**THANK YOU**
The fight against election fraud and the courage of the eight Canadians’ determination to expose the chicanery of the Conservative Party deserves the support of all Canadians. I hope the eight Canadians are successful in their cases, but I fear the big money behind the opposition will succeed in watering down the serious issue that is involved.

The Council of Canadians is to be commended for giving these people – and all Canadians – support on such an important issue! It strongly suggests that a national amount should be set aside to help defray costs for ordinary citizens to do the right thing.

*A concerned citizen*
Calgary, AB

**WE NEED TO CALL IT NEOLIBERALISM**
Brent Patterson’s article “Making Waves and Sinking the Harper Agenda” in the autumn issue of Canadian Perspectives was exciting.

I have one suggestion: that we name and describe the ideology referred to that is behind Harper’s agenda. To do so would clarify why Harper is doing what he is doing.

The ideology is called neoliberalism (google it). It is named after the unregulated liberal economics of the days of the robber barons that led us eventually to the Great Depression. It is the false religious-like belief that if governments step aside and give the wealthy, corporations and financiers free reign, all will benefit.

Deregulation, privatization, corporate tax cuts, low taxes on the rich, free trade agreements, P3s, high unemployment, job outsourcing, austerity policies and financial speculation are just some of the ways this false economic religion is practised.

It has led to radical inequality and environmental devastation in Canada, the U.S. and Europe.

We can’t just battle the symptoms of neoliberalism – we must also name and fight the sick ideology itself.

*Jim Riesberry*
Brockville, ON

**SAY NO TO TANKERS!**
One of the stronger arguments against tanker traffic in coastal waters is that all three of the recent maritime disasters – Exxon Valdez, Queen of the North, and Costa Concordia – were due to human error. No amount of sophisticated aids to navigation can protect us against human frailty. I’m constantly surprised that this point is not made more often and more strongly by opponents of tankers.

*Dr. R.M. Strang*
Surrey, B.C.

**BUILD AWARENESS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT**
Awareness of environmental issues and changes to the environmental laws here in Canada has become a recent preoccupation for me. Issues surrounding the environment should be every Canadian’s primary concern, and we should be sharing notes and taking pictures of the urban and rural decay we are all experiencing in our neighbourhoods and communities. We should be educating each other from coast-to-coast-to-coast, posting it on Facebook, Tumblr and Twitter, and discussing what we see.

*Paula Ann Stewart*
Montréal, Québec

**CIDA IS SHORT FOR “CORPORATE INVESTMENT DEVELOPMENT AGENCY”**
The Harper government has dropped the first shoe of its new foreign policy – economic agreements with the Third World and China. The latter will be at our expense, but it looks as though our agreements with developing countries will be at theirs.

Canadian mining companies are implicated in dozens of cases of human rights and environmental abuses: Dorato Resources in Peru, Barrick Gold in Tanzania and New Guinea; Centerra in Kyrgyzstan; Excellon in Mexico; Hudbay Minerals in Guatemala, and others.

If the Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement we signed with China is any measure, the agreements we are signing in Africa and South America will allow Canadian mining companies to run roughshod over other peoples’ rights and their environment.

Now the other shoe has dropped. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) will be funding non-governmental organizations like World Vision to work with Canadian businesses who want to set up shop in other countries.

The idea is to use the connections that NGOs have in those countries to help Canadian corporations hit the ground running. The theory is that NGOs will also teach them to behave.

If that’s the theory, it’s not working. Some $50 million has gone into this effort since the Conservatives came to power. And now citizens of the nations in which our mining companies operate are looking to the courts for help. The Q’eqchi’, a Mayan people from Guatemala, have even filed suits in Ontario courts for shootings and rapes at HudBay’s former mining project in El Estor.

Forced displacement, rape, murder and environmental degradation loom heavily over the industry. NGOs might have the knowledge to make Canadian companies better corporate citizens, but not the clout. Instead, they are being used to polish the tarnish growing on our international reputation.

*David McLaren*
Neyaashiinigmiing, ON

**SEND US YOUR LETTERS!**
If you have something to say about an article you have read in Canadian Perspectives, or an issue you think would interest our readers, please write to us. We reserve the right to edit your letter for clarity and length. Letters must include your full name, address and phone number.

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