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THE MÉTROPOLITAIN

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A FREER, FAIRER, RICHER **MONTREAL** PLUS LIBRE, PLUS JUSTE, PLUS RICHE

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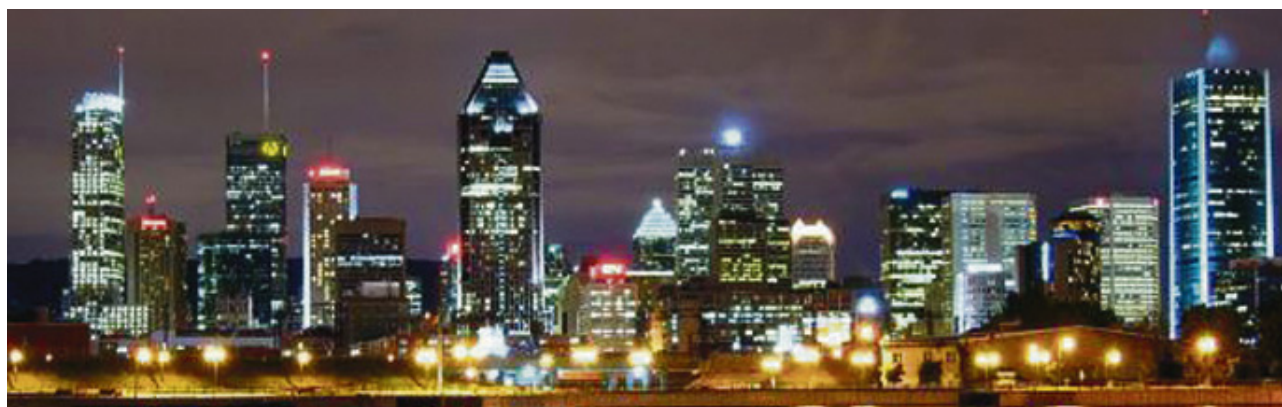


We must not be satisfied. We must not be satisfied because not one of the candidates for the mayoralty of Montreal are discussing the issues that matter most. None are proposing solutions to our most basic challenges. None are examining the actions we need to take for Montreal. They run to oppose each other for a job. None has proposed needed policies. They run on the politics of demonization and deflection. They fail in their duty. It is time for a fundamental, transformational change. It is time to make Montreal freer, fairer and richer. Time to stop demonizing citizens through rules and regulations that are nothing more than back-door tax grabs. Time to stop deflecting from core responsibilities through projects and programs that are questionable in their purpose and practicality. Time to end the profligate pilferage of our pockets for ends that no need demanded and no suffrage affirmed.

FREER

Il vient un temps dans les affaires entre gouvernants et gouvernés où chaque action de l'administration publique aigüise la méfiance du peuple et où le défaut d'agir suscite sa colère. C'est là où nous en sommes rendus à Montréal. Tout contrat social entre les citoyens et l'État demande une certaine cession par le peuple de sa liberté et de son trésor. Rien de plus. Le contrat social n'exige nullement l'abdication de nos prérogatives. Selon tout concept de justice naturelle et d'équité, l'État ne peut être autorisé à dicter nos passions personnelles et nos poésies. En aucune circonstance, l'État ne doit être habilité à faire en sorte que les citoyens se sentent coupables pour le simple acte d'être humains et à leur faire porter le lourd joug de la nullification et de l'interposition que leur impose une autorité sans compassion. Et aussi, le contrat social ne permet pas l'imposition au public de fardeaux financiers additionnels sous la forme de pénalités en guise de punition pour des services pour lesquels les contribuables paient déjà des taxes, mais que leur impose la bureaucratie gémissante de l'administration publique.

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"Ethics and transparency? Inform the people of your decisions and leave more than a few hours a month for the public to ask questions. Montreal as an international city attracting world business? Stop the culture wars and make a tax free zone downtown for tourists. Transport? Build a highway and rail link parallel to the 20 through Turcot. Economic development? Cut social engineering and nanny state programs. Get rid of the boroughs. Reduce the size of government like New York and Toronto. And give the savings back in lowered taxes to Montrealers, particularly the small business people who create 80% of our jobs. Urban planning? Develop air rights and stop the empty talk of 'sustainable development' in a city with a third of our households below the poverty line. Governance? Talk straight to the people. They are not stupid. Just tired."

Louise Harel and the art of newspeak

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When Louise Harel was still Quebec's minister of municipal affairs, and promoting the borough system for Montreal, she envisioned the boroughs as "little homelands...What is important to understand," she said back then, "is that there are little bits of patrie throughout Montreal, and the people are proud of it. That has helped me understand the feeling of identity in the suburbs."

Harel also promised the boroughs would be good for the economy, because "the system, at the same time as increasing the value of independent neighbourhoods, has at its base, mutual co-operation. I am totally in favour of the adoption (of a borough system) in Montreal."

