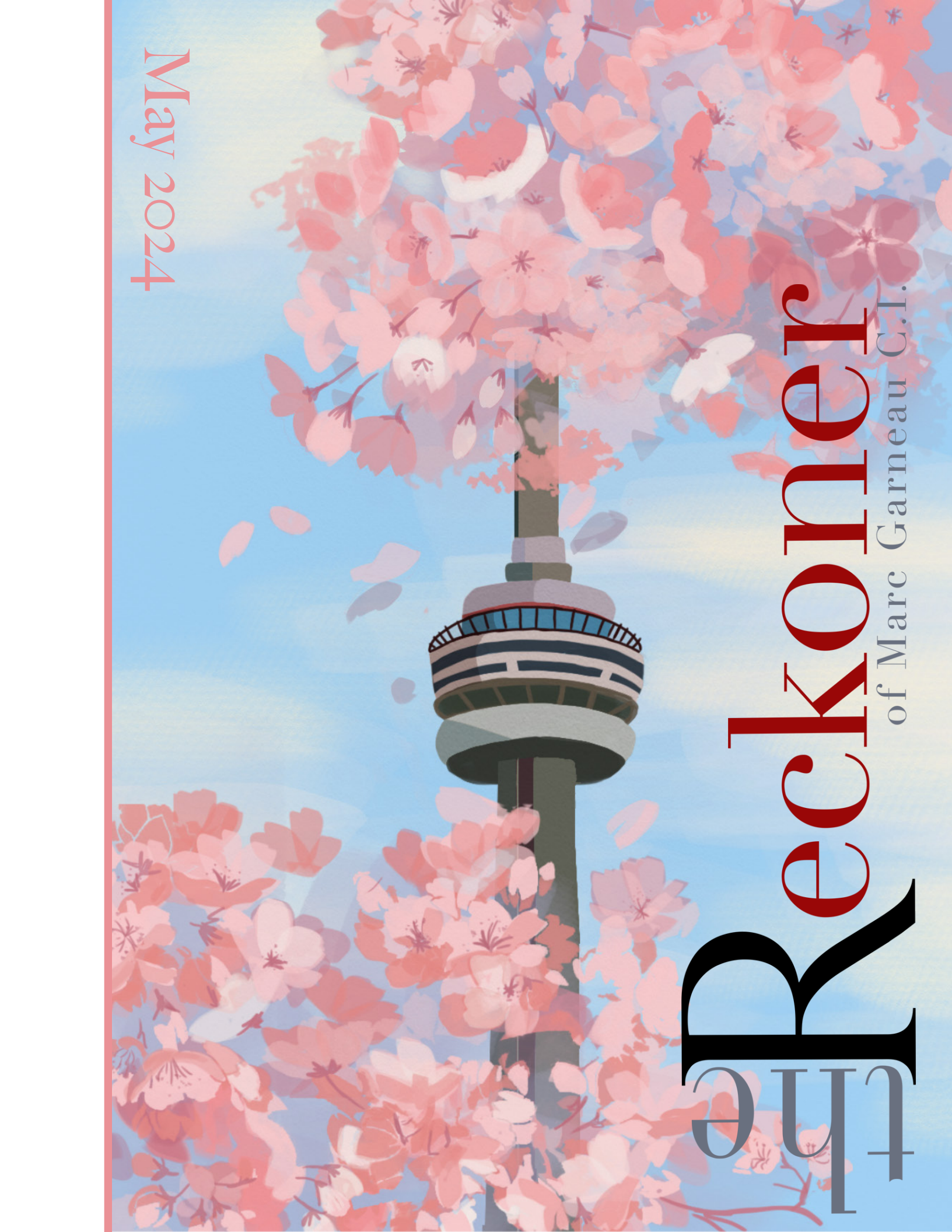


May 2024

An artistic illustration of the CN Tower in Toronto, Canada. The tower is depicted in a stylized, painterly manner with a grey and white color scheme. It is surrounded by a dense canopy of pink and red cherry blossoms, which appear to be blooming around the structure. The background is a soft, light blue sky with a hint of a sunset or sunrise glow. The overall style is romantic and celebratory.

the Reckoner

of Marc Garneau C.I.

the Reckoner

of Marc Garneau C.I.

19 MAY 2024

VOL 12 NO. 4

Cover Art: Yuewen Gao

NEWS

- 4 TEDx MGCI Youth: Bold Ideas, Bright Futures
- 5 Getting a Sample of the World of Data Science at the 2024 Florence Nightingale Day

LIFE

- 6 The Zone of Interest and the Banality of Evil
- 8 Not Again
- 9 Thoughts

EDITORIAL

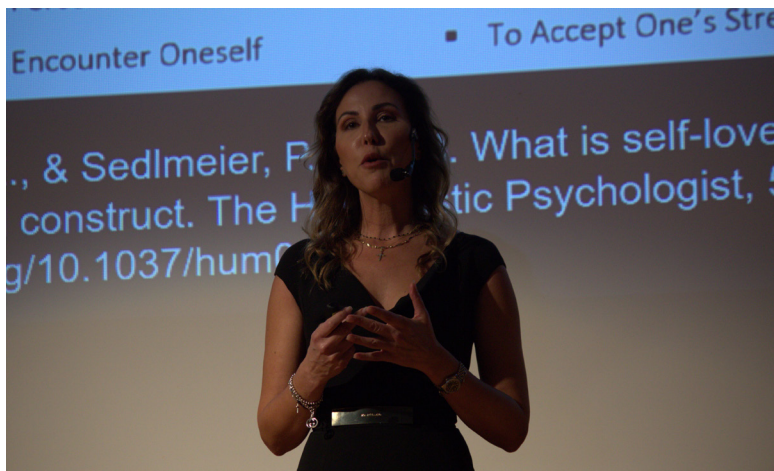
- 10 America Votes 2028
- 14 Confronting the Epidemic of Violence Against Women

NEWS BOARD

A board to keep the student body informed about their school and local community.

