. Readers were happy to use their time at home trying out new recipes and exchanging their experiences online!



This monthly production features interesting and topical issues from a left perspective not covered in the mainstream media. Discussions are centred on impacts on people, mobilization, and bringing about progressive change. To view the full roster of episodes please visit: <https://rabble.ca/rabbletv>

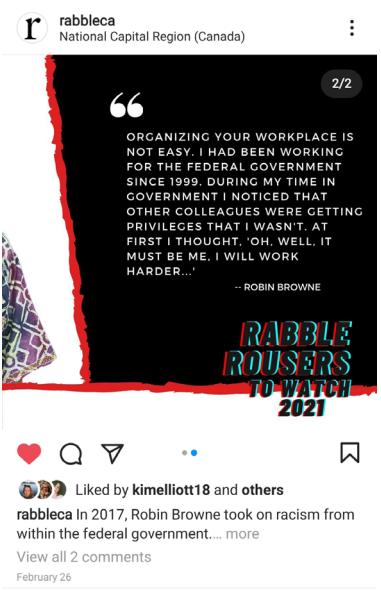
# ACTIVIST TOOLKIT

Despite the difficulties of 2020, it was a year of activism. [Toronto pioneered what became a global caremongering movement](#), when activists across Canada demanded [better economic and social supports](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was a year when the pan-national devastation felt following George Floyd's murder in the US led to the call to defund police becoming mainstream in Canada.

The Lynn Williams Activist Toolkit, launched in 2013 and coordinated by Maya Bhullar since 2015, amplifies what organizers are doing. Our goal is to help activists share, discuss and create tools for organizing from the ground up. Lynn Williams was a labour organizer, activist and the first Canadian to become international president of the United Steelworkers Union. The toolkit reflects Williams' dedicated work as a lifelong activist, providing organizers and communities with access to success stories, guides, workshop outlines, petitions, open source software, copy-left images, activist histories and more.

As conversations about police violence grew around the country, the Activist Toolkit took on the role of researcher. The Toolkit put together [a province by province review of police oversight mechanisms](#), raised an alarm about [white supremacists and their relationship with police forces](#), and grappled with the role of labour and progressives in [managing the influence of police unions](#).

At the end of 2020, we launched rabble rousers to watch, asking the rabble.ca community to nominate local and community activists who are building change on the grassroots. This project brought together our social media promotions editor who published [Instagram profiles](#) of rabblerousers, our podcaster, and the Activist Toolkit. Together we have [interviewed activists](#) from nearly every province. Stay tuned for more about this wonderful project because this is what rabble was built for, to support activism and build.



# EAR IN REVIEW

## -THE RABBLE PODCAST NETWORK

A lot has changed in the world of podcasting since rabble first started podcasting in 2005.

We were one of the first places in Canada where people could post their podcasts. That's why we started the rabble podcast network — distribution was cumbersome and difficult. rabble created an online interface to make it easy to get podcasts from a person's computer to the internet, and server space to store the podcasts. It was an important contribution to the development of the podcast space online in those early days.

Today, there are lots of ways for podcasters to get their shows to their listeners easily. So we're changing the concept of "network". We are happy to have fostered the growth of dozens of podcast series in our 16 years of podcasting. We said goodbye this past year to Talking Radical Radio, The Hum and Face2Face, our remaining network podcasts. They've got their own RSS feeds, their own distribution and they just don't need us anymore. We bid a fond farewell to them and are happy that we were able to help them launch.

RadioLabour has an exclusive version of Labour News specifically for Canada hosted on rabble.ca. Some of the highlights from the podcasts including:

- [Saving Alberta's advanced education from privatization](#)
- [Ontario won't fund the fight to save kids from COVID-19](#)
- [Make Air Canada the people's airline again](#)
- [How a little newspaper started labour journalism in Canada](#)
- [21,000 health-care workers infected with COVID-19](#)



presented by rabble.ca

In late 2020 the focus of rabble radio shifted to special time-limited podcast series. In December we hosted a special series called [My Art Wears a Mask](#), consisting of interviews with young artists as they talk about how the pandemic has affected their art, their livelihoods and their spirits.

In spring 2021, rabble is partnering with the Tommy Douglas Institute on a six-part series in lieu of their annual May conference, which can't happen because of the pandemic. It is shaping up to be a great series called [Courage My Friends](#).