Harel was confident that the 19 arrondissements – she originally proposed 27 -, each with three to six councilors, would be cost effective. She produced a study that she said was ordered by the Montreal transition committee to indicate the borough system would save taxpayers \$342-million. It would be more efficient, she argued, because local authorities would concentrate on day to day things that really matter - garbage collection, road maintenance, sports and recreation plus building permits - while City Hall would look after the big picture. As it turned out, her arithmetic was wrong and the study she quoted from didn't exist. Many didn't believe her big lie then and today her plan has been exposed for what it is – an enormous waste of taxpayer's dollars.

Now Harel is running for Mayor, and the tables have turned. Early in June, she told Radio Canada's Simon Durivage that if she's elected, she will cut the number of boroughs, because all that patrie has turned the city into ethnic ghettos.. "We'll have an Italian city, a Haitian city, an Anglophone city, we will no longer have the sense of one big city with boroughs that speak with one voice," she said.

In a June 29 interview with LaPresse she complained the arrondissements that she herself created, have now turned into "quasi-cities," with too much power.

Harel is not the first politician to make a U-turn on policy but what is disturbing is the direction she now wants to take us. Getting rid of the boroughs is a necessity. But just which

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MILLES MOTS • THOUSAND WORDS



PHOTOS: ROBERT J. GALBRAITH



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Ex-dramaturge, romancier persévérant, essayiste et poète à ses heures, Pierre K. Malouf fréquente des fédéralistes et des indépendantistes, des gens de gauche et des gens de droite, des jeunes et des vieux, des écrivains et des ingénieurs. Gentil comme tout, il ne dit pas toujours tout ce qu'il pense, mais pense toujours ce qu'il écrit.

LA PATRIE

LES CHANGEMENTS QUI RÉSULTERONT DE LA CRISE ACTUELLE

Des changements, oui ! Mais lesquels ?

Nous sommes en récession. À quelques exceptions près, les experts s'entendent pour identifier la cause du mal : la « déconnexion entre économie réelle et finance virtuelle ». Tous conviennent que la crise emmènera des changements. Dans La Presse du 5 juin, Alain Dubuc écrit qu'elle « va forcer les économies à se transformer et à s'adapter à un monde qui ne sera plus le même ». Dans la revue Liberté, Gilles Dostaler déclare : « Cette crise est donc l'occasion idéale pour remettre en question la façon dont nous fonctionnons. ».

Il y aura donc des changements. Il y en a d'ailleurs déjà. Qui aurait dit il y a un an que le gouvernement américain deviendrait actionnaire majoritaire de GM ? Ces changements présents ou futurs sont-ils tous souhaitables, tous inévitables ? Faut-il vraiment que les gouvernements accumulent d'énormes déficits ? Des disciples de Keynes ou de ceux de Friedman, lesquels voient juste ? Le simple citoyen peut-il faire autrement que de croiser les doigts en espérant que les gouvernements prendront les bonnes décisions ? C'est ce que je fais pour ma part, tout en lisant un tas d'articles et de bouquins afin d'y voir plus clair. Mais j'ai beau vouloir garder la tête froide, c'est plus fort que moi, les prophètes me hérissent.

Je parlais d'exceptions... À l'encontre de l'opinion générale, selon laquelle c'est la déréglementation néolibérale à la Thatcher ou à la Reagan qui searait à l'origine de la débâcle, les libertariens affirment que la crise financière aurait été provoquée par les banques centrales, trop interventionnistes, donc par les États eux-mêmes. On trouvera

dans la revue Argument un bel échantillon de cette pensée dans un article de Martin Masse, qui s'appuie sur les théories de l'école d'économie autrichienne (Hayek, von Mises, Rothbart). Il va sans dire que Masse réprovoque les mesures de sauvetage ordonnées par les gouvernements, mesures qui consistent à détourner l'argent des contribuables pour servir à l'économie malade une dose massive du médicament qui l'a déjà intoxiqué. Il faudrait, écrit Masse, « permettre la liquidation des malinvestissements et laisser les marchés

se réajuster. » L'article se termine sur cette phrase : « Mais si nous voulons sortir de ce cercle vicieux et retrouver une prospérité stable et durable, seul le capitalisme pourra nous y mener. » Je veux bien croire, mais j'accueille tout de même avec beaucoup de scepticisme un discours qui, de l'aveu même de son auteur, ne rallie que très peu de spécialistes.

Il faut également compter parmi les exceptions la gauche anti ou altermondialiste, pour qui la cause des cafouillages du capitalisme, c'est le capitalisme lui-même, qu'il ne

faut pas soigner mais euthanasier, idée reprise dernièrement par Québec Solidaire. Deux ouvrages publiés récemment nourrissent cette école de pensée : Pour sauver la planète, sortez du capitalisme, de Hervé Kempf ; Capitalisme et pulsion de mort, de Gilles Dostaler et Bernard Maris. Kempf porte au débit du capitalisme tous les problèmes environnementaux de la planète. Le socialisme ultra-pollueur ayant presque complètement disparu, il a beau jeu. Rien de bon n'ayant jamais résulté de l'économie capitaliste, il ne nous resterait plus qu'à aller vivre en autarcie au fond d'un rang. Quant à Dostaler et Maris, ils appellent à la rescousse de leur thèse l'infortuné Sigmund Freud. Thanatos est sans doute à l'œuvre au sein de l'économie libérale, mais ce que je sais sans l'ombre d'un doute c'est qu'il redoublerait de zèle quand sévissaient le communisme et le nazisme, et qu'il se manifesterait toujours quand nous serons tous redevenus chasseurs-cueilleurs.

