



THE PEP

GAZETTE

OCTOBER 2022

FOREWORD

A huge thank you to everyone that came out to our Semi-Annual General Meeting this month, it was great to have some intriguing conversations with you all. Each meeting has been more productive than the last, we were able to get the ball rolling on some events and projects for the coming months. On November 8th at around 7pm we'll be having a US Midterms hangout and watch party on our Discord server. Feel free to pop in for a minute, and hour, or the whole night if you're up for it. On the 16th of November the MSVU Young New Democrats will be holding their inaugural meeting at noon through Microsoft Teams. Please email scott.ripley@msvu.ca for the link if you are interested in helping to increase awareness of the NDP and its policies on campus. On the 25th, Dr. Grace-Edward Galabuzi will be [giving a talk](#) on the Anti-Black Racism Movement and the Fight for Economic Racial and Climate Justice at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Nova Scotia Office's Annual Fundraising Gala. The event will take place in Rosaria 131 at 6pm. If you would like to attend the event, please email tammy.findlay@msvu.ca as soon as possible to discuss tickets.

And as always, if you are interested in having your writing published in the next issue, be sure to send it to msvupeps@gmail.com before the end of the month. We look forward to hearing what you have to say,

Scott Ripley, President of the MSVU PEPS

VOTING AND THE STUDENT UNION

Natalie Locke

In recent years, the MSVUSU has experienced many ups and downs regarding their staff and representative retention. This month alone, the General Manager has been let go, elections were postponed, and the election results for VP of Student Life was called into question. While providing some helpful services, it is difficult to trust the Union to be a place of professionalism with a student-first initiative.

While a student, I have voted in a few elections for student representatives. However, I have also missed voting periods. This fall, voting was open for less than 48 hours. Virtual polls were available October 18th at 9am to the 19th at 5pm. Students had 32 hours to vote. In addition to the time constraint, the link to vote was difficult to access. The link was sent to students' junk folder and not public in other areas like the SU website, for instance. Students were seeking the link, asking other students for it and messaging SU reps. Others simply did not vote.

University students are notorious for being busy. From drowning in work to perfect time management, our education looks different for all. Not everyone has time to track down a link within 32 hours.

I propose extended voting periods to be more inclusive for people's schedules. The timeframe does not allow for mistakes, like the link delivery. Modeling off federal elections would solve this problem. Federal elections have advance polls, in-person polls, and now mail-in ballots. The voting process does not have to be so complex for the Union, but it does need to be amended.

OPINION – LET’S REFRAME AND RECLAIM ‘QUIET QUITTING’

Scott Ripley

A phrase that has gained popularity this year is “quiet quitting”. In general, this phrase has been used to describe a trend of workers performing only the duties specified in their work contracts and not expending mental or physical energy outside of those defined duties. While this is a concept that goes back as far as the first organized labour movements (work-to-rule, slowdowns, malicious compliance), the fact that it is gaining popularity and a new name among many younger people means that the idea is being discussed a lot in mainstream discourse. News organizations like [CNN](#), [CNBC](#), and [CBC](#) make up the primary search results on YouTube and thus have an out-sized impact on the shaping of this emerging narrative. To their credit, some outlets have been emphasizing the reasons why workers are burnt out and give a sympathetic account of quiet quitters. Others, including any organizations that have [Kevin O’Leary](#) on to voice his views on the matter, tend to use this to further the idea that young people are lazy and that “no one wants to work anymore”. No matter the view of the outlet, all these narratives make one thing clear: worker exploitation is the norm and fighting back is not.

The phrase itself betrays a deeply held view about the nature of work in society. Describing this trend as “quitting” in any capacity frames work as something where it is necessary to go beyond what you are paid to do to be seen as truly working. There are many people who push the “grindset” that if you are not giving the proverbial 110% in your work or side hustles that you are not going to succeed. There is this omnipresent uber-competitive mindset that views workers as having to outshine everyone else in their field as the only way to advance their careers. What this way of viewing labour is missing however is the fundamentally exploitative nature of most forms of work in capitalist society.

