

Courage My Friends Podcast Series IX – Episode 2
On September 20th Draw the Line - For People, For Peace, For Planet

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ANNOUNCER: You're listening to *Needs No Introduction*.

Needs No Introduction is a rabble podcast network show that serves up a series of speeches, interviews and lectures from the finest minds of our time

RESH: On September 20th, Canadians from coast to coast to coast will be gathering, rallying and marching to Draw the Line: For People, For Peace, For Planet. What makes this an historical alliance? Why do we need to draw the line? Who and what are we drawing it against? And why must we Draw the Line now?

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COURAGE MY FRIENDS ANNOUNCER: Welcome back to this podcast series by rabble.ca and the Tommy Douglas Institute at George Brown College.

In the words of the great Tommy Douglas...

TOMMY (Actor): Courage my friends, 'tis not too late to build a better world

COURAGE MY FRIENDS ANNOUNCER: This is the Courage My Friends Podcast.

Welcome to Episode 2: On September 20th Draw the Line - For People, For Peace, For Planet.

I'm your host, Resh Budhu.

In this episode, we welcome climate justice and Indigenous rights organizer from Stellat'en First Nation and Senior Advisor at the David Suzuki Foundation, Janelle LaPointe, Member Services and Movement Building Manager with Climate Action Network Canada, Lauren Latour, and Canada Organizer for World Beyond War, Rachel Small.

We discuss the Draw the Line National Day of Action, taking place across Canada on September 20th, the reasons for this historic cross-movement coalition and the urgency of drawing the line now in this moment of converging and overwhelming crises, for people, for peace and for planet.

Janelle, Rachel, and Lauren, welcome. Thanks so much for joining us.

LAUREN: Thanks so much for having us today.

RESH: To get us started, Lauren, give us a brief overview. What is Draw the Line? And what exactly is happening on September 20th?

LAUREN: Yeah. Draw the Line it's a national day of action that ties into an international day of action as well. But here in so-called Canada, from coast to coast to coast, there are gonna be actions taking place in municipalities and towns and villages and cities. All sort of calling for the government to choose progressive solutions over regressive ones.

We're in this kind of scary moment globally right now and nationally where we are seeing a lean towards some might use the word fascism, and it's frightening a lot of people. And it's causing a lot of people to look to the progressive community and progressive movements for solutions. And that means that there's this call to action that started initially coming from Pacific South Island communities and Indigenous communities in Brazil ahead of COP 30 negotiations that are happening later in November and ahead of New York Climate Week, which coincides with the Draw the Line action.

LAUREN: So that was initially sort of where this big banner Draw the Line call to action came from. But meanwhile here in so-called Canada, there were a number of organizations and a number of different grassroots communities who were also simultaneously pulling together plans for their own days of action in the fall. So we heard from Migrant Rights Network, we heard from Seniors for Climate Action. We heard from 350 Canada and Climate Action Network Canada and a number of other organizations were all sort of cooking up ideas in their own way and realizing that their communities were all feeling the needs to take to the streets in some way, to assert their asks, assert their demands. And it felt like a moment when, after years and years and years of communities from across progressive spaces saying, we need to learn how to work together in community. We need to learn how to build coalition. It just felt like this was the perfect opportunity for that.

And as Janelle, as Rachel, and as you know as well Resh, the best way to build trust and to coalition-build is to roll our sleeves up and do the work together and build a project together. So that's kind of what drew a lot of us to this day of action was the opportunity to actually kind of get our hands dirty and build something cool together.

Yeah, so actions across so-called Canada. There's also gonna be three main big flagship exciting actions happening in Vancouver, Toronto, and Ottawa. Though by no means does that mean if you don't live in one of those cities, you shouldn't get out on the 20th. But yeah, that's what it's shaping up to be. Really excited to see how it all goes down next week.

RESH: Thank you for that. So this is, as you're saying, a mass coalition effort involving a number of organizations, including those that the three of you are representing, including the David Suzuki Foundation. Janelle, talk to us about the work of the foundation and how it is involved in Draw the Line.

JANELLE: Yeah, the David Suzuki Foundation, of course, is one of the many climate organizations in so-called Canada. And I think for the climate community, a lot of us haven't seen massive mobilization in the streets since the 2019 youth-led

climate strikes. And I feel people have been really, really hoping for time together back in the streets.

I think Lauren hit the nail on the head talking about just the fear and the disconnect that people are feeling coast to coast to coast.

So as climate organizers who are concerned about the numerous climate impacts that Canadians are experiencing year after year, overwhelmed by the enormity of the climate problem. But because of our innate love for humans, for nature, I think a lot of us are making the connection to some of the other areas of the progressive movement that are also organizing on the streets and yearning for that moment of mass mobilization. And we all know that the progressive politics that we would like to see our new Prime Minister implement will not happen without a mass movement of people to force their hand.

Our work at the organization and me as an Indigenous person at a climate organization really looking to this opportunity to draw the connection between environmentalism and human rights, et cetera. And to have a moment as big as 2019, but to be bringing people from across issue areas.

RESH: Thank you. And David Suzuki was at a mass organizing call in August where he was also talking about climate, the big existential issue of our time and so we do need to make those connections. And Rachel, what is World Beyond War?

What is a world beyond war? Because we haven't seen that in a long time, but what specifically in terms of the organization, what is World Beyond War and what is its role in Draw the Line?