Sur le même sujet, je recommande plutôt l'ouvrage déjà classique d'André Comte-Sponville, Le capitalisme est-il moral ? ou le livre d'Alain Dubuc, Les démons du capitalisme. Pourquoi la crise et comment s'en sortir. Les deux ouvrages mentionnés précédemment se distinguent de ceux-ci comme l'astrologie se distingue de l'astronomie.

La conclusion que je tire de mes nombreuses lectures, c'est qu'il est vrai que le monde change, parfois pour le mieux, parfois pour le pire. À nous d'orienter ces changements dans la bonne direction. Mais que l'on trouve ou non des solutions aux problèmes qui confrontent la planète, le monde transformé qui nous attend sera capitaliste.



...si le Gouvernement nous protège de tout,
qui donc nous protège du gouvernement ?

...if the Government protects us from everything
else, then who protects us from the government?

Citoyens Anti Gouvernement Envahissant

CAGE

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A FREER, FAIRER, RICHER MONTREAL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Sadly, Montrealers today have little choice among the leading contenders for city hall. We have an incumbent administration that has broken much of the social contract through sins of omission. Its main challenger is an unholy alliance of two of the fiercest statocratic social engineers whose public lives have been characterized by sins of commission. The former taxes first, explains never. The latter demonizes first, discusses never. Both are manifestations of a revived prohibitionism, a recurring virus when our public life turns feckless and fey. Both sides, if still wedded to their current opportunism, would leave us all in virtual straitjackets.

Les politiques actuelles font de nous tous des victimes. Il nous faut reconquérir nos libertés. Nous avons peut-être besoin de mobiliser une coalition de victimes, en clamant : « Assez, c'est assez ! ». Assez de règlements et de législations étouffants. Assez de jeunes qui se voient imposer des amendes de \$500 pour avoir mis leurs pieds du mauvais côté de la bordure bétonnée du parc Émilie-Gamelin. Assez d'inspecteurs dans le Vieux-Montréal et dans NDG qui fouillent dans nos sacs à vidange pour y trouver nos adresses afin de nous imposer des amendes de \$1000 parce que nous aurions sorti nos sacs trop tôt. Assez de commerçants sur l'avenue du Parc qui se voient imposer des amendes de centaines de dollars pour ne pas avoir coupé l'herbe sur les trottoirs municipaux.

Assez de propriétaires du Centre-Ville qui se font coller des amendes parce que leurs restaurants ou leurs bars n'ont pas vissé des cendriers « officiels » à côté de leurs portes d'entrée. Assez d'amendes qui criminalisent les sans-abris. Assez de hausses des tarifs de parcomètre tandis que la ville cache des profits records. Assez de marchands qui se voient tenus responsables du maintien de la propreté des trottoirs face à leurs commerces. Assez de quartiers comme Ville-Marie qui instituent certaines des amendes les plus offensantes afin de punir des comportements innocents tout en s'en vantant par des publicités via des dépliants affirmant, en lettres en caractères gras, que « les coupables seront punis ». Et coupables de quoi, au juste ? D'être humain, en échappant un emballage de friandise ou en fumant une cigarette sans se faire imposer les tâches des employés municipaux. Nous avons besoin d'être libres de nouveau. Nous avons encore besoin d'une cité libre !

Les Montréalais sont déjà les citoyens urbains les plus taxés de l'Amérique du Nord. Et il y a vingt mois, nous avons été frappés par la plus importante hausse de taxes de l'histoire.

Our taxes are supposed to cover the basics. Garbage collection, snow removal, public security, public transit, and water and sewage. It should not be up to the citizens to pay additional costs to manage what they have already paid for. The job of elected officials is not to engage in social engineering. To impose fines forcing citizens to do what is the city's work — street cleaning, garbage collection, maintenance of public spaces — is stark malfeasance at worst and double taxation at best. To impose fines on citizens for making personal choices about personal risk borders on social fascism. For municipal politicians to offset their responsibilities onto the backs of the public is an admission that they can't do their jobs.

This city's administration has failed to address solutions to improve any of its basic core service responsibilities. Eighty percent of our water lines leak. Our world-famous potholes are now craters. The transit system is in gridlock. The Agglomeration Council and the borough system have degenerated into paralysis as we have become the most over-governed city on the continent. The Mayor and the borough mayors can't get our blue-collar workers to pick up the garbage and clean our streets properly because they are too frightened to engage. And who can forget the abysmal failure to deal with the cemetery lockout leaving hundreds of bodies unburied. The city's solution was to deflect public attention from its nonfeasance by demonizing us all through needless regulation. It's time to be free again. It's time to revoke many recently enacted by-laws.