Most people in the workforce work for someone else. The products of their labour are not owned by the worker but rather by those who own the company they work for. Furthermore, most people are not paid in proportion to their effort they are paid in proportion to their time. If you work for an hourly wage and you spend your next hour working twice as hard as your previous, you don’t make any more than you would have if you just did the bare minimum. I suspect an argument would be made in response that said something to the effect of “you need to prove you’re worth more money by showing that you’re reliable and invested in your work, then you’ll get promoted and earn more”. What this line of thinking fails to account for is the lived experience of workers in today’s job climate. Upward movement within companies is no guarantee anymore but people don’t have the emotional bandwidth to wait decades for growth.

Workers should not be shamed or called “quitters” when all they are doing is fulfilling their end of a contract. Employers need to realize that the free market goes both ways, if you want more work done you have to pay people more.



TOWARDS PERPETUAL PEACE OR WORLD WAR

Sam Clancey

The periodization of history is an easily contestable field. The variety of perspectives or points of emphasis which are valued by various relevant groups will always lead to a variety of systems to split up the various eras into a comprehensible and meaningful narrative. One method of periodization which is often used is the division of history based on the treaties or conferences ending large all-consuming wars. The end of a total war is generally marked by a new order in the norms and values of foreign relations and the redrawing of borders across the contested territories and especially the defeated powers.

In this view we are currently simultaneously in the era drafted by the victors of WWII and the Cold War. We are living in both simultaneously because while the post WWII international order was developed through various meetings and congresses held by the victorious powers, the end of the cold war was a less well-planned affair. It is certain that the borders of eastern Europe and the politics of central Europe still live in the shadow of the USSR but no thoughtful negotiations by the victorious capitalist powers were carried out in order to ensure long term regional stability. The victory in the cold war was widely believed to represent the beginning of the end of the idea of interstate conflict in general.¹ The post-Cold War order doesn't carry with it a new moral, political and economic mode of life, as the Treaties of Versailles or Westphalia did. Rather, the post-Cold War era is one defined by a victory of liberal foreign policy rather than realist foreign policy.

¹ Fukuyama, Francis. 2013. "The End of History?" In *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace*, edited by Richard K. Betts, 6-18. 4th ed. N.p.: Pearson.

In this way it was expected that the future of peace between great powers would be carried out based on the principals which the United States have long promoted as an antidote to great power conflict (i.e., multilateralism, free trade, negotiated settlements).² From 1989 to 2022 it seemed like they might even be right. Only a dense area of great powers is capable of generating a general world conflict because only such a conglomeration of powers is capable of pulling a vast number of the minor nations into total war. Europe and east Asia are the only regions containing such an environment. The liberal foreign policy order has theorized that a stable democratic nation would never launch a war of aggression.³ So long as democracy is propagated in the majority of countries in those two key regions world war should be impossible, by this view. While wars were waged elsewhere these two regions had been successfully exorcised of the spirit of war for three decades now. However, history has shown us again and again that optimistic, relaxed, utopian foreign policy makers will always let their guard down, like a horror movie protagonist, and allow the monster of war to arise again and again in every cinematic sequel.

The rise of populist nationalism has not been ignored by the liberal world. It is a catastrophe for policy makers because even if the premises of Liberal foreign policy are assumed to be true it cannot be useful as a method to understand interstate conflict if a liberal society is at any moment, capable of transforming into an illiberal society. In this way liberal theory on peace and conflict only moves the target of analysis from foreign policy itself to domestic politics. The ability for successful liberal democracies to turn on their liberal values and embrace nationalism is a threat to the conceptual basis of the post-Cold War peace. One previously liberal country which has seen the meteoric rise of a militaristic, nationalistic, populism is Kyrgyzstan. The current president, Sadyr Japarov, once was exiled and then imprisoned due to his involvement in an attempted coup in 2013. He ran for president from prison on a platform of acquitting himself and building a strong Kyrgyzstan with an independent militaristic foreign policy.⁴ The model of development in the states residing in the central Asian steppes is based on the control, extraction, and taxation of their vast, accessible mineral wealth. By using a strong military state to control mines both in Kyrgyzstan and expanding their territory through military aggression, Japarov intends to make Kyrgyzstan the dominant regional power in central Asia. To accomplish this, he has built the Kyrgyz army into a formidable force and gained the public's enthusiasm through energetic nationalistic rhetoric.