RACHEL: Yeah, thank you. So, I mean, we're a global abolitionist organization that seeks to abolish war and the military industrial complex and build a world that's based on justice and peace and diplomacy and that doesn't resort to State violence to solve the problems that we face.

It's been a wild few months. I mean, just last week, Carney made a jaw droppingly, horrifying promise. He literally announced that Canada will quadruple our military spending between now and the end of the decade.

And the end of the decade is less than five years away. This is an unfathomable amount of money, but also like change to Canada's entire foreign policy, entire way of seeing itself in the world. It's also a enormous gift to Trump. This is exactly what Trump asked Canada to do. And while Carney's been talking this game of standing up to Trump of "elbows up", instead he's giving Trump just the biggest gift imaginable. Not to mention the biggest gift to the weapons industry, to the whole military industrial complex.

And this is a promise of enormous austerity, right? Like you can't quadruple Canada's military budget without stealing those billions of dollars from everything else and from everyone else.

And it's also a promise of a war-filled future. Just like when you build pipelines, you are committing to a future of fossil fuel extraction, of theft of Indigenous land, of burning up the planet for decades to come. When you're investing billions of dollars in these weapons systems, you're committing to a future of war. You don't buy these weapons and sit them in a warehouse.

And like I said, it's committing to a foreign policy for Canada that's based on ever increasing militarization in lockstep with the US. This is the exact opposite of standing up to Trumpian politics. This is joining them. And it's been so horrifying to see.

And as my friends here have mentioned, like these issues are deeply connected and we have to refuse to let ourselves be divided, to let ourselves give into this climate of fear. And instead say, no, actually Carney, you're gonna need to choose a side because we are all united. We actually stand together to defend people, to defend the planet, to defend the land and the water. And not just people here across so-called Canada, but we stand in solidarity also with our friends and our family truly from Turtle Island to Palestine and everywhere else.

So you're gonna have to pick a side 'cause we are drawing the line. And I think it's gonna be such a powerful statement of unity and of cross-movement collaboration, the likes of which I haven't seen in decades.

RESH: And we're gonna get more into both of those points in terms of this moment of crisis, but also what does this type of mobilization mean?

But it is interesting that as you said, we're hearing about where we're gonna have this ballooning defense spending within militarism and at the same time we're also going to double what is now being referred to as an austerity budget that they're promising is going to come in.

So before we get to that, Lauren, tell us about Climate Action Network Canada and its role within Draw the Line.

LAUREN: So we're an organization that listeners might not be super familiar with. We're not nearly as publicly facing as David Suzuki Foundation or World Beyond War. We're an organization that exists to kind of act as a convening body for different groups and communities in our case, across so-called Canada. To act as a hub for folks to come together in collaboration, in intel sharing. And we act to do that, not just for organizations that are strictly the ENGOs, environmental nonprofits. Yes, we do have David Suzuki as a proud member. We're so happy they're there. But we also have labor unions and faith-based groups. And we're a national note of an international organization. So we're also party to Climate Action Network International as well, which acts to attempt to do the same thing in various countries

and various regions around the world. We're very much, we're the background actors.

RESH: But everybody coming together within the foreground, through Draw the Line.

LAUREN: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly.

RESH: There you go. So again, these are three of, as you've pointed out, many organizations that are involved in and/or endorsing Draw the Line. So obviously there is a context. You've begun, all of you, talking about the context, why this is happening. A context that is necessitating this type of action. And I wanna hear from each of you to elaborate on essentially why do we need to draw the line and why do we need to do it now.

Janelle, expand on what you were saying about this moment, what we are facing from both the perspective of where you're organizing within climate justice and Indigenous rights, but also more broadly.

JANELLE: Yeah, I think more broadly, everyone I talk to has a sense that something is deeply wrong and people are struggling to make their basic end meet. And more and more people are waking up to this class consciousness that they're struggling and that there are billionaires and corporate executives that are only increasing their profits at our expense. And so I see the struggle and I see the frustration. And I see this new pointed anger and realization that we all have a common villain.

From an Indigenous perspective, it's been a really scary time to see new fast-tracking legislation take place across Canada. We have Bill-14 and 15 provincially in British Columbia, Bill-5 in Ontario, and then this new federal legislation Bill C-5, which is to fast-track destructive projects on Indigenous land and forego the government's accountability to Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

We've seen the former Transmountain, CEO appointed to lead this Major Project's office. We've had this week announce their Indigenous Advisory Council, many of whom were hand-picked by the Prime Minister's office, that are Indigenous people that have direct ties to the oil and gas industry. And so what I see and what I fear is that there's this intentional really villainization of Indigenous People, that if you stand against the projects and wish to stand up for your land, your water and culture, you're going to be painted as anti-progress. Which is a really terrifying narrative, especially when you have someone that ran on standing up the Trump and stoking the fear of Canada versus US. Indigenous people are now being told that you're compromising the safety of Canadians by enacting your rights to protect your lands.

Just yesterday, the Prime Minister's office announced some of their initial projects that they are going to fast-track and one of them was LNG expansion. Which is what Rachel said, we don't build these projects for them to sit idly. This is locking us into a future of LNG expansion, which will blow Canada's climate commitments out of the water. It's a risky bet on a dwindling market, and it means that the Indigenous people in the LNG region - and many of which are already involved in legal battles and have

already had militarized police in their backyards, that forced through the previous LNG project - we're in a scary circumstances where Indigenous People can't say no without these legal battles or without literally risking their bodies against militarized police; while a certain type of Indigenous person who is willing to partner on these projects is being pedestalized.