# JOIN THE CONVERSATION — BABBLE!

2020 was the year that a much-needed regime change in Washington became a reality welcomed by many, and a call to sedition for others. George Floyd was murdered by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin, captured on the phone of Darnella Frazier, which then went viral around the globe. Here are some threads that highlight what it was like to be a progressive in lockdown:

Started in January of 2020 the thread [Coronavirus: what Canadians need to know](#) had progressives discussing and disseminating evolving information about COVID-19. It would be months before the full extent and impact of the pandemic would be widely understood. This thread has consistently been on the Active Topics front page for well over a year.

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was murdered by police in Minneapolis. It was recorded by 17-year-old Darnella Frazier on her phone, with the young Black woman facing threats from police as she recorded. She later received many death threats and racist abuse from white supremacists on social media. The slow, agonizing death of Floyd went viral, resulting in a resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement, a broad-based Defund Police movement, and community pressure that resulted in Derek Chauvin being charged with murder. He was recently convicted on three counts. The issue of police reform in the wake of Floyd's murder surfaces in [this babble thread](#).

And Joe Biden became president-elect in November 2020, narrowly beating out Donald Trump's bid for re-election. In [The Biden administration](#) babblers discussed the election, the Capitol riot and, most importantly, the opening policy volleys of Biden's early days.

2021 is shaping up to be another important year as we grapple with vaccinations, poor government pandemic response, and how the conviction of Derek Chauvin can be translated into ongoing action on brutal systemic racism in policing and the inherent racism in society that has allowed it to continue for so long.



Image by [Gerd Altmann](#)

# RABBLE TV

rabbleTV shares must-see video, our live video panels, Off the Hill and, of course, the latest from Not Rex Murphy video columnist Humberto Da Silva.

**OFF THE HILL** is a thought-provoking panel discussion on current issues of national significance, from a progressive and critically applied perspective not covered in the mainstream media. Discussions are centered on impacts of politics and policy on people in real life, and the need to mobilize to bring about progressive change.

Launched in the autumn 2019, the panel had a chance to find its feet before moving to Zoom during the pandemic. The fast-moving panel is moderated by Libby Davies, former NDP deputy leader and author, who was joined in 2020 by Ottawa-based blogger and activist Robin Browne. Regular panelists Karl Nerenberg, Winnipeg Centre MP Leah Gazan and FoodShare ED Paul Taylor were joined by special guests, including Pam Palmater, Jim Stanford, David MacDonald and Sheila Block.

In 2020, Not Rex Murphy included regular contributor Humberto DaSilva-shared stories, including about the brutal [death of animal rights activist Regan Russell](#), and a report of how [Allies gathered in solidarity with Six Nations land defenders in Caledonia, Ontario](#). Guest contributors included Anna Jessup, who ranted on how [Being pro-Palestine ain't antisemitic](#).

In Best-of-the-net, rabble gathered important videos from across the web, including [Coronavirus capitalism -- and how to beat it](#) from the Intercept.

As part of our in-house [Amplify event services](#), we streamed [Canada's place in the world: Green Party of Canada leadership debate](#).

At the end of 2020, rabble was given a Local Journalism Initiative grant through the Canadian Association of Community Journalists. We were delighted to welcome Jase Tanner to the team over winter 2020, including the addition of Emma Gregory in the spring of 2021.



# 20 YEARS OF RABBLE!

As we prepare this report, rabble has turned 20 years old! As our founders can likely attest, keeping this grassroots media project afloat for two decades and counting is a victory they couldn't have predicted on April 18, 2001.

Although we cannot celebrate this momentous occasion together in person, you know that there will be many more events when we do meet again.

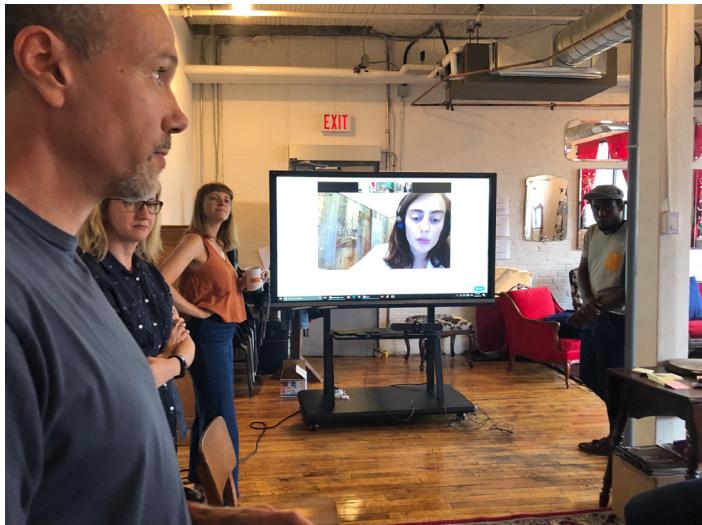
So what is to come in 2021? Our book!

