

WHY  
are  
Indigenous Peoples  
blocking  
the railways?

AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT!



A path towards  
understanding

by Chlouloula ∞ February 2020

translated by Lexicos [www.lexicos.ca](http://www.lexicos.ca)

It can be hard to untangle the **CAUSES** of the blockades and the Indigenous Peoples' **ANGER**.

- We live in parallel realities and know very little about each other.
- There are **BIG** parts of our history that we don't know.
- Many prejudices persist and are spread by the media.
- The media tend to focus on the CONSEQUENCES of the blockades and little on their CAUSES.

We need to take a look back in time...

*IMAGINE...*  
That you have a beautiful home  
and you WELCOME strangers  
who were lost.



Have you  
eaten?



Then, without even saying  
**THANK YOU**, they quickly take possession  
of the house, impose their laws on you  
and lock you in the basement.





HOW  
WOULD YOU  
FEEL?

Unfortunately, this metaphor  
shows too well the relationship  
between CANADA and INDIGENOUS  
PEOPLES

Let's take a closer look...

## ROYAL PROCLAMATION

Constitutional foundation  
for WHITE/INDIGENOUS relations.

Recognition of NATION status and  
the Crown's responsibility to have  
CONSENT when settling new lands.

1763

1867

## CANADIAN CONSTITUTION

Article 91 (24)

The Parliament of Canada  
has exclusive legislative  
authority in relations with  
Indigenous Peoples.

1876

"SAVAGES ACT"  
which will become  
"THE INDIAN ACT"

OBJECTIVE:  
Dispossession of Indigenous  
territory and assimilation.

Indigenous Peoples are placed  
under the guardianship of  
the State.



REPATRIATION  
OF THE CONSTITUTION

Section 35

The existing ancestral or treaty  
rights of Indigenous Peoples are  
RECOGNIZED and CONFIRMED.

1982

1997

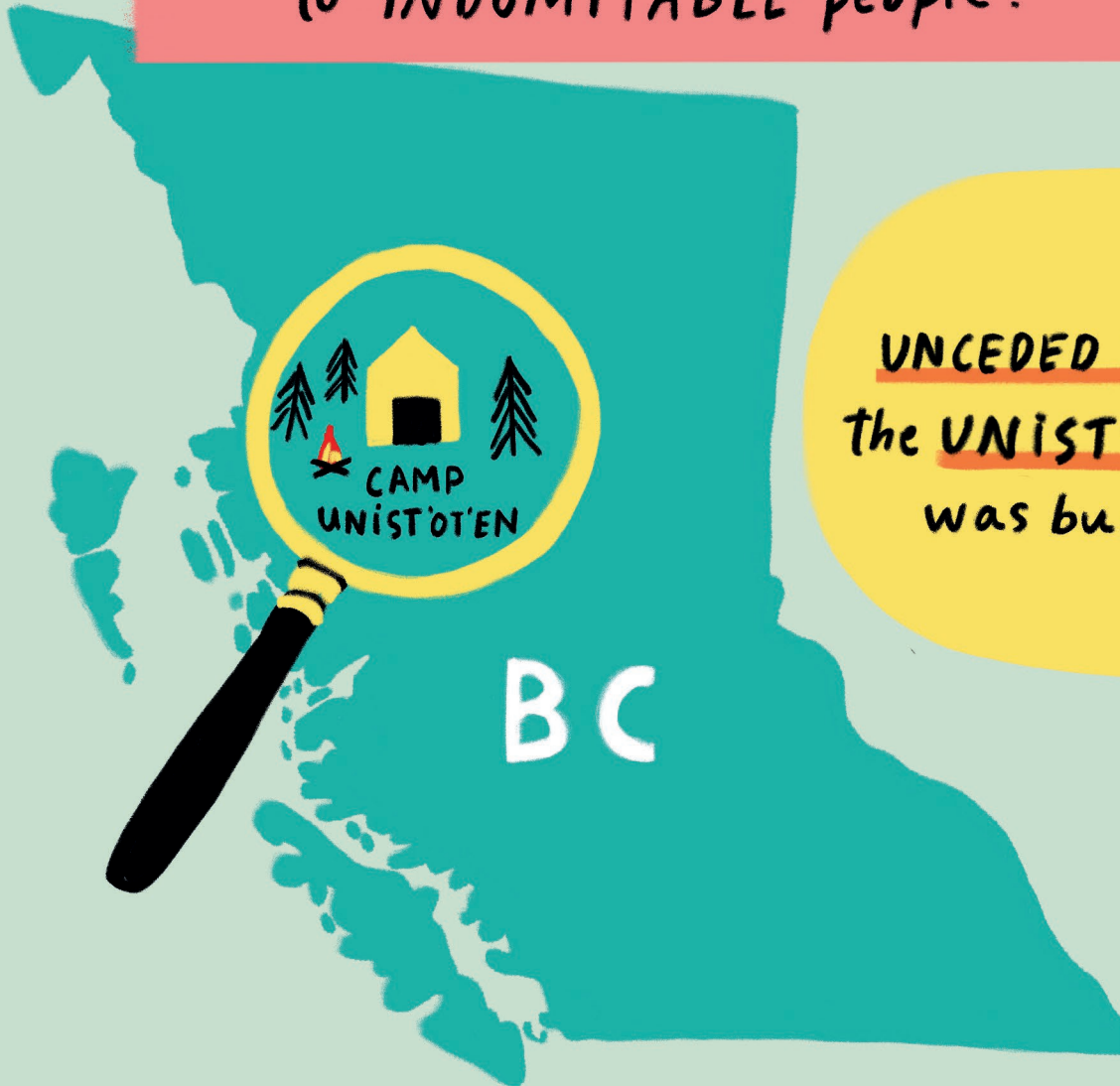
"DELGAMUUKW DECISION"  
SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENT

Recognizes the ancestral rights  
of Indigenous peoples over their  
territories as well as their traditional  
leadership.

This means that UNCEDED  
TERRITORIES are under Indigenous  
jurisdiction.



Northern British Columbia is home to INDOMITABLE people.



On UNCEDED TERRITORY, the UNIST'OT'EN camp was built in 2010

The aim is to make their PRESENCE on the territory VISIBLE, even though they have occupied it for more than 1,000 years.

This is a way of protesting against the THREAT of pipelines that several industries want to pass through their 22,000 km<sup>2</sup> territory, which, it should be remembered, is recognized as belonging to the WET'SUWET'EN nation and UNDER ITS JURISDICTION.\*

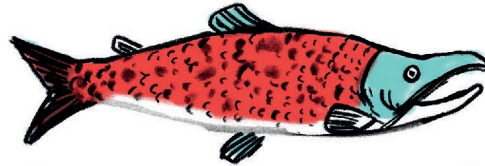
\* Delgamuukw Decision- Supreme Court 1997

The Wet'suwet'en have many reasons to be concerned about pipelines.

As nomadic people on an extremely rich territory, their **LIFESTYLE** is intimately linked to



fishing



Sockeye Salmon country



trapping

These projects threaten the entire ecosystem.



MARLENE HALE  
WET'SUWET'EN  
WHO LIVES IN MONTREAL

How is a moose supposed to cross a pipeline?

A few years ago, there were three million salmon coming up the rivers. Each family had enough to get through the winter. This year, there were 10,000 for a distribution of two fish per house.

WARNING!

Because we have a relationship with the land, we are the first to see the changes.

We are the canaries in the mine.