I'm sad to see that division stoked because I think Indigenous worldviews offer a lot of solutions to the converging crises. And Indigenous people have unique cultures, language and laws and government systems that have allowed them to be the only people to survive sustainably on these lands.

And so I think that division is intentional because the government doesn't want people to invest in this alternate form of governance that exists on these lands.

And so I feel like this moment is crucial because we're all waking up to the root cause of the crisis, which is imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, and those systems were intentional and systemic and focus on division. And so I think we need to be just as intentional, strategic with our unity. And I think that's what this mobilization is all about.

RESH: Thank you for that. And just to go back into Bill C-5, which is for those who don't know, *An Act to Enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act*. And it's very interesting the way that you're saying indigenous peoples who are standing against this are being villainized, sort of saying, well, you don't want to build Canada.

Rachel, this is happening at a unique moment of multiple and converging crises. We're all feeling that, right? You started talking about this enormous investment within war and militarism and these weapon manufacturers. So could you speak about this moment and what many are calling a polycrisis?

RACHEL: Yeah, it really is a moment of multiple kind of overlapping crises. I spoke about briefly this major commitment to literally quadruple Canada's military budget. But it is coming at the exact same moment and in sync with Carney ramming through these laws that are attacking migrants. That, as Janelle mentioned, are pushing these destructive projects on Indigenous land without consent. Promising to cut public services by at least 15%. Like it's kind of, we're being hit by an onslaught of things. And then it is being justified in some ways under this bogus narrative of nationalism. Like somehow what we need to do to protect ourselves is to destroy ourselves, is to destroy apparently these institutions, to undermine healthcare, to undermine housing, to undermine the climate

RESH: and migrants as well. I mean, when you're talking about the militarization, this is also happening on our borders. The proposed Strong Borders Act.

RACHEL: Absolutely. And I mean, I think it's clear to many of us that from climate destruction to anti-migrant racism, to these underfunded public services, to this endless wars and militarism, like these crises are actually deeply connected.

And then in the context of militarism, this is all happening at the same time as we are seeing Canada play a key role in propping up Israel's genocide in Palestine. I mentioned before that Carney's talking this talk of, oh, standing up to Trump. But then if you look at what he's really doing, which is more important I would say, than the words, we're seeing this ever-increasing integration with US militarism. Canada's bulking up its defense is actually about committing billions of dollars to buying US-made and controlled war machines, including F-35s, which is the key fighter-jet that Israel is currently using to bomb Gaza. But at the same time as he's kind of talking this talk, it's actually committing to US militarism and to joining the US versus pushing away from it.

And there's a way in which it's similar to what we're seeing in terms of Canada's talk with Israel. I mean, thanks to just enormous cross-movement organizing over the past two years, we have forced Canada to no longer deem it acceptable to be arming Israel. Versus two years ago it would've just been, oh, of course Canada's arming our closest ally in the Middle East, Israel. Now we've pushed the government to a place where they say, oh, no, no, no, Canada's not sending weapons to Israel. We are not fueling this conflict. Which is a win that we have made that so deeply unacceptable that that's the line the government now has to parrot.

Unfortunately, again, when you look at the government's actions, it's not true. Canada is still arming Israel's genocide. Canada is still allowing tons of weapons and military components to go both directly from Canada to Israel, which requires permits from Global Affairs Canada, from the Canadian government.

But even more significantly, they're continuing to sneakily allow millions and millions and millions of dollars of weapons to go from Canada to the US and then on to Israel. So there's a matter of what is this government saying, but even more importantly, what is it actually doing and how do we make sure that we as people can rise up to materially, as much as we, can interrupt this genocide. To interrupt Canada's complicity in it.

And similarly to stop these new pipeline projects that are being planned. And similarly to stand up and defend our friends and our neighbors and our family members who are at risk of deportation now in Canada under this xenophobic attack on migrants. They're deeply connected.

And from the climate perspective, something that's also really important that I don't think is talked enough about is the role of Canadian mining on all of these fronts. The world's biggest mining convention happens in Toronto every year, and I attend, in protest every year, and there's been a huge shift. Two, three years ago, all the talk was about these new mines for the renewable energy industry and all the critical minerals for batteries, et cetera, et cetera. The past year or two, it has not been that, it has been just blatantly, we need to open these mines for war machines. I mentioned F-35 there's 900 pounds of rare earth minerals in every single F-35.

We're talking like the huge open pit, completely climate-destroying mines that are literally required for this push of militarization. And if we look at what are things that

create crises where people are forced to flee their homelands and sometimes come to Canada, it's actually, mines like this and it's military projects.

So on one hand we're continuing the harm that forces people to leave their homes. And then we're militarizing our borders to block them from coming in and we're deporting them instead of actually taking action to stop the climate crisis, to stop people from forcing to flee. So it's this vicious cycle.

And then we're told the solution is to reject our neighbors or to be scared of people who are just struggling to have a decent life on a livable planet like all of us.