***Everything on (the) line: 20 years of Social Movement Stories from rabble.ca*** was released in April 2021. This long-anticipated book, published by Between the Lines Publishing, outlines 20 years of activist struggles and reporting. It guides readers deftly through rabble's archives, combining critical analysis with new essays from celebrated activists and writers.

Also keep your eyes peeled for our new website coming this Fall! Thanks to the support of the Canada Heritage Grant, we finally have the funding to update our website, with the opportunity to meet industry standards, delivering our news to you with a more accessible navigation system and an easier-to-use platform. We are switching to a WordPress model and couldn't be more excited!

rabble will also finally have the opportunity to effectively archive 20 years of content. That's a large online library that covers the history and breadth of two decades of progressive activism!

Thank you for being with us on this journey!



# FINANCIAL REFLECTIONS: COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED MEDIA

Like community radio and TV, community online news sites depend on members to help them meet their budget.

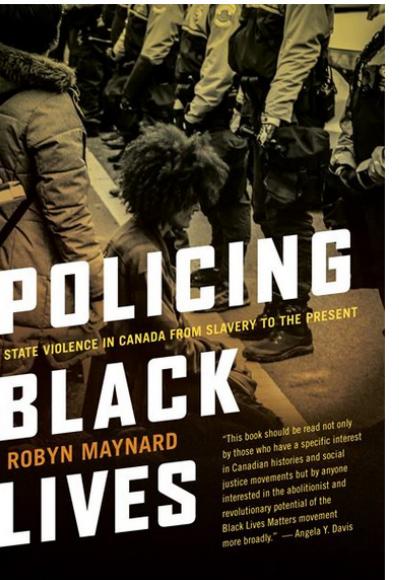
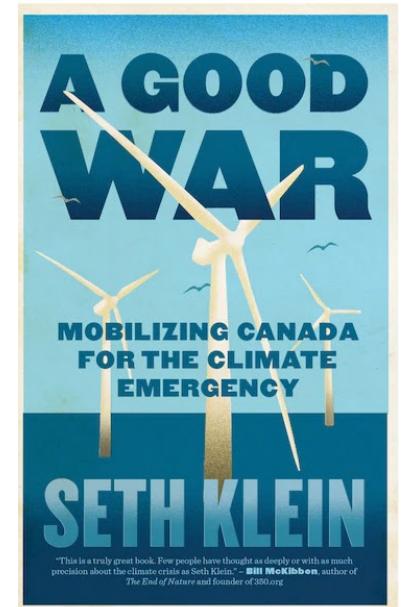
*rabble.ca* is a registered non-profit organization, and we rely on the generous donations from our supporting donors — with both one-time donations and the all-important monthly memberships. We hold annual monthly donor drives to recruit members.

In 2020, with donations averaging \$5/month, a total of \$140,000 was raised from individual donors — over \$92,500 of which came from our regular monthly donors.

Monthly supporters get a variety of perks, ranging from thank-you gifts upon sign up, — in 2020 that included Robyn Maynard's Policing Black Lives and Seth Klein's A Good War — Mobilizing Canada for the Climate Emergency — to special event invitations and an exclusive newsletter for monthly supporters. Don't miss out — sign up now: [rabble.ca/donations](https://rabble.ca/donations)

The total operating budget for *rabble.ca* in 2020 was \$376,786, with revenues of \$408,480. Thank you to our donors! We couldn't do it without you! Of course this is a fraction of what it costs to do journalism, and we thank all the volunteers whose time and effort make independent media like *rabble.ca* possible. 2020 was an extraordinary year and we thank Heritage Canada, Canadian Periodical Fund, for their special pandemic support, and for their grant that allowed us to move to a new Customer Relationship Management software.

*rabble* has a solid reputation for being an efficient and lean operation that punches far above its weight in terms of reach and in original content. In 2020, *rabble* again proved itself a sustainable organization, and saw the year end with a surplus, with plans for taking the organization in new directions, having undertaken a thorough organizational review in 2020, and with plans for a new website in 2021.