TEDx MGCI Youth: Bold Ideas, Bright Futures

by THANUSA PASKARAN



Photographs: Grace Zhu

On the evening of 11 April, TEDx MGCI Youth came to life at Marc Garneau CI. From 5 PM to 7:15 PM, five speakers gave twenty-minute talks relating to this year's keynote: "Bold Ideas, Bright Futures." The theme was designed to foster diversity and creativity in the talks and encourage people to think outside traditional boundaries.

TEDx MGCI is a youth-led event that takes after esteemed TEDx events. It features professors, entrepreneurs, and student speakers who aim to educate and inform young people by giving a platform for interesting and distinctive topics. It serves as a forum to network and meet other TED event leaders.

The evening commenced with Victor Jiang, a Grade 10 student at MGCI as he

gave his talk: "I Talked To A Random Person Every Spare Lunch I Had." It was then followed by the event's first guest speaker, Lucas Vespoli. His talk "How To Change Your Life With A Single Decision" used his expertise in business and neuroscience to deep dive into the science of decision-making. The next speaker was Vandana Puranik, a marketer, innovator, and strategist, who builds businesses and helps solve impossible problems. A Wall Street Journal bestselling author, and international speaker, Ms. Puranik sought to transform the way people think with her "The One Skill That Has The Power To Change Everything" talk. This was followed by a ten-minute intermission from 6:15 to 6:25 where guests were able

to network and talk with the speakers. The next speaker was writer, editor, and certified life coach Teresa Greco, who gave her talk about "Self Love: The Ultimate Happiness Hack," and was followed by Grade 11 Student Andy Sun who closed the program with his "How To Stop Finding Your Passion" talk. After closing notes were presented, the event came to an end.

TEDx MGCI Youth served as an event to promote innovation and exploration with the inspirational talks presented by each wonderful speaker. Not only did it offer attendees a chance to listen to inspirational keynotes from renowned professional speakers, but also a chance to hear from students at MGCI concerning topics dear to them. ■

Getting a Sample of the World of Data Science at the 2024 Florence Nightingale Day

by NEVETHA ARULLINKAM

Florence Nightingale, “The Lady with the Lamp,” is widely known as the founder of modern nursing for her work in the Crimean War. In addition to this, however, she was also a statistician and a pioneer in data visualization [1]. On 2 March, the Canadian Statistical Sciences Institute (CANSSI) and the University of Toronto Department of Statistical Sciences aimed to honour her legacy in hosting their second annual celebration of Florence Nightingale Day. Thirty high school students, including some from Marc Garneau, attended.

The event, which ran from 10 AM to 2 PM, took place at the University of Toronto with the goal of promoting gender diversity in data science. The students who participated took part in various data-science-oriented activities, spoke with professionals in the field, and were provided with lunch.

The activities, which students completed in rotations, allowed them to explore different aspects of statistics. In one activity, the participants selected small samples to estimate the mass of toy dinosaurs as they discussed bias. In another, they visualized the moods of different music artists using the programming language R and the Spotify API.

“I really enjoyed the cats and dogs activity,” said Grade 10 attendee Evie Murdock, referring to an activity where students devised creative ways to conclude whether a lost pet was a cat or a dog by comparing its characteristics to a sample of other pets. “That was fun.”

Following the activities, students took part in “speed rounds,” where they spoke to guest speakers about university, career paths, and other topics related to data science.

“I want to go into actuarial science, so I wanted to get a feel for what that might be like,” said Lisa Bolsinger, a Grade 12 participant, on her motivation for attending. Actuarial science, insurance, consulting, and non-profit were among the

sectors represented by the speakers.

Annie Collins, a guest speaker and data scientist for the non-profit GivingTuesday, spoke about her work in the industry. “I create and analyze surveys that ask people about their giving behaviours. [...] I enjoy being able to quantify abstract concepts like generosity, and to use novel methodologies to help give people a better understanding of peoples’ behaviours. I also really enjoy being able to answer their questions with data-driven research and writing about my work in a way that is both accessible and interesting to a broader audience.”

Overall, students left satisfied and with a better understanding of data science than when they first walked in, holding laminated copies of their earlier music data visualizations.

“I’d definitely come again,” Evie said.

“It [was] really fun to connect with students and other profes-

sionals in a more informal setting,” said Annie, leaving with some advice for students. “Data science is a relatively new and very broad field at the moment. If you are interested in doing data science, you will of course need to work on your technical skills like math, statistics, and coding, but it is just as important to ask interesting research questions and be able to communicate your results clearly. It can be helpful to identify a topic or topics that are of interest to you that will help narrow your focus, allow you to apply your skills, and get you familiar with different types of data. And as early as you can, start working with real-life data sets. Anything can be data, and the real-world data is almost always messy and complicated, so it’s important to get used to this and learn ways to deal with it.” ■

Works Cited

[1] <https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/florence-nightingale-lady-lamp>