RESH: Absolutely. There's a dissonance, there's an illogic, a strong illogical approach to this. In the organizing call in August, Syed Hussan who is with the Migrant Rights Network, he was bringing up that already the canceling of study and work permits for international students and international workers has cost only in terms of tax revenue, the economy, \$50 billion, which is much more than the Trump tariffs are costing the economy. And yet our focus is on those and not on newcomers, however they're coming into Canada.

Lauren, the same question to you in terms of the present context and what types of crises are we facing that perhaps haven't already been mentioned?

LAUREN: A lot of things have already been mentioned, but I think the thing that always comes to mind for me whenever we talk about polycrisis is that... this is so hokey to quote, but that Gramsci quote from the *Prison Diaries*.. To be clear, have I read the Prison Diaries? Of course I haven't. But there's that quote that's like, "The old world is dying. The new world struggles to be born. Now is the time of monsters." And I think that's exactly where we are right now. I know if for listeners that are too online, we're always talking about the perils of late stage capitalism. And that's kind of what's happening.

It's like the fact that we're in this moment of overlapping crises. That's no coincidence. They drive each other. They're interlocked and they're in feedback loops. And I think where we are right now is unfortunately a moment, a phase that I think we thought we were past.

Janelle earlier mentioned that back in 2019, back in 2018, especially in climate world, we had this moment where it was hundreds of thousands of people, millions of people out in the streets. In so-called Canada, there was a government that, by no means am I casting a golden glow on any previous government necessarily, but, there was a government that would meet with folks, that would talk with folks. And, if I can be so bold to say, really cared about their reputation on the global stage, especially as it pertained to climate. It was the first government in a long time that had gone to climate talks and really participated fulsomely and wanted to make a good showing there.

So politically we were in a different place. But also from a movement standpoint, we were in a different place. And we had targets that were not nearly as ambitious as

they needed to be, but the government was standing behind those targets fulsomely. And what we know from comments that Carney made this past week is that even those targets, from a climate standpoint are being called into question here in a way that's nerve-wracking

RESH: He said, " we're focused on results, not objectives". And I don't know what that means.

LAUREN: Which like vibes, but also it's nice to have a bullseye to aim for here that helps keep us on track and helps us know what we're moving towards.

We're in a point as a movement, not just as a climate movement, but progressive movements across the board where it feels like we're kind of on the back foot. I thought we had moved past a lot of these conversations. But when COVID happened and everybody was stuck in their homes, everybody was stuck on their devices, it really reinforced this sense of insularity and isolation, which I think really, really resulted in people kind of reverting to a place of fear and a place of suspicion and a place of doubt in their place in community and their relationships to other folks in their community. And that drives us towards a more regressive politics. And it also makes organizing really, really, really, really hard.

So I think that's also why we're feeling this need to get out in the streets and give people a recognizable movement home to go towards is because a lot of these are muscles we haven't flexed in a long time. And that's not the reason maybe that we're seeing this boom, this scary moment of converging polycrisis. But it might be partially what is leading people to feel so disempowered during this moment of polycrisis... is that we're not out in the streets with our neighbors all the time. Heck, I don't even know my neighbor's name. She seems like a lovely girl, but like, I don't know her. How am I supposed to build anything resembling a political relationship with her if I don't even know her name?

, So I think it's also this lack of community that we have with folks outside of our immediate circle of friends and our immediate circle of family is part of what's contributing to this moment of unease generally speaking. And I think that exacerbates all of these polycrises. Because when your back's up against a wall, you're gonna lash out, you're not gonna be your best self. And that applies to the individual level, but also at the macro societal level as well.

RESH: And there's a deliberateness to this. As Janelle earlier was pointing out there's this sort of deliberate fragmentation about who we're going to listen to within the community.

And also that rather than being dealt with as overlapping, mutually reinforcing and converging crises, what we're hearing from policymakers seems to be, well, no, let's treat these as competing crises where we have to prioritize some and back burn-others. Climate measures can wait because the priority right now is building the economy to deal with the Trump tariffs.

LAUREN: Yeah. That's an intentional tactic and that only behooves the capital owning class and the elite class. Because as long as we are divided and we are committing lateral violence against one another. And we're not focused and we don't realize that uplifting one is uplifting all, and that we're not building these relationships based on solidarity. And we're busy kind of fighting for crumbs amongst ourselves, that only benefits them. That only allows them to push forward Bills like C-5 that was pushed forward extremely quickly in a very short period of time. Same with Bill C-2, this bill that has such negative effects for migrants, it was pushed forward extremely quickly. And as long as we're busy in fighting amongst ourselves, whether you're looking at it from a class standpoint or otherwise, it just means that they have free reign to do whatever they want.

JANELLE: As Lauren you were speaking.

I had the privilege of attending 350's, Renew Our Power Conference in Brazil in April, which had 200 plus organizers from the Global South and Indigenous communities worldwide. And I was just really struck with the hopefulness and creativity of these communities in the face of the polycrisis that they're also feeling. And also just how clearly they saw Canada for what it is.

As Lauren mentioned, our previous government put a lot of effort into the reputation into making Canada look like a global climate leader, to making them seem friendly to their Indigenous people, as they like to say. And I had a moment with Chief Nawa who's a chief of the Hunekween people in the Amazon. And he was dressed in his full regalia. He speaks his culture. He's retained, you know, maybe 95% of his culture. And he told me the reason he does this work is 'cause he sees what Canada has done to their Indigenous peoples. And he said, we don't want to be like you, we don't want to not know our language and we don't want to not have our community and lose our customs.