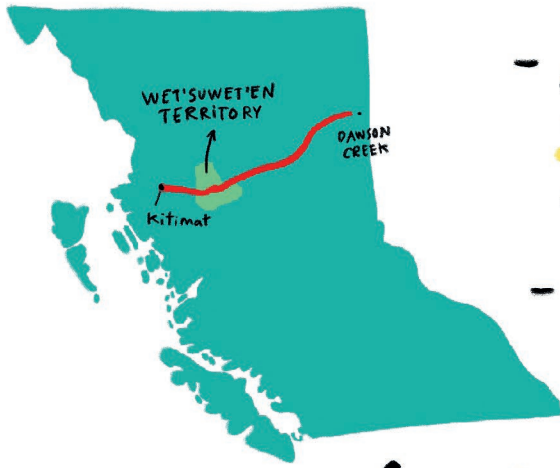


MELISSA MOLLEN DUPUIS



The current threat is called...

# THE COASTAL GAS LINK PROJECT



- A 670 km PIPELINE to transport SHALE GAS to an LNG terminal for export to Asia.

- \$40 billion project

= 8 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>  
+/- 856 831 new cars  
5% of B.C. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

## ON SHALE GAS

- Soil fragmentation
- Uses of a lot of water
- Toxic products used and NOT DISCLOSED
- Risk of impact on water tables
- LESS PROFITABLE \$\$\$

~~TRANSITION ENERGY~~

While Canada is far from meeting its CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets for 2030, it is imperative to reduce emissions from the most polluting sectors, namely:

- THE PRODUCTION OF FOSSIL FUELS
- PETROLEUM CONSUMPTION IN TRANSPORTATION

This project will increase both.



# YES, but the BAND LEADERS have AGREED to the pipeline so **WHERE'S THE PROBLEM?**

1 According to the Indigenous leadership that prevails here (again DELGAMUUKW DECISION-1997) the territory in question is not under the jurisdiction of the band council but under that of the hereditary chiefs.

## BAND CHIEFS

- System imposed by colonization. Derived from the "Indian Act".
- Deal with the day-to-day affairs of the community and the territory of the RESERVES.

vs

## HEREDITARY/TRADITIONAL CHIEFS

- Traditional system that survived colonization despite all efforts to eliminate it.
- Take care of the WHOLE ancestral territory and have as their role to protect it for the next 7 generations.

→ It can happen that the same person plays both roles, which can be confusing, but this is not the case here.

## 2 IS IT A REAL CHOICE?

Do you want a pipeline?

YES

WE'RE GOING TO GIVE YOU MONEY

NO

WE'RE NOT GOING TO GIVE YOU ANYTHING

(AND WE'RE GOING TO DO IT ANYWAY)

Endemic poverty on (underfunded) reserves can be a MAJOR incentive to say YES



The government's TACTIC of addressing the wrong authority is revealing.

They are looking to IMPOSE a project (still!) and to DIVIDE (a strategy that has proven its worth).

But the indomitable WET'SUWET'EN do not intend to let this happen and continue to DEFEND THEIR RIGHTS AND THEIR TERRITORY in a PEACEFUL way, armed with their drums and SACRED chants.

WE DEFEND OUR TERRITORY  
FOR EVERYONE



Their customs and cultures have long been FORBIDDEN and we can only salute their resilience and strength to be still here today, despite the efforts of White people to relegate them to the realm of folklore.



FEBRUARY 10, 2020

# THE INVASION

A ceremony took place at UNIST'OT'EN Camp to honour the memory of missing women and girls.



For it must be remembered that more than 1,200 Indigenous women have gone missing or been murdered in Canada since 1980, against a background of GENERAL INDIFFERENCE



This situation can be described as a real **GENOCIDE**

But I disgress...



The RCMP decides that this ceremony is a good time to intervene and impose an injunction allowing the industry (CGL) to take over the territory.



HELICOPTERS



WEAPONS OF WAR



DOGS

Many repressive methods are used.  
7 people are arrested in the middle of their singing.  
The media is muzzled (fortunately, the scene was documented).



The LAND DEFENDERS are treated as CRIMINALS and this is the image desired by their opponents.





## SIDE NOTE ON THE RCMP

It is relevant to note that the RCMP, formerly the NWMP, was basically created to control Indigenous populations and quell rebellion.