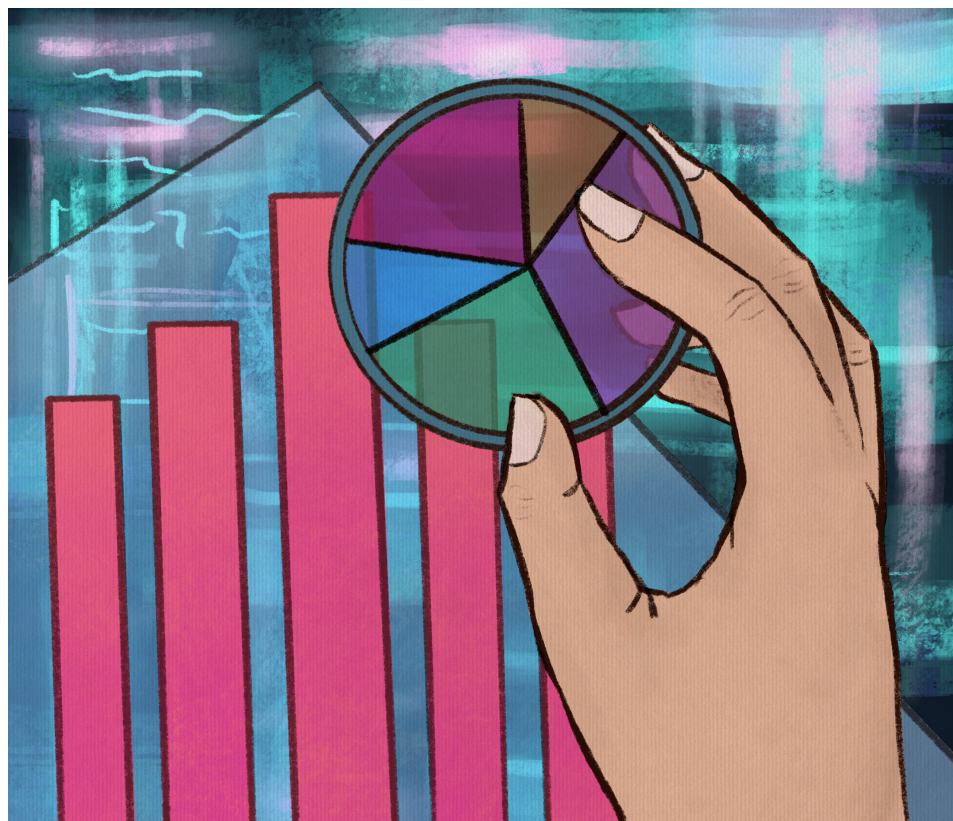


Illustration: Sonia Ravindran

LIFE BOARD

A board for imaginative self-expression through written and visual content.

The Zone of Interest and the Banality of Evil

by GRACE ZHU

Angelus Thomsen works at Auschwitz, he doesn't want to be here—if you want to kill Berlin, kill his uncle, he's just a cog-turner in the factory of Nazi bureaucracy; he's just doing his job. Paul Doll works at Auschwitz, he doesn't want to be here—he's exhausted, the toiling, the stench—in fact, if the thousand-year Reich truly craves consolidation, he's better off in the East trampling the Bolsheviks—but no, he's here, he's following orders; he's just doing his job. Szmul works at Auschwitz, he doesn't want to be here—work is a loose word, Arbeit macht frei, he's a Geheimnisträger, “martaur”—keeper of secrets, witness bearer—he lives and his brothers die, he eats and his brothers die; he's just doing his job.

From 14th May to 9th July of 1944, Adolf Eichmann sent four transports daily—each carrying 3000 Hungarian passengers—to Auschwitz. That's 12,000 per day which made at least 437,000 Jews in that period alone. Eichmann signed the papers and made the calls, he did his job. The next gear was Rudolf Höss—from whom Aktion Höss would derive its name. The trains arrive and Höss would be there at the ramp to oversee the transfer of its passengers to the chambers mere meters away. Höss didn't shoot them, stab them, he didn't draw blood—he did his job. The SS manned the gas chambers, they were glorified footmen at best, hardly the conductors of genocide. They dropped Zyklon B through the vents and waited, they would not watch them die, they did not kill them, the gas did—they did their jobs. The Germans were not concerned with the corpses, that was the burden of the Sonderkommandos. They were prisoners too,

lucky or unlucky enough to be allowed to live so that they could burn the bodies of their neighbors, friends, mothers, sisters, and sons. They had to do their jobs.

The Holocaust was not a slaughter, it was a fatal yet precise and efficient assembly line. Totalitarian evil thrives on order, on systems, on bureaucracy, on administration—it's frigid and dispassionate. Unlike earlier Christian anti-semitism, which accused the Jews of the murder of Jesus, Nazi anti-semitism was justified by pseudo-scientific and racial means. Eugenics was born out of Darwinism, survival of the fittest and all. There are superior races just as there are superior species. It's in the blood, it's scientific, it's factual, it's emotionless.

The characters in Martin Amis's 2014 novel are also entirely emotionless—towards their job at least. They have their motivations, needs, and wants, but all that precedes the backdrop of their work—of Auschwitz, of the Holocaust. The story is narrated by three characters. Thomsen who describes himself in his own words as “-obstruktiv Mitlaufere (obstructive followers). We went along. We went along with, doing all we could to drag our feet and scuff the carpets and scratch the parquet, but we went along.” He's a Nazi officer, not too low, not too high on the pecking order. His uncle is the real life Martin Bormann. Life isn't bad—but he isn't a fanatic, he's just along for the ride. Paul Doll is the commandant of Auschwitz, based on the real Rudolf Höss. Doll insists repeatedly that he is “completely normal.” He's a borderline alcoholic and everyone refers to him as “the Old Boozer”. Sometimes he's even comedic relief. Szmul's sections are

short and the most poetic. He's the Sonderkommandoführer, the special command leader, “-we are the saddest men in the Lager. We are in fact the saddest men in the history of the world. And of all these very sad men I am the saddest. Which is demonstrably, even measurably true. I am by some distance the earliest number, the lowest number—the oldest number.”

Like a fugue, their narratives are sometimes complementary, sometimes repeating, sometimes dividing—but Hannah Doll connects them all. Hannah is the wife of Paul Doll, viewed through the lens of three men, her character isn't complete—but she isn't flat, she's elusive. Thomsen is infatuated with Hannah, Paul's aware of this—when his last efforts to control his wife fail, he coerces Szmul to help him kill her.

That is the driving force, the plot behind *The Zone of Interest*. Not Operation Barbarossa, not the Judenfrage, not the war, not the camp. Banality is the lack of originality, novelty—it's something that's commonplace. For the men of Auschwitz, they smell the fetor in the morning, they feel the thrum of the train tracks at midday, they hear the hushed screams in the afternoon, they see the smoke at night. It's the same everyday and it's been the same for years. Nothing new, it's commonplace—murder is commonplace, it's trite, it's ordinary, it's banal. The Final Solution is implicit in this book, Amis sneaks in pieces of the full picture, it's all we get—pieces, but each are delivered with such apathy, such banality that one could easily zone out and let the pieces fly past as if they described mere numbers on an accountant's paper or graphs on

a banker's report. Szmul tells Doll the number of femurs, Doll asks if he still needs to divide by two; the final number is 107,000. Thomsen finds a young prisoner and gives him a Hershey's bar, he's inquiring on the whereabouts of the Jewish gardener after his sudden disappearance. "-291 men, were uneventfully shot between 17:10 and 17:45."