And so I'm really glad that this national day of action on September 20th is happening in a global context because I think it's quite shameful for Canada to perpetrate the scarcity mindset as a wealthy Global North country that has a ton of resources, that still has, thanks to the protection of Indigenous people, access to land and water. And to pretend that we don't have enough and that we need to choose between these priorities.

What also came to mind is just that a better world for Canadians and a way to put policies that are helpful to the struggling Canadians also means Canada being accountable on the international stage. I mean, Canada's failure to meet their objections, to focus on result not objections, whatever that means, will mean that Pacific Islander communities are underwater. It will mean that we're arming Israel and a genocide against Gaza. That is blood on Canada's hands.

JANELLE: So yeah, just wanted to note, the connection to the internationalism. And I think this is our moment of standing in solidarity and saying, Canada, you can't pretend to be this thing that you, you are not.

RESH: Yeah. And the shine is definitely off. Because for so long we've been, as you said, the forefront of the climate movement in the Global North, the global peacekeepers all of those types of things. Canada, the good. One of the benefits of sort of being in the shadow of the superpower of the US is that all of our less than stellar activities is overshadowed by them as well. What you were saying in terms of our record with Indigenous peoples within Canada, but also outside of Canada, largely through our mining operations as well and through our militarism in terms of this genocide in Gaza.

Draw the Line happening on September 20th, which is also five days after Parliament reconvenes on September 15th and 10 days before the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation.

RESH: So it's interesting the interplay of everything that's happening in September and the different statements that are being made there.

RACHEL: Yeah, I mean this is really, as Janelle laid out and as you laid out, this is like a really strategic timing internationally. But then, yeah, this is a really key moment here in terms of parliament will have just resumed, but this comes before Carney's new budget.

There's sometimes this idea of oh, you should give new governments a chance, or there should be this grace period.

RACHEL: Carney, as we've mentioned, has not waited. He's rammed through policies without due process immediately, and we also cannot be waiting for our response. So I think to have a historic mobilization like this before his budget drops to really show this is what we expect and you can expect a fight from us. We are not actually just gonna accept an austerity budget and all the other things that we've talked about from this government. We're getting out ahead and we're mobilizing for it.

And another thing that, especially for us in anti-war organizing is important to note, is that the same weekend is international Peace Day, which is always a key moment to come together across movements and borders, to stand up to the war machine and stand really in solidarity with everyone facing the violence of war first-hand. For us, that's what International Peace Day is about.

So I think that us, Draw the Line is actually a perfect way to mark International Peace Day by taking that unity into the streets, taking a stand, like we've said across movements for people, peace and the planet.

So I think the timing really works in a bunch of different ways. Not to mention that this is just a couple weeks before what will be two years of Israel's genocide in Palestine. And I think again, such a key moment to really take a stand in Canada to say, actually we won't allow you to continue arming this genocide. We won't allow Canada's continued complicity. It's continued role propping up this genocide.

RESH: Absolutely. Now I want to go into the five key demands because Draw the Line is really centered on these demands, and I'm going to ask you to elaborate on each of those.

In no particular order, but number one: Put people over corporate profit. Fund our families and communities.

JANELLE: I think this is connected to, what I was saying, of how shameful it is for Canada to perpetrate the scarcity mindset, not only from the wealth of Canada, but to have so many corporate entities and ultra rich people in Canada who are continuing to thrive.

And so this objective is really about making those people pay their fair share by having a tax on the ultra rich, ending those corporate subsidies and using it to fund all of the things we critically need, like housing, food, healthcare, transit, education. Those are the things that Carney right now is threatening to take away by about 15%.

So part of the demand is also to reverse that spending. But yeah, this one to me is like an acknowledgement of just how ridiculous it is for us to be scraping for crumbs while there are so many making exorbitant amounts of wealth off of our land and our labour.

RACHEL: Yeah, and I think it's about really highlighting the choice that Carney has.

Because you actually do have to make a choice, and you're either enriching billionaires, you're giving corporate subsidies, you're enriching these arms manufacturers and like the wealthiest people in the country, handing them over more money. Or you're taking a stand to ensure that people don't go hungry, that we have access to healthcare, PharmaCare dental care, that there's housing.

Like it's actually a clear choice that Carney needs to make here, and you don't get to have it both ways. And I think that's what this demand is really highlighting.

LAUREN: Thank you both so much for saying that so beautifully. I think I also wanna jump in here because I think there's this misconception in public discourse that folks in progressive spaces are like a bunch of NIMBYs that are always saying no to things and never saying yes to things.

And I think the thing that I really sort of like about how this demand was phrased is that it does say fund our families and communities. We are looking to build, we are looking to generate housing, and make sure that the world that we're moving into is one that's built on abundance. And like Janelle said, not in this false sense of scarcity whereby we're all fighting for scraps at the bottom here.

Yeah, for me especially, it's generating income by taxing the rich and then funneling that money towards everyday folks. Because that is who drives these progressive movements. It's everyday people

RESH: And people who are working as well. So labour as well. And I say this absolutely, and I say this within the context that right now Ontario colleges are on strike in terms of their full-time support staff, including my college. And we're seeing far more strike actions happening everywhere, across so-called Canada, but also across the world. 'Cause this is really an attack on working people as well.