# STATISTICS

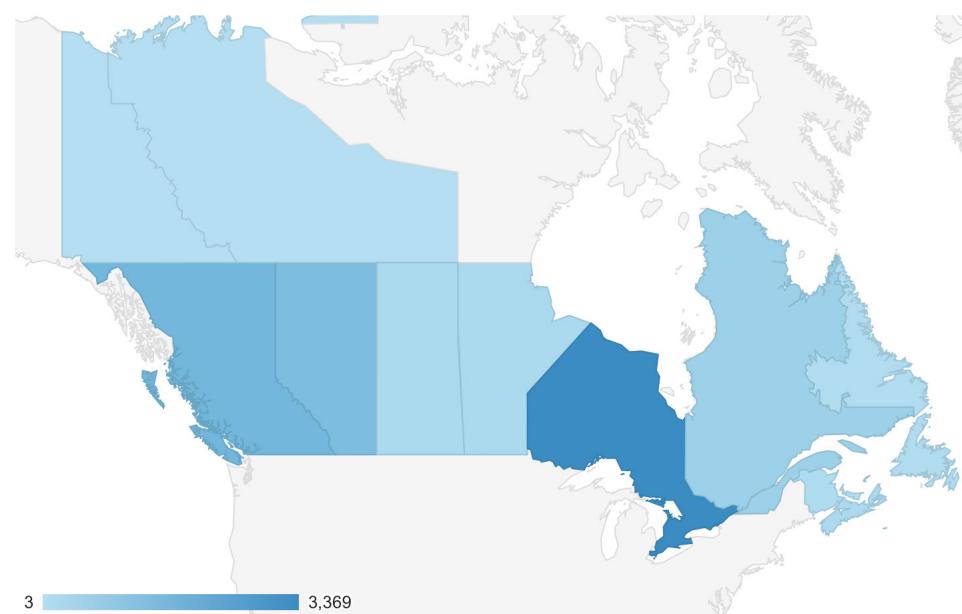
## MEASURING TRAFFIC

We had over 1.1 million users/unique visitors coming to the site in 2020, reading almost 2.6 million pages.

Nearly half of those coming to the rabble site do so by means of a Google search. Of the remaining half, links from social media surpassed direct links, referrals, as well as our weekly and daily newsletter as the primary means of reaching the site.

A total of 73% of our readers in 2020 came from Canada, and 15% from the United States. rabble also maintains a presence on Flipboard and Google News.

In 2020, 13% of our users were aged 18-24, and our largest audience according to Google Analytics — 25% our readers — were aged 25-34



# OUR IN-HOUSE SERVICES!

## AMPLIFY!

Through our Amplify! services, community members, groups and local businesses can invite our media-savvy crew of journalists and professional multimedia storytellers to record and amplify the messages of their events and conferences — and support media democracy and independent media at the same time.

As a non-profit organization, all revenues from rabble services are invested back into *rabble.ca*'s mission to bring progressive, grassroots voices to the forefront. Our fully equipped team of videographers, podcasters, photographers, bloggers, writers and social media professionals can help you to promote your goals. We offer fee-for-services, including live- and near-time video recording, podcasting, live-blogging, street-videos and social media storytelling, now available at competitive rates.

See more at [rabble.ca/amplify](http://rabble.ca/amplify), and see our amplify menu of services here. Allow us to help you tell your story, while you help non-profit independent media! Email [amplify@rabble.ca](mailto:amplify@rabble.ca) for more information or to obtain a quote.

## ADVERTISING

By advertising at *rabble.ca* you can invest your marketing and promotion dollars into non-profit, independent journalism. Consider promoting your campaign, petition or business on *rabble.ca*, and reach our dynamic, engaged and giving audience. *rabble* sells advertising packages for ad buys on our site, as well as on our social media and e-newsletter. We also carry editorial advertising opportunities for progressive research and advocacy organizations.

*rabble.ca* sprang to life in 2001 as an independent news source with strong roots in various movements working for social justice and equality. In 2020, rabble had 1.1 million readers. People come to rabble for news on social movements and for alternative takes on federal and provincial politics.

We have a strong presence on social media, with almost 43,000 followers on Twitter and 27,000 on Facebook and Instagram in total. 73% of our traffic in 2019 came from Canada.