After the war, Adolf Eichmann was captured by the United States before he made his escape to North Germany, then eventually to Argentina in 1950. He remained there until 1960 when Israeli forces apprehended him and brought him to Jerusalem for trial. His defense was standard, it'd come up multiple times over in Nuremberg—he was just following orders, he was doing his job. "My heart was light and joyful in my work, because the decisions were not mine." Eichmann was found guilty on the 15th of December, 1961—and sentenced to death. As Arendt wrote, "Evil comes from a failure to think. It defies thought for as soon as thought tries to engage itself with evil and examine the premises and principles from which it originates, it is frustrated because it finds nothing there."

To not think is wholly different from to not know. One can know yet still not think. Eichmann surely knew, stating in 1945 "I will leap into my grave laughing because the feeling that I have five million human beings on my conscience is for me a source of extraordinary satisfaction." Eichmann knew the consequence of deportation—but he did not think of the consequence of deportation. Perhaps everyday he set his briefcase down and viscerally imagined the women and children, then consigned them to their deaths, perhaps he even derived joy from it—to be wicked for the sake of wickedness. But what is far more likely, given the scope and capacity of the Holocaust is that every man behaved as so because they did not think. What is more probable—a contingent of wicked men who derive joy from being wicked and lack in totality good of any kind are born in the same generation at just the right economic and political state of unrest and who all happened to be German? Or that perhaps in his

mind, Eichmann consigned numbers to death and not people—and that perhaps for the governing bureaucracy, they are so detached from the actual murder that they don't truly process it. After all, they'll read about it but the bureaucracy doesn't see the corpses, hear the screams, see the blood—the trees are still green and their beer will still taste the same.

All of this is not to say that banality is a justification of any kind, it doesn't lessen their evil or dilute their actions. Totalitarian evil is merely an idea as to how evil can function on a mass scale. The readiness of the assignment of people to either possessing good, or lack of good—and such implying that certain people are just inherently evil so evil people perform evil because they enjoy it—is archaic and uninspired. That line of thought implies that evil is inevitable and that there will always be evil people—but so much evil is avoidable. The Holocaust was the product of evil people making evil decisions because of some specific reason—not because wicked people were there to enjoy their own wickedness and thus commit inevitable genocide en masse. Again, it must be stressed absolute evil—or inherent pure evil where the will to do evil solely derives from the state of lacking good, is not morally better or worse than totalitarian evil; the Nazis are in no way justified or vindicated.

Take anti-homeless architecture for an example. One can apply the idea of the banality of evil and say the detachment of bureaucracy from the people they're affecting and overall lack of thinking is resulting in the shoddy decision. So from this we can discern the point of impact—detachment may be the cause of evil and thus by ameliorating this issue we can hope to lessen the evil created. This is a much more productive way of thinking than just concluding that lawmakers consciously want to torture homeless people.

Thomsen is evil because he does not think—he has disassociated, disconnected any action he cannot immediately reconcile to a different projection, so he doesn't have to think. "In the Kat Zet, like every perpetrator, I felt doubled (this is me but it is also not me; there is a

further me)." Doll is evil because he does not think—he cannot think. "Here at the KL, in the cremas, in the pits; they're dead. But then so are we, we who obey...The questions I asked myself on the Reich Day of Mourning: they must never recur. I must shut down a certain zone in my mind." If Doll starts thinking, he will not be able to continue doing.

Eichmann did not have to fire a gun or sharpen a blade, but he murdered millions of Jews with ink and paper. How many people can kill one million with a knife? How many people can kill one million if all they had to do was sign—if they believed that one million would do the same to them, if their tea doesn't get any colder and the sky doesn't grow any darker with each passing thousand—if they've been doing the same thing for the past month—what's another 12,000? Such is the banality of evil.

The columns stay ashy and the crematorium is always burning. The Sonderkommandos are building another pyre because the buildings are full. The trains keep coming—the stench heaves farther day by day. Someone is planting flowers in their garden. The machine churns, nobody quite knows what it is that they're doing—but they know exactly what's going on. The machine churns, everybody has a job to do in the zone of interest. ■

Works Cited

- [1] Arendt H. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. Penguin Books; 1963.
- [2] Longerich P. *Holocaust : The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews*. Oxford University Press; 2010.
- [3] Waysman D. The Mossad man behind Eichmann's capture - interview. *The Jerusalem Post* | JPost.com. December 22, 2021. Accessed February 18, 2024. <https://www.jpost.com/j-spot/article-689497>.
- [4] Author: Martin Amis. *The Zone of Interest*. Vintage Books; 2015.
- [5] Eichmann, Revisited. *The Jerusalem Post* | JPost.com. Published April 20, 2011. Accessed February 18, 2024. <https://www.jpost.com/Jerusalem-Report/Jewish-World/Eichmann-Revisited>
- [6] Plotinus, *The Perfect Library*. Plotinos Complete Works. CreateSpace; 2015.
- [7] Eugenics and antisemitism – The Holocaust Explained: Designed for schools. *The Holocaust Explained.org*. Accessed February 18, 2024. <https://www.theholocaustexplained.org/how-and-why/eugenics-and-antisemitism/>
- [8] Chare N, Williams D. *Testimonies of Resistance*. Berghahn Books; 2019.

Not Again

by YOLANDA ZHOU



Illustration: Ivy Liu

Not Again.

If the last time already happened, what is this? The last of the last times? Hopefully the very last of the last of the last time you've promised yourself last, last, last, last time ago. Maybe even further back than that. A simple mental promise to yourself after that disaster(s).

It was painfully slow. You brace yourself upon the impact, tensed up knowing what will come. You know exactly how you got to this moment, every excruciating detail. Every single twist and turn that has led you to another dead end. You want to travel back, maybe even just for a minute. There are a million different things you could've done. Why did you choose the most painful, stupid choice?