RACHEL: And there was a moment where Carney was kind of talking about these nation building big projects. And I mean, there can be a version of that that can be amazing and that we wanna champion and that can look like transit and transportation across the country that connects communities. That can look like really ambitious new housing models that are actually about putting roofs over people's heads. That can look like new models of education, like funding Canada to be a global research leader.

There's all kinds of building and major projects that Canada can be doing that's actually about making all of our lives better. That's actually about maybe Canada taking on whatever role on the world stage Carney or others wanna brag about. But it doesn't look like military. It doesn't look like pipelines, it doesn't look like things that are about destroying the planet and our communities there.

There's so many ways that we wanna see that investment happen, that really are about putting people over corporate profit.

LAUREN: Yeah. And there's certainly ways that we can do that while respecting Indigenous sovereignty and making sure that we're doing simple things like impact assessments in order to make sure that these projects, when shovels go into earth, that it's not gonna result in terrible, terrible impacts for the communities surrounding them.

RESH: And that takes us into the next one, which is: Refuse ongoing colonialism and uphold Indigenous sovereignty.

JANELLE: Yeah, I'll just say that, you know, I think a lot of these commitments are things that our previous governments have already committed to. We have guidelines on how we should be in relationship to Indigenous people since the inception of so-called Canada. I mean, there are treaties that exist, that have been failed to be upheld.

We have Supreme Court cases, in Canada that have already ruled Canada's obligation to rights holders on unceded territories. We have Canada's own commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This November will mark 10 years since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that had 94 very clear Calls to Action that our governments have failed to implement.

And so I think this is a call to action to like, look at the groundwork that's already been made and do the things that you said you were going to do. And to stop finding loopholes and ways to shrink those commitments and calls to action and to things they don't mean.

One of the big pieces of my work is calling out this new framework that has really emerged in this government and in provincial governments across the country, which is the term *economic reconciliation*. You will hear Prime Minister Carney using this, especially when it comes to Bill C-5 and his so-called "nation building projects". Saying that his version of reconciliation is having partnership agreements or to have Indigenous people be owners of the pipelines that are desecrating their own lands and waterways.

And the Truth And Reconciliation Commission actually has very little focus on economy. This is to me again, another really intentional tactic to water down reconciliation. And I think it's really shameful that a word as meaningful and important as reconciliation has been watered down to mean you get to partner on this project that is not in line with your traditional values.

Yeah, this is a call to action to look at true forms of reconciliation, which means funding Indigenous housing and languages. To invest in land-based economies. We have traditional economies and we also have new economies like the renewable energy economy that are emerging worldwide. We don't want the crumbs of your old economy, like fossil fuel projects.

And to invest in climate solutions.

Indigenous people are most susceptible to the climate impacts. And we need to be adapting and mitigating the crisis at the scale that that speaks to it being an emergency.

Just as MMIWG2S again, another area of missing and murdered Indigenous girls, women in Two-Spirit, where we've had politicians across the country commit to actions on this, to shed tears for cameras about the violence that happens against our women girls and Two-Spirit, but little policies to actually protect our communities.

And so this is, I think, really calling out and again, joining Indigenous and non-Indigenous people across the country and saying that colonial violence doesn't just affect Indigenous people. It affects us all. And indigenous sovereignty can build the world that we deserve and this country.

RESH: Thank you. The next one: Stop blaming migrants. Demand full immigration status for all now.

RACHEL: I think this is such a classic situation where the lies we're being told just could not be further from the truth. And the truth is that migrants play such a vital role

across the country, like growing a huge percentage of the food that we have, building the homes.

I think it's 20% of construction workers in Canada are migrants. Caring for the sick, doing like really vital people caretaking roles. So these are people who are our neighbors, our friends, our family members, but also play like such a vital role in our economy and are instead being scapegoated for basically every problem.

And what an old story, right? To take some of the most vulnerable people in any given place. And when times are tough, say, oh, it's their fault. And it's nonsense, but it works. And it stokes racism and it stokes xenophobia. And it means that migrants are denied equal rights and are subject to violence and right now are increasingly subject to deportation and to losing their status.

So this is about us refusing all of that division, all of that scapegoating, and instead saying what we need is permanent resident status for migrants. That these people are not illegal and are key and crucial parts of our communities. And we need an end to these deportations. We need an end to these cuttings of status and recognizing that attacks on migrant workers are also attacks on all of us and on all workers.

RESH: End the war machine. Stand for justice and peace.

RACHEL: That's kind of my jam. But yeah, I mean, as we've talked about, Canada appears to be making this choice right now to pour just ever increasing billions of dollars into the war machine and into weapons, while simultaneously cutting everything

I mentioned already that Carney just last week promised to quadruple Canada's military budget, but it also is behind the scenes clearing the path to allow Canada to join Trump's Golden Dome scheme. This is this completely crazy idea basically that is in Trump's head and thus far is completely unproven on the ground in any way, that a missile shield can be built over the US and presumably maybe Canada too.