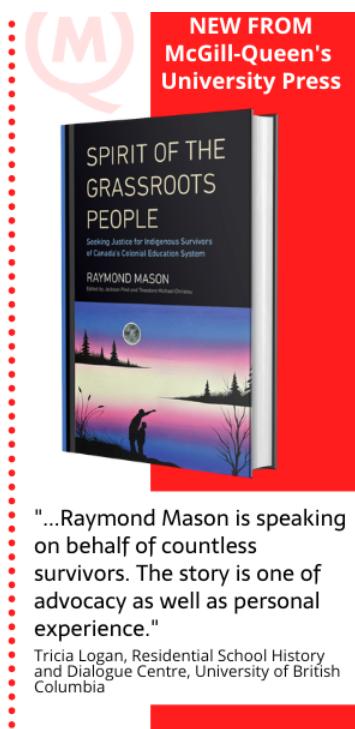
## BOOSTING YOUR WORK THROUGH EDITORIAL ADVERTISING

Are you a civil society organization seeking new ways to broadcast your news? Look no further than In Cahoots. In Cahoots is rabble's portal to the research and news releases of Canada's vibrant civil society and labour organizations. In Cahoots was conceived as an opportunity to amplify the messages of the community of organizations who share *rabble.ca*'s progressive ideals, and work to realize this progressive vision. We have dedicated a part of our website's homepage and social media infrastructure to share our partners' words and press releases. People who click on links in In Cahoots posts will link directly to an URL of your choosing, allowing your communications team to maximize web traffic to your site.

Contact [publisher@rabble.ca](mailto:publisher@rabble.ca) for information about advertising opportunities.

Join organizations other like-minded organizations such as:

- Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada
- Alberta Union of Provincial Employees
- Canadian Health Coalition
- Canadians for Tax Fairness
- Harrowsmith Magazine
- Inter Pares
- Mining Watch Canada
- Liisbeth Magazine
- The Starfish



"...Raymond Mason is speaking on behalf of countless survivors. The story is one of advocacy as well as personal experience."

Tricia Logan, Residential School History and Dialogue Centre, University of British Columbia



## MEET THE RABBLE AUDIENCE

### SURVEY RESULTS FROM RABBLE'S 2020 READERS' SURVEY

Results based on a voluntary survey of *rabble.ca* users conducted in Spring 2020, N = 904

- *rabble* readers are mostly between 25-64, from Ontario or BC, highly educated and with the majority earning between \$20,000 to \$70,000 per year.
- 49% of our readers identify as male, 47% identify as female, and 4% identify as Non-binary/Two-spirited/ or Genderqueer.
- 56% reported some form of employment, while 39% are retired.
- *rabble* readers care, with 89% donating to two or more community organizations every year. 46% donating to five or more!
- *rabble* readers are also highly involved in their communities, with 70% participating in volunteer work each week, 57% belonging to a political party, 42% belonging to a grassroots organization, 37% belonging to an NGO, 33% belonging to a professional association, 24% belonging to a trade union, 20% belonging to a co-operative, and 17% belonging to a religious organization.
- *rabble* readers are both loyal and committed to *rabble*'s various platforms, with 71% reading *rabble* on a desktop or laptop computer, and with 54% of these readers also accessing our news through daily or weekly email lists, as well as on our social media platforms.

# STAFF & REGULARS AT RABBLE

## PEOPLE AT **RABBLE.CA**

*rabble.ca* operates with a dedicated crew of staff and volunteers. Our work is supported by interns, volunteers and a volunteer board of directors.

We are a virtual organization, with workers located around the country and, in 2020, around the world. We had regular staff across Canada — and even as far away as Abu Dhabi. We have columnists, bloggers, podcasters and videomakers from coast to coast.

*rabble.ca* is a proud member of the Centre for Social Innovation in Toronto, where we have access to work and meeting space, and can connect with other progressive organizations and businesses. In Vancouver, until May 2020, we rented space with our friends in Vancouver's historic Dominion Building.

### Executive of *rabble.ca* Members' Council (as of June 2020 AGM)

- Matthew Adams (President)
- Bob Gallagher, USW (Vice President)
- Robert Lamoureux, CUPE (Secretary)
- Nicole Johnson (Treasurer/Acting Publisher)
- Phillip Dwight Morgan

### Members' Council (as of December 2020 AGM)

• Domenic Bellissimo, OSSTF	• Riccardo Fillipone, PSAC
• Federico Carvajal, ETFO	• Shannon Devine
• Jim Stanford	• Sylvain Beaudry, CUPW
• Kathleen Monk	• Tania Ehret, rabble staff representative
• Linda Silas, CFNU	• Tria Donaldson
• Mike Old, HEU	• Trina James, CFS
• Natalie Clancy, UNIFOR	• Trish Hennessey
• Ravi Joshi, Council of Candians	• Wayne MacPhail