But it's "fine".

Everything will be alright. You'll grow, cherish your past and learn.

Whatever happened in the past will be a stepping stone for a greater future, you foolishly assert as you stumble over stone after stone. All these battle scars shall be resume material! The bumps and bruises exist only to increase your pain tolerance! You will certainly never trip again, clearly with all this experience, all this suffering, this will be the last unbearably stupid mistake I fall prey to.

They always make it sound so easy. One pivotal moment that gets a couch potato off TV and out to start a new world. One lesson that gets a student to top the class. They always wake up and decide to start doing something. All the whimsical biographies, memoirs, and fantasies that mythicise the moment. Perhaps this is THE moment. This is your moment. Life will 180 from here on out. Everything will change.

Mistakes are simply bound to

happen. They are inevitable. Just move on. You will change. Right? One day, there will be no more. One day, one glorious day, you will become as great as everyone you've compared yourself to.

Perhaps you will change with the freezing cold wind passing through. The fall's harvest withers at its wake. Snow blankets the frozen ground. The world feels almost devoid of life as the animals scamper off, but it's instantly filled by the festivities surrounding winter. Everyone is preparing for something, it's warm, happy. It feels too calm. How could it possibly be this easy?

And again. Perhaps a mistake at a party, another problem at school, a stupid stupid mistake.

You anticipate it. You tense up on the impact. Another wrong step.

It's okay. You will change. Right? ■

Thoughts

by LOVELY GEBEYEHU

I kneel towards the stained, brick walls. The water drips from the tarnished sink in tune with my heartbeat. My body aches but my mind roams other realms, regardless of every shock.

When will I be released from this cage, enhanced with these sturdy prison bars and your typical rotting body stench? Am I forgotten, left to die, a relic of existence?

I await my trial, my retribution. What if this is my sentence-to be left isolated with my invading thoughts, echoing through the walls, threatening to never die. To never leave. Forever.

I occasionally hear a new instrument joining the solitude: footsteps and murmurs adding to the ominous melody, but no. Nobodys coming. It's all a fragment of my imagination-a game my mind plays to entertain itself-torturing me.

When I first arrived in this cell, I cried. How foolish of me to think someone cared of my distress. I screamed, I yelled. I moaned but my thoughts were all that responded to my vehement cries. "No one's coming for you." they'd taunt. "You will die here." has remained the script of my nightmares.

I no longer persist to hold on to hope, to my future, for there is none. My thoughts are the only thing holding on now-to my family, my companions, memories and tears. It was

all evicted by one act against authority. I have destroyed myself, my future-my destiny now is to become a relic of existence. I will forever lay here, not dead nor alive. "Dead, but not privileged to die. Alive but as good as dead."

"Mel! Mel!" I hear another

thought singing a rather cruel melody; It's loud, familiar, promising a long forgotten hope.

"Come on, where are you?" Why is it so loud?

"MEL!" A sudden shock of electricity awakens me, I look over to the prison bars and I see...

"A-"

"Shhhh!" he hissed. "I'm getting you out of here." ■



Illustration: Sadaf Jaffary

EDITORIAL BOARD

A board that amplifies student voices through supported opinions.

America Votes 2028

by ORIANA ZHOU

The wealthiest country in the world has survived a battle against Britain, created a Constitution, squashed the Civil War, won World War 2, and invaded Iraq. She managed to pull through the rocky and violent journey of racial integration, withdraw from Vietnam, and recently ended military operations in Afghanistan [1]. In five months, she will head into another contentious election—three deeply flawed men as the choices Americans get to choose from. A rematch between Biden and Trump is certainly the worst combination that could have happened. But parties are looking beyond 2024. The shadow of 2028 looms behind party lines. Strategy, funding, and candidates are already being considered. Both parties have viable and electable candidates... so who are they?

For starters, it is imperative to understand party priorities and party bases to determine which candidates have a chance. The main parties are the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, the former being more “liberal” and the latter earning the title as the “conservative” party.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, modern Democrats have lauded the principles of modern American liberalism. This is not to be confused with classical liberalism or liberalism in general. Modern American liberalism supports civil liberties and equality through means of social justice [2]. They believe in using government as a means to bring equality. The Democratic Party supports LGBTQ+ rights, legal abortion, social security, climate

change action, higher taxes, immigration reform, and a larger government role in providing healthcare and education. In the past, the Democratic Party supported slavery and was largely comprised of Southern, white voters. They were responsible for Jim Crow laws that supported mass discrimination against Black Americans after slavery was abolished. However, the 1930s brought a wave of change to the party and the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) who enacted the New Deal programs during the Great Depression. The New Deal expanded government spending, established employment programs, and introduced more government regulation through setting agriculture standards, regulating finance, and setting up labour laws to ensure fair treatment of workers [3]. Since then, the election of more Democrats such as Harry Truman, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama have built on liberal traditions the party began in 1932. The Democratic Party has been associated with the desegregation of schools, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, expanding free trade through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and expanding government funding of healthcare through the Affordable Care Act (known as Obamacare).

The modern Republican Party is more conservative. They support lower taxes, less government intervention in industry, larger military spending, opposition to a legal path to immigration for illegal immigrants, and a nation-

al abortion ban [5]. Republicans support private services providing healthcare and education. They are less likely to support government-enacted climate change action. The Republican Party’s agenda has largely shifted from its foundations. Established in 1856, the Republican Party was first founded by people who opposed the expansion of slavery to the United States’ new western territories. The Republican Party under Abraham Lincoln frowned upon slavery and after the Civil War, they worked to protect the rights of African Americans. This was the Reconstruction Era. The first Black Americans elected to Congress were Republicans [6]. During that time period, Republicans passed the 13th Amendment, which banned slavery and fought to protect the voting rights of Black Americans. Reconstruction was heavily resisted in the South, where the vast majority of white voters aligned themselves with the Democrats. As mentioned above, southern Democrats enacted racist legislation while Black Americans were violently targeted. During Reconstruction, large businesses flourished in the Northeastern United States, where they enjoyed the most popularity. These wealthy businessmen gained more power within Republican politics. As they gained leadership in the Republican ranks, they realized that fighting for civil rights would be unpopular in a majority-white country and they stopped their efforts to decrease discrimination and reform the American South. Their platform became largely associ-