But what this means is putting missiles in space for the first time on planet Earth. It's a horrifying idea. It's a hugely aggressive project. It goes against any foreign policy decisions Canada has ever made. And here's Carney, like quietly paving the way towards Canada, joining this type of a crazy military project that, as you can imagine is not gonna win us friends globally. Is very much an antagonistic military policy that's gonna terrify anyone who is already freaked out about US militarism. It's just one example of him pushing us down this militarized path. Also it's gonna cost like hundreds of billions of dollars by the way. Not to mention new military bases and infrastructure.

Canada is talking about building in the Arctic, which would push out Indigenous communities. Which would continue to contaminate Indigenous land. While as we've talked about continuing to arm a genocide, continuing to prop up Israel's horrific violence.

So this demand is about saying, actually, this is not the investment that Canada needs. Actually what we require for security, none of that is gonna be solved with war planes and tanks and new Arctic bases.

The actual forces that endanger the security of people across Canada are the same things we've already talked about. It's climate crisis and destruction. It's not having access to healthcare and housing and food. And that the role we actually want Canada to play in the world is one of peace building and of connection and of diplomacy. Not of creating a global arms race and being a big part of that.

RESH: Absolutely. And the final one: End the era of fossil fuels. Protect Mother Earth.

LAUREN: I mean this isn't gonna surprise anybody, but we need to be phasing out fossil fuels and fossil fuel infrastructure here in so-called Canada and abroad as well. Again, going back to that global emphasis on Draw the Line here. We cannot be offshoring our emissions. And we can't be developing this new LNG industry just to then ship that product overseas and let somebody else deal with the carbon accounting there.

So it's saying no to new oil and gas projects and doing so in a way that ensures that, I know the term *just transition* has become quite contentious in recent years, but really making sure that we're doing so in a way that does not leave workers and affected communities behind. And make sure that decent work is being provided in the wake of, as this industry shuts down, as we leave oil and gas behind, that we're bringing online a new sort of like 100% renewable energy grid, again at home and also abroad. One that provides good work and decent work for people. And doesn't further endanger communities.

We spoke very, very briefly about mining and critical minerals. We need to make sure that that's part of the equation as well. That we're not leaving communities around the world, destitute in our hunt for critical minerals.

LAUREN: In so-called Canada as well, this also looks like ending subsidies for oil and gas companies, which was previously a target. I believe theoretically, all inefficient oil and gas subsidies were supposed to be phased out by 2025. I don't know where we are with that, frankly, because *inefficient* is a bit of a fuzzy and obfuscating word.

And then also at the end of the day, if listeners are sitting here and wondering how we're gonna make all of this beautiful transition to renewables happen and funding all this housing and good food and good healthcare and good PharmaCare for people, it's making polluters pay. It's making the billionaire class pay.

There is no shortage of money in the world. It's simply just a matter of redistributing it. And part of what that is, is holding these polluters accountable. Making sure that they're not able to just walk away from the damage when their factories and when they're refineries, are eventually sunset.

RESH: Now at the mass organizing call in August, they describe, Draw the Line as a "historic alliance". Lauren, just to go back to you, why is this an historic alliance?

LAUREN: Is it historic in like looking at the last a hundred years of movement work? Maybe not, but it's historic in recent memory. We haven't had a coalition like this come together in a very long time. We've seen a lot of really incredible demonstrating over the last couple years for Palestine and anti-war measures in the streets. We've seen separate climate marches. Obviously Labour is always doing a fantastic job of getting out in the streets and supporting their communities. It's not that we haven't seen these individual factions within the progressive space out calling and defending their communities.

But it's the fact that we haven't seen everybody really, really prioritize coming together in mutual solidarity and in mutual care here and saying, You know what? I see my demand in what your demand is. And the language might not be perfect. I think progressive can sometimes get kind of bogged down in language here.

The language might not be exactly perfectly what I might want it to be or what Janelle might want it to be, or what Rachel might want it to be. But I think what's really special about this moment of all of these groups coming together is that it's happening in this sort of air of mutual generosity and trust building and understanding that we need each other right now.

LAUREN: Because like Rachel said earlier, if we can show a united front and we can show that we are this massive people that we know we are, we account for such a huge portion of the country, it's gonna make it way harder to say no to us. And if we build these relationships of trust, now, it's gonna be harder to divide us and it's gonna be harder to make us compete against one another.

RESH: Janelle, what comes after September 20th?

JANELLE: Yeah, that's the exciting part is like through that trust-building and uniting that Lauren was talking about, we have an opportunity to keep momentum and to keep coming together and creating more actions, more opportunities to be in the streets. More ways to bring the information that we get at the rally home to our communities and our families. I think this is just the start of what could be a really powerful movement to win all the solutions that we deserve.

And as someone that myself has gone through the journey of coming into the movement through a very specific issue and feeling overwhelmed that everything else that was happening, and then finding that commonality between other, factions of the movement, that was really liberating for me and empowering and hopeful.

And so I hope that people leave with the same sense of empowerment and hope and are ready to go to work.

RESH: Thank you. And Rachel, just to add onto that, to those listening to this podcast, why should they get involved in the Draw the Line mobilization on September 20th?

RACHEL: What occurred to me when Lauren and Janelle were speaking just now, there's that there's a way in which this is an experiment.

Like I think this is something that hasn't been tried in, again I'm not gonna say things like a century, but in decades in Canada. And what a cool experiment to see like, yeah, what, what actually can happen when we do unite, when we do also learn from each other. And in the lead up to planning, I think we've hit over 65 actions across the country now announced for the 20th. In the lead up to planning them, we're talking about meetings where it's people in the room who didn't know each other before. Who are learning from each other and are creating these new connections.