### Regular Staff (as of December 2019)

- Baraa Arar - Summer Books Editor
- Kim Elliott, Publisher
- Matthew DiMera, Acting Editor-In-Chief
- Tania Ehret, Operations Coordinator
- Meg Borthwick, babble Moderator
- Alex Cosh, Opinions Editor
- Maya Bhullar, Activist Toolkit & In Cahoots Coordinator
- Christina Turner, Weekend Editor & Books Lounge Coordinator
- Sophia Reuss, Summer promotions editor
- Victoria Fenner, RPN Executive Producer
- Shirley Marquez, Administration and Membership Coordinator
- Star Company, Bookkeeping
- Karl Nerenberg, Parliamentary Reporter
- Lidia Abraha, Jack Layton Fellow
- Chelsea Nash, Labour Beat Reporter
- Marianela Ramos Capelo, Graphic Design
- Krishna Lalbharie, Graphic Design
- Michael Ensley, Facebook Group
- Consensus, Tech support
- Jase Tanner, Amplify
- Frank Preyde (babble)

**President Emeritus:** Duncan Cameron

**Founding Publisher:** Judy Rebick

**Legal:** Iler Campbell LLP

**Auditor:** Numeris CPA

**Insurance:** Numeris CPA

# PEOPLE TO THANK

# KEEP RABBLE GROWING

## OUR GRATITUDE:

Brian Sharpe, Jo Ellen Kaiser, Libby Davies, Linda McQuaig, Olivia Chow, The Institute for Change Leaders, WhatCounts, the New Internationalist, Judy Rebick, Martha Plaine, Humberto Da Silva, Jodi Rai, Jessica Rose, the Canadian Periodical Fund, James Lorimer Publishing, Health Save Toronto, Jacinta McDonnell, Anita Krajnc, Canadian Foreign Policy Institute, Liisbeth Magazine, Paul Gross, Jase Tanner, Member of Parliament Leah Gazan, Paul Taylor, David Macdonald, Sheila Block, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Fernwood Publishing, Harrowsmith Magazine, Brent Patterson, Amira Elghawaby, Monia Mazigh, Pam Palmater, Margaret Atwood, Between the Lines Publishing, and to our friends at the Junction Media Collective in the Dominion Building in Vancouver and to the Centre for Social Innovation in Toronto.



Image by [Marco Verch/Flickr](#)

## How can you keep *rabble.ca* going and growing?

- Become an individual rabble member for \$5/month by visiting [www.rabble.ca/donate](http://www.rabble.ca/donate). rabble depends on memberships to survive and thrive.
- Support with a special one-time donation. No amount is too little or too much. See [rabble.ca/donate](http://www.rabble.ca/donate)
- Sign up for our FREE news summary: [www.rabble.ca/alerts](http://www.rabble.ca/alerts)
- Have your organization join in cahoots -- our sponsored portal of news from civil society groups in Canada. See: <http://www.rabble.ca/incahoots> Contact [business@rabble.ca](mailto:business@rabble.ca)
- Have a conference or event you want to broadcast to the world? Book our event coverage services at [amplify@rabble.ca](mailto:amplify@rabble.ca)
- Have your organization become a Sustaining Partner. Sustaining Partners provide financial support to rabble and receive a fantastic advertising package and promotion from rabble. Contact [business@rabble.ca](mailto:business@rabble.ca)
- Advertise on *rabble.ca*. rabble is Canada's largest independent online news site. Contact [advertise@rabble.ca](mailto:advertise@rabble.ca)
- Tell us your news! If you have a story to tell, let us know! Contact [editor@rabble.ca](mailto:editor@rabble.ca) .

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“It is no exaggeration to say that the hopes of a decent world rest substantially on the success of the kind of work that *rabble.ca* has been carrying out with such distinction.”

-- **Noam Chomsky**

“I rely on *rabble.ca* to bring me the real debates that are shaping our country.”

-- **Naomi Klein**

“*rabble.ca* is a crucial resource for achieving media democracy in Canada, in this era of increasing corporate media concentration.”

-- **Maude Barlow**

“The world needs to hear a lot less from the mainstream media and a lot more from *rabble.ca*”

-- **Linda McQuaig**

“Our cherished, venerable, fierce and principled source of truly independent media in Canada.”

-- **Avi Lewis**

“*rabble* is essential, as in this climate, independent media is needed more than ever to provide an alternative to the dominant narratives, and bring authentic conversations and perspective to communities across Canada.”

-- **Kinnie Starr**

“*rabble* continues to publish strong and independent online journalism. I’m happy to support them.”

-- **Margaret Atwood**