ated with “big business.” The big business ideology of the Republican Party still exists, through their support of lower corporate taxes and less government involvement in labour laws and regulations. During the Great Depression, the Republican Party collapsed. Faced with sweeping reforms of the New Deal, the Republicans opposed the New Deal. They cited the vast role of government and branded themselves in support of “small government” --- a label which still exists today. During the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s, Northern Republicans and Northern Democrats both supported desegregation. However, southerners were against desegregation. In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson, a Democrat, signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Republican presidential nominee that year, Barry Goldwater, opposed it, citing large use of government power. During this time, many Southern white voters switched to the Republicans and many northern Black voters supported the Democrats. In the 1980s, a new brand of conservatism emerged. It was led by Ronald Reagan, a Hollywood actor and former Governor of California. Reagan was elected President in 1980 and championed lower taxes, larger military spending, and a free market [3]. During this time, Republicans railed against government intervention in race, gender, and religion. The party platform was against abortion and LGBTQ+ rights. In the 1980s and 1990s, a Republican congressman from Georgia named Newt Gin-

grich rose in Republican leadership. In 1994, the Republicans won control of the House of Representatives. Under Gingrich, the House impeached Democrat Bill Clinton, but uniquely, Gingrich started using inflammatory rhetoric against Democrats. He often accused them of being unpatriotic and enhanced the use of performative politics [7]. The



Illustration: Yuewen Gao

Republican Party shifted further to the right. Although George W. Bush was elected in 2000, issues such as immigration became prevalent. There was more immigration, both legal and illegal. Democrats supported reforming immigration and they were joined by a couple of Republicans, notably John McCain and Marco Rubio. However, that gave rise to the Tea Party movement. With rapid

immigration and globalization, right-wing populism rose. In 2016, Donald Trump won the support of the Republican Party and became its nominee for President. Today, Trumpism remains the dominant ideology in the Republican Party.

The majority of Democrats are liberals or “mainstream” Democrats. They generally support a socially liberal agenda, while being able to compromise with Republicans [8]. There are much more progressive Democrats and much more conservative Democrats, however, they do not make up the Democratic base.

The Republican base is a bit more difficult to characterize than Democrats. They are 23% staunch religious conservatives. They are socially conservative and want a larger role of religion in public life. The next 23% are part of the populist right-wing. They are very socially conservative, but agree more with the most progressive Democrats when it comes to criticizing banks and corporations. Both of these groups are strong Trump supporters. 15% of the Republican Party belongs to the traditional conservative wing. They are conservative on issues—especially

economic ones and point to Ronald Reagan as their political idol [9]. They are Trump supporters and would vote for him... but have some reservations. The rest of the Republicans are either conservatives who are against Trump or Republicans who are swing voters and may vote Democrat. Overwhelmingly, it seems that the Republican Party is still behind Trump.

2028 is a year where Biden will not be eligible to run again. The

Democrats will be heading into a crowded primary field where many candidates have the chance to make their mark. Younger Democrats tend to support more progressive reforms, but mainstream liberals are still the largest issue [8]. On the Republican side, Trump doesn't seem to be going away. His daughter-in-law was recently appointed as the Chairwoman of the Republican National Committee, cementing the Trump family and ideology in Republican politics for years to come [10]. There will be many issues in the election, prominently, the culture wars. Battles over trans rights, abortion rights, LGBTQ+ rights, education, and free speech easily stoke fires in political journalism and media. There are concerns over healthcare reform and economic reform. Lastly, foreign policy will likely remain a key issue. Trump ran on a campaign to weaken NATO and with Trump, the Republican Party has turned friendlier to global autocrats. As of 2024, it is unclear when the War in Ukraine will end and when peace will stabilize the Middle East. Lastly, Democrats won't let Americans forget that American democracy is on the line. Voters in both parties have differing opinions. The winning candidate will have to win the majority of voters and broadly appeal to these issues.

The Democrats' Candidates

I think this candidate will win the majority of the Democratic base. They will have to appeal to older Democrats and younger voters, as well as moderates in swing states. They will likely have to be able to fundraise a lot of money to win.

*Josh Shapiro,
Governor of Pennsylvania*

Josh Shapiro became Governor of Pennsylvania in 2023 and enjoys an approval rating of above 50% [11]. Obviously, that may change later on. But he did win the general election with a margin of greater than 10 points in a swing state. Shapiro prides himself in his "common ground" ap-

proach to politics, which is likely to be favoured by the traditional Democratic base. His willingness to work with Republicans and moderate political views boost his electoral chances. Furthermore, being the popular governor of a swing state wouldn't hurt. He has embodied economic populism, promising to fight against student loans and big pharma companies—a message that resonates with many Americans in this economic climate [12]. His message resonates with blue collar workers, who are crucial voters in swing states (Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Pennsylvania). He has demonstrated a smart tactic of focusing on big issues and not playing into culture war discussion topics.

*Gretchen Whitmer,
Governor of Michigan*

Gretchen Whitmer is the Governor of Michigan who was elected in 2018 as part of a national Democratic victory. She has a 48% approval rating, but has gained prominence on the national stage [13]. Whitmer has been extremely successful in getting things done including stricter gun control laws, overturning abortion bans (although the right to an abortion is now part of Michigan's Constitution), and expanded voting rights to name a few [14]. When compared against other candidates, she can easily stand out by pointing to her legislative victories. She also has name recognition and has become a "rising star" in the party, providing her with an advantage in the primaries. She delivered the 2020 State of the Union rebuttal for the Democrats [15].