Sadly, Montrealers today have little choice among the leading contenders for city hall. Both sides, if still wedded to their current opportunism, would leave us all in virtual straitjackets.

Reduce the amount of fines in others. And we need to restrict, and in some cases eliminate, the powers or positions of smoking police, meter maids, the cleanliness corps, jaywalking cops and garbage inspectors. Nobody elected anyone to impose a control state on Montreal.

FAIRER

As much as restoring freedom must lead the reform of this city, restoring fairness must parallel that effort. As Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. wrote, "Justice must be seen to be done as well as done."

The most visible face of justice, done or undone, is the police. Whether we, or they, like it or not that is very much the reality. The daily connection of governors and governed is too often realized through contact with security authority. Much of our efforts at reform must be addressed at the way we police

can write up tickets. This is neither Tehran nor Havana. No citizen should be obligated to carry an identification card. But there is more that is objectionable.

À une époque de restrictions budgétaires, il est inacceptable que l'ont ait procédé à l'embauche de 110 officiers chargés d'imposer des amendes aux citoyens qui traversent les rues ailleurs que dans les zones cloutées. Le seul but de cette mesure est de faire croire aux citoyens qu'ils sont des criminels, en plus de leur soutirer davantage d'argent en amendes payées à la municipalité.

We have turned the law away from being an instrument for justice — a shield of the innocent and a staff of the honest — and made it into a revenue generating machine. As such we also have to eliminate the use of police in enforcing anti-smoking laws. The provincial government can pass whatever laws it wants. It can hire as many inspectors as it wants. But how much of local police resources are used to enforce personally invasive statutes is up to the civic administration. Our police should have a human, and most of all a fair, face.

But the overriding reform needed in restoring fairness in policing is a new set of measures on how to deal with visible minorities. It is time for new practices so that each week does not bring yet another story of a black woman surrounded by police as she was moving boxes from her garage to her house because someone called and thought she was a burglar; or of the Arab taxi driver being ticketed for parking in a non-taxi zone while feeding the meter because he had to run to a toilet; or a young black student wrestled to the ground by police with a gun to his head in front of his friends because some nightclub

La police constitue le visage public d'une administration civique. Sa tolérance, sa compassion et son respect de la liberté du peuple peuvent être mesurées par les lignes de conduite qu'elle impose à sa police.

ourselves. Though faulty, we have many avenues of redress in civilian matters between citizen and city hall on issues ranging from taxation to regulation. But new fairness doctrines in policing are crucial because the authority the citizen faces is so great and often so overwhelming.

La police constitue le visage public d'une administration civique. Sa tolérance, sa compassion et son respect de la liberté du peuple peuvent être mesurées par les lignes de conduite qu'elle impose à sa police. Notre police a besoin d'une nouvelle doctrine. Il est temps que survienne une administration à l'Hôtel de Ville qui mettra fin à l'ingérence de la police dans nos sphères personnelles et qui maintiendra une bride ferme à la brutalité de ceux qui sont chargés d'imposer le contrôle étatique. Le principe fondamental d'une société libre est la liberté de choisir. Même de choisir erronément. Même si nos choix nous font du mal à nous-mêmes.

A reform civic administration must restrict police checkpoints enforcing the wearing of seatbelts. Particularly at the exits of highways. They cause more harm than good and often come close to inciting catastrophic accidents as drivers hit the brakes and start checking their belts while navigating a turn.

We have to limit anti-jaywalking actions. Certainly abolish the practice of four-cornered patrols that make an area feel like an armed camp. No citizen should have to put up with cadets sticking their hands up to their faces or chests. And worse, as I have witnessed, demanding identification from citizens so they

bouncer said he had a gun. The names of Gemma Raeburn, Jamil Ibrahim and Courtney Bishop — along with dozens of others — cry out for fairness. It is our responsibility to make fairness a reality.

RICHER

The primary reason for the slow undoing of our basic liberties in this city is also the cause behind the steady impoverishment of this city. Too much government! In reducing the size and manner of our governance we will not only make this city freer and fairer, but we will make it richer as well.

Bill 9 that created the borough system was a devil's stew. But Bill 133, which devolved powers to the boroughs, was a legislative abortion of unparalleled proportion. It created 19 little fiefdoms with 19 little feudal lords. It has been said that the only thing more dangerous in politics than little people exercising a lot of power is little people exercising little power but thinking it is a lot. That is what has happened in Montreal the past six years.

Dans le but de perpétuer leur propre patronage sinon leur propre pouvoir, les administrations des arrondissements se sont mis à l'avant-garde de la perpétuation non seulement de règlements inutiles, mais aussi de la bureaucratie qui leur est inhérente. Leur leitmotiv semble être : « Nous réglementons, donc nous sommes ». Pendant ce temps, c'est nous, les citoyens, qui payons le prix. Il est inconcevable que deux millions de Montréalais sont gouvernés par plus de cent élus

municipaux, tandis que dix millions de New-Yorkais et cinq millions de Torontois en ont moins de trente. Ces 19 gouvernements dans notre ville, les dédoublements et la bureaucratisation qu'ils imposent, nous coûtent annuellement presque \$200 millions.

