Festival of SOLIDARITY 2013

Alternatives: Solidarity in Action

https://www.alternatives.ca/en/content/page/festival-solidarity-2013

The Festival of Solidarity is a festive event: a place for exchanging and sharing issues concerning social solidarity. The workshops and activities will address the social challenges we currently face in Canada and around the world. The event will feature kiosks, conferences, workshops, and a concert. We look forward to seeing you all this year at Usine C from 10:00 a.m. onward. 1345 av Lalonde, Montréal.

Moving Beyond the Outdated Extractivist Model

The climate is changing fast, leaving the planet gasping for breath. Despite this, and against all common sense, mining and oil companies are accelerating extraction and production at a frantic pace. Their efforts have already caused our CO2 emissions to increase to a staggering 400 parts per million. Bad news for Canadians; three out of four extractivist companies operate in Canada. The “most beautiful country in the world” is the victim of rampant natural resource exploitation by business and government. Ecosystems continue to be weakened, democratic rights are being trampled in order to make way for commerce, and Native communities are driven from their homes. Quebec and the rest of Canada has the responsibility to act now for the sake of future generations here and abroad.

Fortunately, groups opposing these actions are also growing in number. Native and non-Native people are aligning themselves towards the common goal of fighting against these destructive forces; issues concerning pipelines, tar sands, and shale gas are causing increased indignation. From the North to the South, local populations are contesting the abuses brought about by Canadian mining executives, sometimes going as far as reclaiming control over community resources. Everywhere, people are organizing in defense of our common heritage.

Alternatives invites you to its Festival of Solidarity 2013, which will be an opportunity to organize and to celebrate our progress, so far, in the face of this ecological crisis. The changes to our climate are forcing us to reflect on the way we live, produce, and consume. There has never been a better time to challenge our outdated model of resource extraction and its resulting damage to our ecosystems.

Citizens, students, workers, and activists from all over are expected to attend en masse.

SCHEDULE

10:00 am : Opening Conference
Countering the Canadian Extractivist Model

The present Canadian economic model is so entirely concentrated on exploiting our natural resources that three out of four international extractivist companies have their head offices in this country. The conference will focus on the extraction of minerals and on petroleum production, two Canadian “specialties.”

In Canada and in other areas where Canadian industries are at work, the environmental tragedies multiply, the local communities and indigenous peoples are displaced, legislation designed to protect the ecosystems is dismantled, and the democratic rights of the people are weakened.

In the face of climate change, it is important to develop an alternative to this old and dangerous model. In Latin America and in Canada, communities are organizing themselves. Come see how.
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Panelists : Melissa Mollen Dupuis (Idle no More Qc) ; Carlos Torres (Chile) ; Audrey Yank (Coalition vigilance Oléoducs),
Patrick Bonin (Greenpeace-Qc) Facilitation : Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois

12h30 : Workshop 1 :
Boycot Israeli Apartheid : Welcome to the launch of the Québec BDS Coalition
The growing number of Quebecois organizations that supported the boycott, divestments, and sanctions (BDS) aimed at disrupting Israeli apartheid led to the formation of a BDS-Quebec Coalition. You are cordially invited to attend the launch of this newly formed coalition. Come exchange ideas with members of the coalition and learn about their experiences and strategies to raise awareness and gain international recognition for justice and peace in Palestine. Find out how and why we came to know BDS, and about the lessons learned from BDS's previous campaigns, such as the sustained effort against Apartheid in South Africa. In addition, the workshop will address the issue of whether Apartheid can be discussed in the context of Israel.

With Hala Yassin, Bruce Katz (PAJU) and Laith Marouf
Facilitation: Sabine Friesinger (Member of the coordinating Committee of the BDS-Quebec Coalition)

12:30 : Street Theater : Quebec and the tar sands

A participatory theater presentation that will lead to a discussion with the audience. This is the story of Evelyn, who did an act of nonviolent civil disobedience against Enbridge. She is arrested and that opens a discussion with her community. After the play, a playmaker asks questions to the public. The presentation will be followed by a presentation of the proposed Quebec delegation to Fort McMurray.