*Andy Beshear,
Governor of Kentucky*

No one remembers the last time Kentucky voted blue on a federal level, but Beshear has a near 60% approval rating in deep-red Kentucky [16]. Clearly, this may be favourable to him on a federal level to win over large swaths of Republican voters—especially moderates. Furthermore, Democrats want to nominate someone who can win and it is telling that

Beshear can support certain Democratic priorities while remaining popular (or at least not deeply unpopular) among Trump supporters. Beshear describes himself as someone who rejects "anger politics", a label helpful on a national level when he can easily paint himself as a candidate who can get things done [17]. Additionally, Beshear has name recognition, especially when he impressed Democrats nation-wide by winning in a red state. On policy, Beshear ticks many boxes of traditional Democrat views. He supports legal abortion, increasing pensions to public workers (teachers, firefighters, and police officers), raising teacher salaries, increasing funds toward public education, restoring voting rights to felons, supporting equal pay legislation, and increasing healthcare coverage [18]. This will provide him with sufficient support for his policies that the majority of the Democratic base will appreciate. Contrary to many of his fellow Democrats, he does not support an assault weapons ban but will support "red flag" laws. Positioning himself as a moderate and someone who can connect to many red state voters will be an advantage in the primaries and the general election.

There are other Democrats who stand a chance. Gavin Newsom, the Governor of California, has been on national TV and helped Democrats with their fundraising efforts. His only weakness is that California is going up in flames (both literally and figuratively). Perhaps Amy Klobuchar and Pete Buttigieg, who appear to be more moderate and both ran for the 2020 nomination may be popular. However, they face their own swarm of backlash and controversies. Democrats will face trouble finding a candidate who is progressive enough to win the support of the Democratic base and appear conservative enough to win the general election.

The Republicans' Candidates

The Republican nominee will

have to end up supporting Trumpism—or at least not outwardly condemning Trump. Seeing as the Trump family, MAGA ideology, and right-wing populism are quite prevalent in the Republican Party, the nominee will have to win over the support of a very conservative and quite populist base. I am sure some more moderate or anti-Trump candidate will appear, but winningwinning the nomination is an upward battle. While the Republican nominee may face hurdles convincing swing voters to turn toward a Trump-like style of politics, there are many other issues including crime and the economy that are helping the Republicans gain ground.

Sarah Huckabee Sanders

Sanders is the first female Governor of Arkansas and a Republican superstar. She delivered the 2023 State of the Union response for the Republicans and was the former President Donald Trump's Press Secretary. She also hails from a political family—her father, Mike Huckabee, served as the Governor of Arkansas and also ran for president in 2008 [179]. She is experienced in managing and working on political campaigns, making a household name in the Republican Party. Furthermore, her closeness and support for Donald Trump would be popular among the majority of conservatives who have supported Trump. She has the name recognition to make it far into the Republican primaries and her connections will provide her with valuable endorsements. Furthermore, she has supported popular conservative viewpoints on school choice, trans rights, and has backed up inflammatory rhetoric against President Biden [19]. She also has signed numerous pieces of legislation into law, which can be useful for her to be considered a serious legislator [20]. Her message aligns with Republicans on a national agenda, signalling that she will likely pursue politics on a federal level. Furthermore, she doesn't have much against her. She has conservative creden-

tials and no scandals and controversies to significantly harm her.

Glenn Youngkin

Glenn Youngkin is the current Governor of Virginia. Virginia has started to lean Democrat on a national level in the recent years. Both of the U.S. Senators from the state are Democrats (one of them was Hillary's running mate in 2016) and the state voted for Obama, Clinton, and Biden for President. Youngkin is a Republican in a blue-leaning state. This could be advantageous to moderate his image and broaden his support to younger Republicans and more Republicans who are getting tired of Trump. Furthermore, he is less inflammatory than other Republicans, which provides him with a better image than many others who will be unable to win over swing voters. At the same time, he still supports Trump but is less partisan [21]. This means that he can still gain support from Trump supporters while not immediately blocking out new voters. Youngkin's biggest strength is his fundraising abilities. He has managed to reign in large amounts of donations from the Republicans' wealthiest donors, providing him with financial abilities and means for a presidential campaign. Furthermore, he fits the national agenda that Republicans want to advance: parents' rights and culture wars [22]. Many Republicans will be willing to support his policies while he is not too inflammatory to be immediately rejected by more moderate voters.

Other possible candidates for the Republican Party includes Josh Hawley, Byron Donalds, and Greg Abbott. However, based on the current fragile state of Republican leadership, it's unclear how much longer these politicians will remain popular. What's for sure is that the Republicans will value a candidate who will advance the MAGA agenda... and so far... Sanders and Youngkin provide both the stability and image to be a strong candidate. ■

Works Cited

- [1] <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-war-afghanistan>
- [2] <https://learn.saylor.org/mod/url/view.php?id=17374>
- [3] <https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression/new-deal>
- [4] <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-government-and-civics/american-civics-parent/american-civics/v/history-of-the-democratic-party>
- [5] <https://gop.com/about-our-party/>
- [6] <https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/hiram-revels-the-first-african-american-congressman>
- [7] <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2020/07/07/newt-gingrich-republican-party>
- [8] <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/11/09/the-democratic-coalition/>
- [9] <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/11/09/the-republican-coalition/>
- [10] <https://www.msnbc.com/opinion/msnbc-opinion/lara-trump-rnc-2020-election-stolen-rcna145328>
- [11] <https://www.abc27.com/pennsylvania-politics/governor-shapiros-approval-rating-highest-among-recent-predecessors-poll-shows/#:~:text=Shapiro's%20approval%20rating%20is%20in,%25%20disapproving%20and%2020%25%20unsure.>
- [12] <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/josh-shapiro-pennsylvania-doug-mastriano-donald-trump-1234626167/>
- [13] <https://emersoncollegepolling.com/michigan-poll-gov-whitmer-ten-points-more-favorable-than-president-biden-in-michigan/#:~:text=Whitmer%20Ten%20Points%20More%20Favorable%20than%20President%20Biden%20in%20Michigan,-October%2016th%2C%202023&text=A%20new%20Emerson%20College%20Polling,she%20is%20doing%20in%20office.>
- [14] <https://www.mlive.com/politics/2023/11/promises-made-how-many-kept-comparing-whitmers-speeches-to-results.html>
- [15] <https://www.cnn.com/2020/02/04/politics/who-is-gretchen-whitmer-state-of-the-union-response/index.html>
- [16] <https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/news/2023/04/19/kentucky-andy-beshear-fifth-most-popular-us-governor-morning-consult>
- [17] <https://apnews.com/article/kentucky-governor-political-action-committee-4597c2a006ac0757d54eae9c65efa2>
- [18] <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/politics/elections/kentucky/2019/11/06/andy-beshear-policies-kentucky-governor-elects-stances-key-issues/4175862002/>
- [19] <https://governor.arkansas.gov/about/governor-sanders/>
- [20] <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/09/16/sarah-huckabee-sanders-records-law-00116402>
- [21] <https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/13/glenn-youngkin-praises-trump-on-economy-downplays-dictator-fears.html>
- [22] <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/oct/30/hes-pretty-smooth-glenn-youngkin-of-virginia-may-be-a-challenger-for-trump>