Ending the borough system would not only provide more direct and accessible one-layer government, but the savings could be immediately returned to the people through lower taxes. Even Mayor Tremblay has, I believe, recognized the folly of the boroughs and worked successfully on last year's Bill 22 that gives the Mayor of Montreal direct control of the borough of Ville Marie. One less level of government to pay for. Those who argue for "local democracy" as the raison d'être for the boroughs are not only ill-advised as to modern governance, but should realize that the logical extension of their thinking would have Stalinist-like block representatives controlling us all. In this case small is not beautiful. It is a prescription for bankruptcy.

Many of the needless rules and regulations that so burden us are enacted and enforced by the boroughs. Their elimination will also mean the elimination of the bureaucracies that perpetuate them. The functionaries and inspectors. Eliminating boroughs would make it easier for Montreal's Mayor to clean up the system. Tens of millions of additional savings could be passed on to Montrealers. As it stands now the Mayor's most powerful executive imperative is to veto funding to pay for the enforcement establishment of needless oversight in the boroughs. The Mayor cannot actually overturn borough by-laws.



pal administrations can affect. It will take federal government initiatives to make hybrid cars more affordable. Municipal governments nationally control areas of jurisdiction that affect only 2% of greenhouse gas emissions. Instead of speaking these

from the former on to citizens. The best solution is air rights.

The problems outlined above are not limited to any party. There has been a general mindset that is adverse to limited governance. Mayor Tremblay seems to have realized many of

Montrealers must face hard truths. One such truth is that in a city with almost a third of our households below the poverty line social housing, mass transit, food banks, libraries and responsible development must have priority over "loisirs", "consultations", "urbanisme", bike paths and sustainable development.

We need efficient government, not a self-indulgent one. Montrealers are desperate for the tax savings that could be generated. The tax hikes over the past four years have meant that small businesses, that account for eighty percent of new jobs, are paying the equivalent of three months of their rent in taxes. They cannot survive. Relief has to be quick and direct. It is the most catastrophic situation since the last years of Mayor Jean Dore.

In public finance, we have witnessed the squandering of too much of public funds on pork barrel vote grabbing schemes. Those inevitably lead to statements from elected officials that they have to fine and tax more just to keep up. Well, we did not need some \$13 million spent on skateboarding rinks in the west and east ends; \$10 million more on bike paths that destroyed commuter arteries and city streets; a Quartier de spectacles that meets no needs whatever and now a potential \$7 million on new recycling containers. These and other projects and initiatives should be shut down and the funds distributed back to the people in lowered taxes as well. A city that cannot get the core basics of municipal services right – public transit, roads, snow and garbage removal, water and sewage provision and treatment and public security – , should not have a budgetary line totaling some \$450 million on "arts, loisirs and urbanisme".

Our false piety on environmental issues must also be brought to a halt. We all agree that the internal combustion engine does damage to the environment. But that is not something municipi-

truths, Montreal has witnessed an anti-car mania among elected officials. They use a convenient lie to pander for votes from environmentalists who they think vote with greater frequency. But their measures perpetuate lies. Anti-car measures will further assault an already battered center city. And they will contribute nothing to the environment. As the Frontier Center for Public Policy has demonstrated, no amount of parking increases or other levies have reduced car use in major North American cities by more than 2%. A Mercer International study demonstrated Montreal was cleaner than most cities including Toronto . It is time for an administration at Montreal's city hall with the courage to end the pandering. With some eighteen percent of storefronts vacant in the city center, and many bars and restaurants suffering a 25-33% drop in revenues since the smoking ban, it is time to let downtown breathe and build again.

Finally, we need to get our development policies kick-started. We all agree that development must be responsible. But there is clearly a limit to horizontal growth. Land is limited. Green spaces should be appropriately protected. But what we can do – and what has been done by environmentally conscious cities like Toronto and Vancouver – is encouraging air right development in the city's core. Heritage buildings can be preserved and respected and in many cases incorporated into new buildings. As much as we cut unnecessary social engineering programs and reduce government size, we will have to create new sources of tax revenues if we are to keep pace with passing savings

the errors. Louise Harel would, I fear, perpetuate a prohibitionist, controlling, tax-and fine agenda.

Les Montréalais méritent une administration municipale qui aura le courage de faire face aux dures vérités et qui en parlera avec clarté et candeur. Qui parlera de cette vérité que nous vivons dans une époque d'austérité. Que l'Hôtel de Ville ne peut pas, et ne doit pas, agréer aux désirs de tout le monde à la fois. Que nous devons remettre les choses à l'endroit et ensuite voir ce qui peut être fait de plus pour améliorer les choses. Que nous ne devons pas dépenser plus de \$100 millions par année pour des frais de consultants externes, tandis que la ville emploie déjà plus de 10 000 bureaucrates cols blancs. Qu'il nous faut diminuer les dépenses afin de réduire les taxes. Que le maire de Montréal doit être résolu à s'asseoir avec les leaders des cols bleus en leur assénant une nouvelle entente.