So far, he has been extremely successful, he gained valuable mines and rivers from Uzbekistan through military posturing⁵ and is in the process of doing something similar to Tajikistan.⁶ The

² Wilson, Woodrow. 2013. "Community Power Versus Balance of Power." In *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace*, edited by Richard K. Betts, 146-149. 4th ed. N.p.: Pearson.

³ Doyle, Michael. 2013. "Liberalism and World Politics." In *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace*, edited by Richard K. Betts, 149-164. 4th ed. N.p.: Pearson.

⁴ Pikulicka-Wilczewska, Agnieszka. 2021. "Kyrgyzstan's Sadyr Japarov: From a prison cell to the presidency." *Al Jazeera*, January 12, 2021. <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2021/1/12/sadyr-japarov-from-a-prison-cell-to-the-presidency>.

⁵ Lillis, Joanna. 2022. "Kyrgyzstan: Looming border deal with Uzbekistan causing discontent." *Eurasianet*, October 7, 2022. <https://eurasianet.org/kyrgyzstan-looming-border-deal-with-uzbekistan-causing-discontent>.

conflict with Tajikistan escalated to the point that their militaries clashed causing hundreds of thousands of civilians to be displaced. This is a disaster for international stability because a small power demonstrating successful annexation of valuable territories through cheap military posturing will encourage more governments to adopt expansionist militarist foreign policies. This can also be seen in Azerbaijan's quick victory over Armenia which led to the annexation of the Nagorno-Karabakh region in 2020 or Turkey's ongoing occupation of northern Syria.

All these conflicts amount to a danger to what realist foreign policy theorists call the “offense-defense balance”. This refers to what military and foreign policy analysts perceive as the most advantageous strategy if an interstate conflict were to occur. In an environment where defense is favored security can be achieved by passively building up one's own military, economy and international relationships. This has been the situation we have found ourselves in since the invention of nuclear weapons. Today this balance is being tilted towards the side of offence by both the actions of small non-nuclear nations and new doctrines published by large nuclear armed states.⁷ A policy world tilted towards the offence side of the balance is one where the one who attacks first is likely to win. If we are put in a situation where conflict seems inevitable an offense leaning perception will strongly incentivize policy makers to strike first. This is “doubly dangerous” if defensive deterrence cannot be differentiated from offensive capabilities by all relevant actors.⁸

All that has been said so far has been said without mention of the Russo-Ukrainian war. It is without a doubt true that this war is the most inflammatory, the largest, the most dangerous, the closest to igniting a total war in the last four decades. However, I left it until last to emphasize that it is not occurring in a vacuum. It is likely that the rapid success of the Azerbaijani forces in 2020 contributed to Russian military planner's overconfidence. In turn, the result of this major European war will have ripple effects for dozens of possible conflicts in every nation in every region of the world. The leaders of lesser countries are reliant on the great powers in terms of both hard power (trade, military advisors) and soft power (universities, mass media), so the results of great power conflicts can drastically change how, when, and why minor power conflicts occur.

The period from the end of WWII to around 2016 or 2020 is one characterized by careful political maneuvering on the world stage fueled by a popular abhorrence of war. The period we are now living in is one which is changing rapidly. War is not seen only as a last resort today. Many governments are thinking about what foreign policy to pursue and keeping an aggressive

⁶ Dzyubenko, Olga, Nazarali Pirnazarov, Olzhas Auyezov, and Raissa Kasolowsky. 2021. “Kyrgyz and Tajik security forces clash at border in water dispute.” *Reuters*, April 29, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/kyrgyz-tajik-security-forces-clash-border-water-dispute-2021-04-29/>.