Organized by the Coalition Vigilence Pipelines (Covo)

2:00 pm:“Fighting Big Oil” by Nnimmo Bassey

Despite the clear realities of climate change, the exploitation of the environment by oil companies is at its apogee. Each day, new methods allow these companies to drill deeper, with more risks to ecosystems and populations who live in the area. Communities are organizing themselves, and social movements, national and international, are banding together. We can get Big Oil out!

Nnimmo Bassey has been involved in various social and environmental causes for more than 30 years, and is particularly active in denouncing the serious pollution caused by the oil company Shell in his native land, Nigeria. In 1996, he internationalized the fight, creating Oilwatch Africa to support local struggles. In 2005, he began one of his most important battles against Big Oil that resulted in a decision from the Constitutional Court of Nigeria declaring gas flaring illegal. A few years later, in 2010, he was awarded the Alternative Nobel Peace Prize. Finally, in 2012, he published his first book, “To Cook a Continent: Destructive Extraction and the Climate Crisis in Africa.” In the book, Bassey demonstrates that issues surrounding the exploitation of natural resources and climate change affecting Africa cannot be separated from neoliberal logic that dictates the maximization of profits.

Bassey will be introduced by Dominic Champagne, a member of the Order of Canada and a recipient of the title, Person of the Year for 2006, awarded by La Presse and Radio-Canada. Champagne was also a major organizer of Earth Day 2012, where hundreds of thousands gathered on Mount Royal in Montreal for one of the biggest environmental events in the history of Quebec.

16h00 Workshop 3 :
Mining in Canada
Canada is to mining what Switzerland is to banking. Canada is the ideal refuge for mining companies who find the legislation lax and the taxes agreeable. Furthermore, a generous exemption system allows mining companies to conduct controversial, even criminal, worldwide operations to the detriment of local communities. Despite the frequent collusion among local governments and these companies, communities are organizing to stand up for themselves. Many of their efforts have been successful. For example, in El Salvador, the giant Goldcorp has recently been shown the door... Journal of Struggles.

With David Pereira from the Centre of Study on investment and commerce (El Salvador); Ricardo Lamour, "Ça m’concerne"  A campaign on Canadian Mining in Africa and  Tania Sagastume, Project Quebec Guatemala (PQAG)
Facilitation: Thérèse Guay (Alternatives et Juste)

4:00 pm Workshop 4 : What kind of international solidarity do we want in 2013?
The area of international solidarity was one of the first Canadian and Quebec sectors seriously damaged by the Conservative government of Stephen Harper. After “selective” cuts to organizations like Alternatives, CIDA was disabled by funding reductions. Eventually, the agency was dismantled and swallowed up by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Meanwhile, members of the Quebec Association of International Cooperation (QAOIC) have begun discussions with the Department of International Relations (DIR) on the creation of a Quebec agency for international solidarity: What kind of solidarity do we want to claim for ourselves?
With Gervais l’Heureux, Executive Director of AQOCI;  Nathalie Guay, CSN; Nikolas Barry-Shaw, Autor of "Paved with good intentions"
Facilitation: Ronald Cameron, Alternatives' Chair

Animation: The People's Choir
The People's Choir formed in December of 2011 at the end of the occupation of Victoria Square. Citizens came together to lend words of protest denouncing neoliberal policies in Quebec and Canada to the tune of well-known songs. The choir will attend the festival and make their voices heard once again.

18h : Concert: Sunrise and Good People with VJ Homing

[Sunrise and Good People - Hope and Liberty](http://vimeo.com/10474722) from [Fabrice Barrilliet](http://vimeo.com/user2976979) on [Vimeo](http://vimeo.com).

The trio composed of Xavier Auclair, Eric Bolduc, and Alain Mercury are no strangers to social solidarity. After they organized the Rock for Tibet tour to raise money for the immigration of Tibetans to Canada, the Dalai Lama invited the trio to the conference in Ottawa on April 18, 2012. The band has traveled far and wide, and their tribal-like rock music is infused with social and humanitarian messages. Moreover, their music video for the song “I Will Not Fall Down” is a tribute to the Tibetan people, and the song “We Are Not Alone” is in support of the student movement that took place in the spring of 2012. In exchange for your participation, our musicians have promised us cool rhythms and amazing videos delivered by VJ Homing.

Many thanks to Romain Lasser, winner of the Festival poster competition!