The truth that we must concentrate on cleaning up our debt and ending the debt-incurring tradition of bread and circus projects. That in a city with almost a third of our households below the poverty line, social housing and mass transit and food banks and libraries will have priority over "legacy" projects and "loisirs", "consultations" and "urbanisme". That we will create new sources of tax revenue by encouraging appropriate development instead of fining and penalizing the public for so many personal, human acts. That our social contract can be restored to produce a freer, fairer and richer Montreal for all our citizens.



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LOUISE HAREL AND THE ART OF NEWSPEAK, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

boroughs would she cut if she does not cut all at once? And just how would she carve the new municipal map of Montreal? Would she have Lachine annex Cote St. Luc to dilute the Jewish influence, or meld St. Leonard into Anjou to eliminate the Italian identity? It would be fair to ask if the only "Homelands" that seem to be acceptable to Harel are those pure laine, French-speaking majority east-end neighbourhoods,

She is making stabs at reform, which is politically smart, but until voters know where and how she's going to wield her knives to divide the municipal map, they should be wary.

Harel has discovered the benefits of newspeak. Taking a page from George Orwell's 1984, she would have us believe that while she said what she said, what she said isn't what she really meant to say. The key word in newspeak, Orwell tells us "is blackwhite." Like so many newspeak words, the word has two mutually contradictory meanings. It means the habit of impudently claiming that black is white, but it means also the ability to believe that black is white, and more, to know that black is white, and to forget one has ever believed the



contrary."

Harel is beginning to reveal her strategy, but isn't explicit about her priorities. Her pitch is to voters in Anjou, Mercier-Hochelaga, Riviere des Prairies-Pointe aux Trembles, Rosemont-Petitit Patrie and Montreal North, five east-side boroughs that could be her springboard into the mayor's chair.

While she has acknowledged Quebec's "plural identity," and has paid lip service to the right of Montrealers to be different, "regardless of their origins, religion, political views or sexual orientation," Harel's record of friction with minorities is there for anyone who bothers to check the record.

She has been disaffected by immigration, has ridiculed Westmount for its "anglo-British character that reeks of colonialism," and in spite of a court ruling that said otherwise, insisted that the Quebec government had "a right and an obligation to declare Montreal a French City.

The fact that she is a separatist doesn't disqualify here as a mayoralty candidate. Federalists do not have a license on competence. The city has been well served in the past by nationalist politicians, and as a Parti Quebecois cabinet minister, Harel proved to be an astute politician with a social conscience. But anyone thinking of voting for her as mayor should be aware that when it comes to understanding Montreal and the nuances of its cosmopolitan make-up, she is a separatist out of joint with the times.



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Will the real Richard Bergeron please stand up?

Projet Montreal's website seems to have whitewashed an element of its leader's history.

While it trumpets a number of books Richard Bergeron has published - "*Le livre noir de l'automobile*" and "*L'économie de l'automobile au Québec*" - there's no mention of his most recent treaty, "*Les Québécois au volant, c'est mortel*." The book deals primarily with Bergeron's favourite bugaboo - the car - and how it has caused millions of deaths and injuries since its invention. He spends much of the book looking at the ways in which car manufacturers, in cahoots with governments everywhere, created cities built around the vehicles, decimating neighbourhoods and public transit systems in the process. But on p. 105, his book veers off course. Here's what he writes:

"Personne ne sait ce qui s'est réellement passé le 11 septembre 2001. Nous avons tous vu à satiété deux avions de ligne percuter les tours jumelles du World Trade Center à New York. C'est bien là le seul événement dont nous soyons sûrs. Quant aux raisons qui ont motivé cette acte, elles nous demeurent inconnues. Pour ce qui est des deux autres avions qui se seraient écrasés l'un sur le Pentagone, à Washington, l'autre sur un champ, non loin de Pittsburg, en Pennsylvanie, on tombe à mon sens dans la farce macabre. Chacun a pu vérifier à des dizaines de reprises qu'un écrasement d'avion, de quelque façon qu'il se produise, produit toujours une abondance de débris. Or, ni au Pentagone ni en Pennsylvanie, personne n'a jamais vu le moindre débris d'avion. Je suis personnellement du genre à ne pas croire que des avions de 60 tonnes puissent se volatiliser. Il se peut que le fameux 11

septembre 2001, nous ayons simplement été témoins d'un acte de bandatisme d'État aux proportions titanesques."

He was pilloried by the media when an enterprising journalist from the *Journal de Montreal* found that passage in his book. Bergeron is still sore about the criticism and refuses to be lumped in with common conspiracy theorists. "It's not based on the 'connerie' that you see online," he said. "I think there remain questions about what happened on 9/11. But it doesn't matter now that we've moved on with Barack Obama. Historians will do that job in 50, 60 years." Bergeron, who compares himself repeatedly with the great minds of the past century, mentioned Jane Jacobs, who once wrote somewhat favourably on Quebec independence. He also brought up Henry Ford, an entrepreneurial genius who nonetheless held anti-Semitic views. "With intellectuals you have to let them go further (in their ideas) than the regular population," he quipped.