⁷ “Special Report: 2018 Nuclear Posture Review.” n.d. DoD. Accessed October 30, 2022. <https://dod.defense.gov/News/SpecialReports/2018NuclearPostureReview.aspx>.

⁸ Jervis, Robert. 2013. “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma.” In *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace*, edited by Richard K. Betts, 425-442. 4th ed. N.p.: Pearson.

war as a possibility. In a nuclear armed world this is an insane proposition, but it is the reality we are being confronted with. It feels like the generation who knew total war, the generation of policy makers with a direct link to the awful events of WWII are dying out. All their carefully negotiated settlements are turning into dust and floating away while a new less mature breed of policy maker is rising to the top in various societies around the world. We are like Germany in the early 1900's, passing from rule by Bismarck's Realpolitik to Wilhelm's Weltpolitik. The ambitious energy is intoxicating but an ideal and peaceful world will never be achieved by a shift in doctrine because the world is not controlled by doctrines. Only the practical and rigorous examination of each potential conflict can enable us to successfully disarm the flashpoint. The dream of a just world order dedicated to peace above all can only be achieved if we are first willing to live in the mundane world as it presently exists and resist the impulse to jump towards the most obvious solution to any given international crisis.

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OCTOBER ELECTIONS REVIEW

Scott Ripley

Quebec – General

Quebec held its general election on the 3rd of this month. The Coalition Avenir Quebec, already the majority party, increased its share from 61% to 72% of the seats in the National Assembly, giving Premier François Legault a second mandate. Quebec was supposed to hold a referendum that would ask the electorate if they wanted to implement a mixed-member proportional representation system. The government, who promised this measure during the 2018 general election, for its part says, “We're not giving up on our commitments”, but the delay certainly puts their commitment in question.

Brazil – Presidential

The first round of Brazil’s presidential election was held on October 2nd. Former President Lula da Silva led the round with 48.43% of the vote with incumbent President Jair Bolsonaro in second with 43.2%. Brazil, like approximately 80% of countries with directly elected heads of state, uses a two-round system which guarantees the winner receives a majority of the vote. Da Silva, elected to two consecutive terms in 2002 and 2006, is eligible for a third term and would be the first to win one if elected in the second round. Jair Bolsonaro is seeking a second consecutive term after his decisive victory in the 2018 election. Bolsonaro would be only the fourth ever Brazilian president to serve two consecutive terms, the second was da Silva.

Bolsonaro outperformed polling expectations while da Silva largely met expectations. This put the gap between the top two candidates approximately 5 points closer than predicted which has some interesting implications for the second-round set for the 30th. Polls have the candidates in a dead-heat which usually means the final results will be up to whichever candidate can mobilize their ground game most effectively. Of course, if Bolsonaro outperforms in the same way he did in the first round, da Silva might have a larger fight on his hands than he realizes.

October 30th Update: With a lead of 2.1 million votes and 99.95% of polls reporting, Lula da Silva has been declared the winner. There is concern that Bolsonaro’s pre-election rhetoric, which echoed Trump’s false claims of election interference in the 2020 election, might indicate he and his supporters will contest the results. We will have to watch and see what the coming days bring.

Make sure to check-in next month for a breakdown of the results of the 2022 US Midterm elections and some insight into Taiwan’s coming constitutional referendum.

OCTOBER RECAP

We had our Semi-Annual General Meeting where we talked about our budget, amended the constitution, and started planning political campaigns on and off campus.

Welcome to Tyler who was named in a new executive role: Project Manager. We are looking forward to working with you this year to get some ideas off the ground.

We added a new “Events” page to our website.



PEP SOCIETY

Semi-Annual General Meeting

McCain 401
October 25th
5-8pm

Be part of political campaigns
Become a member
Get a slice of pizza

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all who wrote pieces for this month's issue. And a strong PEPS welcome to Sam for contributing his first article for the Gazette.