I was just hearing from one of the meetings, from one of the actions last night and the age range was like 15 to 80. It was people who had never met before. Who organized in super different ways. Had like really different ideas of what even happens at a march and what should happen.

Like that's so exciting, these kind of awkward coalitions sometimes and these awkward coming together because that's as all of us getting so far out of our people and our small communities.

So yeah, I think it's an experiment. Like what is gonna happen when we unite, when we learn from each other, when we grow these alliances to grow our power.

And I think once you experience that. I think you don't wanna go back to not being in connection with other folks.

These are gonna be really unique marches and actions across the country in the biggest cities of the country. I'm anticipating marches like thousands and thousands of people strong. A really powerful show of force to meet this moment. And I think in some of the smaller communities, it's gonna be really powerful, smaller gatherings that reflect who actually cares in these communities right now about changing the path that Canada is on and trying to figure out how do we do that together.

I would encourage people to go, like Lauren was saying, with that same spirit of, trust and openness and like willingness to learn something new from each other. 'cause I think that's the real power here.

RESH: And, Lauren, on September 20th, what are you hoping to see?

LAUREN: I'm hoping to see exactly what Rachel and Janelle have talked about, thousands of people out in the streets, or if you're listening from a small community, a couple, you know, a handful, a few dozen. No matter the size of the demonstration, it's valuable and it's impactful.

I think the thing I would also really like to see is people making connections with one another, like Rachel said, talking to somebody you haven't spoken to before.

If you're somebody who isn't currently involved in a community organizing or something akin to activist work, make a point of finding the organizer or an organizer at the event you're at and make a connection with them and make a commitment to come out to a meeting, to go out and have a one-on-one coffee date with them to learn more about their work and learn more about how they're pushing these efforts forward.

We've talked a lot about sort of the despondency that people are feeling right now, and I have found that the best way to push back on that is to organize and to meet people and to try to actively build the future that you wanna see.

It's too easy to stay at home and doom scroll and to repost. And it doesn't make you feel good. We know this.

Not only is it productive to get out there and organize in your communities and play a role in something akin to activism, but it makes you feel really good too.

RESH: Absolutely. And for those who are listening and they want to find out what's happening in their community, where can they find that information?

And if there's nothing happening in their community, can they still start an action?

LAUREN: Absolutely, you can still start in action. So if you go to drawtheline.world/canada, actually if you just go to drawtheline.world, you will be, depending on your IP address, if you use a VPN, I don't know, but you will be automatically rerouted to the so-called Canada based website that contains links for if you wanna review the demands yourself and familiarize yourself with them. If you want to sign up for an action, if you just wanna sign up to stay in the loop and be told about where actions are. If you're listening and you are part of or represent an organization and you want to endorse right now, I think we're sitting at something like 250 endorsers, endorsing organizations from across progressive spaces. All of that is on the website. So it's drawtheline.world and then you'll be rerouted to the Canada website.

RESH: Right. And there are supports and resources for those who want to start actions of their own, correct?

LAUREN: So many supports and resources. Yeah, there's lots of ways to sort of get advice, figure out what an action could look like in your community. And then of course, as is always the way, we've got plenty of amplification packages because although I just sort of knocked too much social media time, help get the word out. Post a little story, post a little reel, tell your friends why you're going.

RESH: Lovely. And finally, to you, Janelle, what do you hope to see on September 20th when people are drawing the line?

JANELLE: I hope to see a lot of smiling faces and laughter and fun and joy. I agree with Lauren, so many of us have been stuck at home, isolated, doom-scrolling, feeling overwhelmed, fearful, sad. And I think this is a moment to celebrate each other and feel really good about being in community.

I'm sure there's some folks listening that are really daunted by the word organizing and organizer. I promise that you all have skills that would be useful to the moment. Perhaps you planned a really awesome birthday party last year. Maybe you're a wizard in Excel. Maybe you're just like a warm person that people feel really drawn to. Like all of us innately as humans, I think have skills that are useful to the movement. And we have people, part of this Draw the Line coalition that have knowledge and resources to share.

So I hope people, yeah, just have a lot of fun. Maybe get out of their comfort zone and talk to someone they don't know, make a new friend. And just bring that warmth and joy back to their community. And find a place to use some of their skills that they have.

RESH: For more information on how to get involved, please visit the Draw the Line website that will be linked in the show notes to this episode, and join the mobilization on September 20th, because as has been said here, it's going to take all of us. Lauren, Janelle and Rachel, thank you so much for an excellent conversation. It has been a pleasure.

JANELLE: Thank you so much, Resh.

LAUREN: Thank you so much. This was fantastic.

RACHEL: Agreed.

RESH: That was Janelle LaPointe, Climate Justice and Indigenous Rights organizer from Stellat'en First Nation and Senior Advisor at the David Suzuki Foundation. Lauren Latour, Member Services and Movement Building Manager with Climate Action Network Canada. And Rachel Small, Canada Organizer for World Beyond War.

Check out the link to the Draw the Line website in the show notes to this episode, and find out how you can join the Draw the Line National Day of Action on September 20th or even start an action of your own.

This is The Courage My Friends podcast. I'm your host, Resh Budhu.

Thanks for listening.

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