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"You can get anything you want in life if you help others get what they want."

- George F. Lengvari, Sr.



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Il ne faut pas exagérer la « flat tax »

Le candidat à la chefferie de l'Action démocratique du Québec, Jeff Plante, a déclaré son adhésion à la « flat tax » à plusieurs reprises sur sa radio internet. Récemment, il est sorti dans Le Soleil et a défendu la « flat tax » à nouveau. L'idée peut avoir ses charmes, mais il faut la mettre dans le contexte québécois pour constater que ses effets seraient minimes voire indésirables.

Qu'est-ce que la « flat tax »?

En premier lieu, une « flat tax » c'est un système fiscal à un taux d'imposition unique. Donc, au lieu d'avoir trois taux d'imposition qui s'appliquent à des tranches de revenu différentes, nous aurions un seul taux pour tous et accompagné d'une base non imposable. Donc, si nous avons un taux de 20% et une base non imposable de \$10,000, un individu qui gagnerait \$11,000 serait taxé seulement sur les \$1 000 dépassant la base non imposable. Cet individu verrait seulement 1.8% de son revenu envoyé à Québec, contrairement à 16% pour quelqu'un qui fait \$100,000. Plus on gagne, plus on se rapproche du taux de 20%. En plus, c'est un système très simple à administrer. Certains éléments de la littérature en économie sont favorables à l'idée, surtout si elle s'accompagne d'un taux relativement bas.

Les erreurs de ses défenseurs

Les défenseurs du taux d'imposition unique citent les exemples de Hong Kong, l'Estonie, la Lituanie, l'Île Maurice

et la Russie et leurs taux de croissance économique pour justifier leur idée. En soit, la croissance de ces pays est spectaculaire si on compare à leurs points de départ. Hong Kong était une île sans ressources naturelles, seulement un port naturel à eau profonde. La Lituanie, l'Estonie et la Russie étaient des pays anciennement communistes qui ont été mis à terre économiquement par le régime et l'Île Maurice était une île pauvre isolée au milieu de l'Océan Indien. Néanmoins, attribuer le taux d'imposition unique comme étant la cause de leur croissance est déplacé. Des politiques comme la protection des droits de propriété, le libre-échange, une politique de stabilité monétaire et les privatisations des sociétés d'État ont dû contribuer davantage. La mondialisation est sûrement le facteur le plus important. La théorie de la convergence des économies nous laisserait croire qu'advenant des bonnes politiques publiques (l'ouverture économique) ces économies auraient des taux de croissance plus rapides au début de leur développement. Quant à la Russie, le prix des ressources naturelles – dont le pétrole – est probablement à lui seul quelque chose de plus important pour la croissance que le taux de taxation unique. Le taux d'imposition peut avoir contribué à la croissance, il y a des débats sur cela entre les académiques, mais vous admettez qu'il est difficile de transposer ces exemples sur le cas du Québec.

Ensuite, il faut aussi considérer que l'implantation d'un taux unique d'imposition va plus loin que de n'avoir qu'un seul taux. En soit, un taux unique n'impliquerait qu'un

changement d'une seule ligne du code fiscal de notre province. Le reste du code fiscal, c'est les multiples crédits d'impôts. Et nous n'avons pas besoin d'un taux d'imposition unique pour mettre en question la pertinence de plusieurs crédits d'impôts. La simplicité n'est pas exclusive au taux unique. Elle peut le demeurer dans un système à plusieurs taux.

Par ailleurs, le niveau de taxation est important. Un taux unique trop élevé pourrait probablement nuire à la croissance économique. C'est l'idée que le taux soit bas qui rend attrayante cette idée. Mais comme c'est le cas avec les crédits d'impôts, les bas niveaux de taxation ne sont exclusifs au taux unique. Il est possible de maintenir les trois taux actuellement en vigueur mais de les baisser.

Finalement, dans le cadre fédéral actuel, je questionne l'efficacité qu'aurait un taux d'imposition unique. Le Québec aurait un seul taux d'imposition alors que le fédéral en aurait plusieurs.