Confronting the Epidemic of Violence Against Women

by THANUSA PASKARAN

April 14th marked the start of “Prevention of Violence Against Women Week” in British Columbia. The movement was created by the Battered Women’s Support Services (BWSS) to take action and prevent violence against women. Every year during the third week of April they commemorate the movement by engaging online and offline communities in violence prevention by recognizing that everyone plays a role in preventing violence against girls and women [1]. The province of BC said “They are ready to create an atmosphere of respect and safety for everyone” following the beginning of the movement [2]. Despite concerted efforts from several organizations, statistics relating to gender-based violence remain concerning. This serves as a grim reminder that we are a long way from achieving gender equality and protecting the fundamental rights of women worldwide.

Violence against women can take many forms including physical, sexual, verbal, and psychological abuse. According to the Canadian Women’s Foundation, one girl or woman is killed every 48 hours in Canada, and the cost of dealing with the aftermath of domestic abuse is over \$7 billion [2]. Just before the pandemic, there were some significant shifts relating to women-based violence that signaled positive change, but as the quarantine began, things changed for the worse. During the start of COVID-19, when many were isolated and forced to stay at home, reports of domestic violence skyrocketed. Four years later, as health measures have been lifted and things are starting to get back to normal, there have not been substantial improvements in gender-based violence nationally. From 2020 to the present day, there has been a 30% increase in the killing of women and girls (femicides) by a male suspect in Canada [3]. While this crisis has intensified over the last few years, what has the nation been doing to tackle the issue?

While the government has imposed some changes and raised a considerable amount of awareness, it is not enough to combat the issue. Awareness and action are two very different things. Although the federal and prov-

incial governments have action plans funded, Angela Marie MacDougall, the executive director at BWSS argues that “we’re definitely not seeing the kind of action that we need to see [3].” It is organizations like BWSS that are providing support and services to victims as well as raising awareness and advocating for social change. Unfortunately, the government has failed to foster change and prevent this crisis from progressing. Provincial governments such as the government of British Columbia have deserted these organizations and efforts by providing subpar funding. The little money these organizations receive from the government is insufficient to address the epidemic that is women-based spousal violence in provinces like BC—which has reported the murders of three women in the last week alone.

Violence against women in Can-



Illustration: Sahana Sakthivel

ada is only the tip of the iceberg. Globally, this issue has reached an all-time high with the UN reporting that more than 5 women or girls are killed by someone in their own family every hour (one every 11 minutes). In 2020, approximately 47,000 women and girls were killed globally by their intimate partners or other family members. Asia reported the highest number with an approximate total of 18,600 victims [4]. Furthermore, an estimated 736 million women (1 in 3) reported being subjected to some form of physical and/or sexual vio-

lence in their lives [5]. Factors like age and ethnic/religious status can increase vulnerability. For example, young girls and older women as well as Indigenous women and those who belong to ethnic or religious minorities are the most vulnerable.

Alarmingly, nations are scarcely committing to counteract violence against women and girls. For instance, only 5% of government aid is devoted to combating violence against women, and less than 0.2% is directed to preventing it [5]. More funding for women’s organizations, improved laws, prosecution of offenders, increased services for victims, and training for law enforcement officials are needed to tackle this crisis.

As we reflect on the end of “Prevention of Violence Against Women Week” it is evident that the strive to curb gender-based violence is far from over. The grim reality of national and international statistics reflects the urgent need for action to combat the global epidemic of gender-based violence. It is crucial to acknowledge that awareness is imperative but so is tangible action and adequate support from our governments. While governmental initiatives exist, their effectiveness falls short of the mark, leaving organizations like BWSS to fill the gap. Inadequate funding and limited resources exacerbate the problem, emphasizing the critical need for systemic change. Only through collective action and unwavering determination can we hope to create a future where women and girls around the world can live free from the shadow of violence and fear. ■

Works Cited

- [1] <https://www.bwss.org/take-action/workers-activists/prevention-week/>
- [2] <https://www.mybulkleylakesnow.com/62077/violence-against-women-prevention-month-begins/>
- [3] <https://vancouver.citynews.ca/2024/04/12/violence-against-women-advocate/>
- [4] <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ewelinaochab/2023/11/25/violence-against-women-and-girls-today-one-killed-every-11-minutes/?sh=2a1a254e1e5d>
- [5] <https://www.un.org/en/observances/ending-violence-against-women-day>

The Reckoner

of Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute

EDITOR IN CHIEF

PAUL SHUR

NEWS MANAGER

ANNE LIU

LIFE MANAGER

ANJALI GUPTA

EDITORIAL MANAGER

CHANG LI

OUTREACH MANAGER

LILLIAN LI

PRINT MANAGERS

ERIC TANG
CAROLINE CHENG

PHOTOGRAPHY MANAGER

JUSTIN WEI

ILLUSTRATIONS MANAGER

YUEWEN GAO

WEB MANAGER

MAHYAR YOUSEFZADEH

Photograph: Komal Dagar