It was also in charge of picking up (kidnapping would be a more appropriate term) the children to take them to residential schools where they were prevented from speaking **THEIR LANGUAGES, PRACTICING THEIR CUSTOMS**, not to mention the widespread abuse they experienced.

**THEY STOLE THE CHILDREN  
FROM THE LAND  
NOW THEY STEAL THE LAND  
FROM THE CHILDREN**

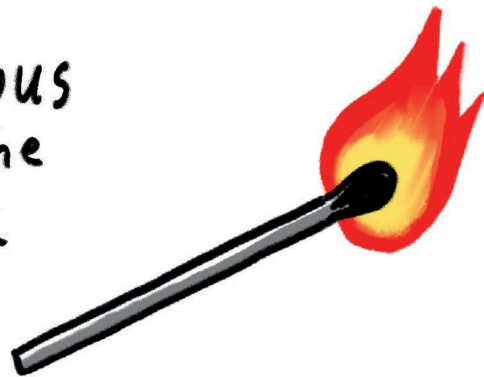


It is therefore a VERY TENSE RELATIONSHIP between INDIGENOUS PEOPLES and the RCMP and its presence on their territory is in itself an act of AGGRESSION

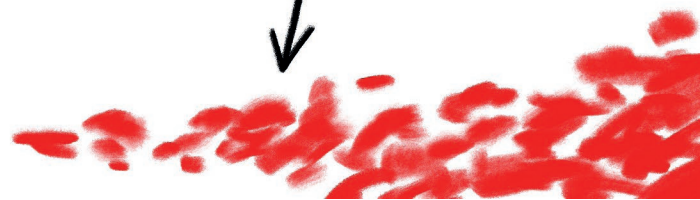
To add INSULT to INJURY, people from the industry invaded the territory as soon as the RCMP made arrests.



This **CONTEMPTUOUS** intervention was the spark that ignited the fire.



5 centuries  
of colonialism





# INDIGENOUS PEOPLE ACROSS THE COUNTRY UNITE IN SOLIDARITY WITH WET'SUWET'EN



They are disrupting the rail system across the country and showing us their **STRONG IMPACT**, while remaining **NON-VIOLENT**.

Using this pressure tactic is not insignificant, since the railways played a crucial role in Canadian colonial history.

It's cold!  
We'd REALLY much prefer to be doing something else!



They are calling for the **RECOGNITION OF INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE**

It's their **RIGHT TO EXIST** that is **THREATENED**.



PROPANE

YES

IT'S

TRUE



The BLOCKADES are causing  
SIGNIFICANT INCONVENIENCES

BUT

This is nothing compared to the prejudice  
and disrespect that Indigenous Peoples  
have suffered since colonization.

REMINDER: To date, 56 communities still do  
not have access to CLEAN DRINKING WATER!!!

Not to mention the dangers that await  
us if we continue to approve these kinds of projects.

HOW TO  
BE HEARD  
IF WE  
DON'T  
DISTURB?







## RECONCILIATION

long-awaited, won't happen through the government but **THROUGH THE PEOPLE.**

Let's acknowledge our history and **CHANGE WHAT FOLLOWS FOR THE FUTURE.**

We were more than 500,000 people in the streets of Quebec demonstrating for the planet.

Today, Indigenous Peoples need our support to protect the **LAND** and their cultures.

They have so much to teach us.

**WE HAVE NO MORE TIME TO LOSE.**



# THIS MAKES NO SENSE! WHAT CAN I DO?

- LISTEN TO WHAT GROUPS HAVE TO SAY AND WHAT THEY NEED
- GET INFORMED
- GET INFORMED
- GET INFORMED
- DON'T "UPSTAGE" COMMUNITIES AND TAKE THE MICROPHONE FOR THEM
- SHOW YOUR SUPPORT
- GO SEE THE "WET'SUWET'EN ALLIES TOOLBOX"  
[www.unistotencamp/supportertoolkit/](http://www.unistotencamp/supportertoolkit/)

♥ SOLIDARITY WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE ♥