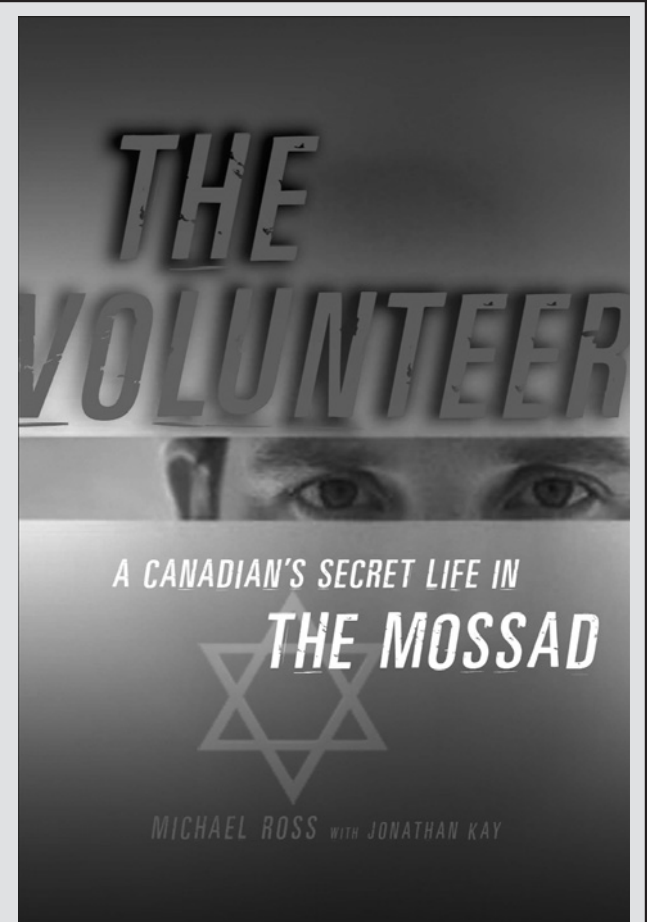
La « flat tax » est une bonne idée théoriquement, mais dans l'univers politique son application risque de coûter chère aux gens qui en font la défense sans rapporter grand-chose aux contribuables. Si on veut stimuler la croissance économique, il serait plus simple de questionner la pertinence de certains crédits d'impôts et voir comment on peut dégager la marge de manœuvre nécessaire pour baisser les taux présentement en vigueur. Le tout est beaucoup moins controversé et serait tout aussi bénéfique.

THE VOLUNTEER

The riveting story of a Canadian who served as a senior officer in Israel's legendary Mossad.

For seven-and-a-half years, Ross worked as an undercover agent — a classic spy. In *The Volunteer*, he describes his role in missions to foil attempts by Syria, Libya, and Iran to acquire advanced weapons technology. He tells of his part in the capture of three senior al Qaeda operatives who masterminded the 1998 attacks on American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania; a joint Mossad-FBI operation that uncovered a senior Hezbollah terrorist based in the United States; and a mission to South Africa in which he intercepted Iranian agents seeking to expand their country's military arsenal; and two-and-a-half years as Mossad's Counterterrorism Liaison Officer to the CIA and FBI.

Many of the operations Ross describes have never before been revealed to the public.



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The Hon. David Kilgour is Canada's former Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific and for Central & Eastern Europe and the Middle East. He is a tireless international human rights campaigner and has co-authored, with David Matas, the seminal study on the tragedy of organ harvesting in China. He is the co-author with David T. Jones of *Uneasy Neighbours*.

The Hon. David Kilgour

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GLOBAL VILLAGE

Decade of terror against Falun Gong

Almost exactly ten years ago, the party-state in Beijing launched its campaign against a government-estimated 70-100 million Falun Gong practitioners. The then determinedly-non-political Falun Gong, which is an exercise community with a spiritual component, soon became the latest in a long list of 'enemies of the party'. Atrocities against Falun Gong supporters continue today across China.

Reigns of terror against Party-selected groups and persons have occurred periodically since Mao Zedong seized power in 1949. In the name of revolution, millions were starved to death, for example, in the Great Leap Forward of 1958; countless others were tortured, abused, executed and deprived of basic human dignity. Probably very few Chinese citizens have been treated more brutally than the Falun Gong.

Organ pillaging from Falun Gong practitioners has been studied in an independent report by legal scholar David Matas and myself (<http://organharvestinginvestigation.net>). The two of us found 52 kinds of evidentiary proof indicating that this crime against humanity is occurring. The Government of China has to date made no substantive response to our report.

Just this month, three lawyers were arrested in China for daring to defend Falun Gong practitioners. The persecution of another prominent attorney, Gao Zhisheng, who defended Falun Gong, continues. He was twice arrested and suffered seventy days of torture. Despite repeated appeals from a range of Chinese and international groups for accounts of his whereabouts and release, Beijing ignores them.

Genocide?

David Matas to the International Association of Genocide Scholars at George Mason University in Arlington, Virginia, concluded on June 9th of this year:

"Every Chinese embassy around the world participates in this incitement (against Falun Gong). Despite their denials, they have to know about the mass killings of Falun Gong practitioners. The evidence fills human rights reports. There are constant media stories. The information is a click of a mouse away on the internet. Any claim of ignorance would mean that they have wilfully been turning blind eyes to the obvious, not a defense in law. So, in sum, the crime of genocide has been committed against the Falun Gong community, through torture, through organ harvesting and through the incitement that leads to both. The elements of the crime, the mass killings based on identity and the intent to destroy the group, can be established."

Mr. Matas provided detailed reasons for coming to this legal conclusion, which are available in the Update section of our report website.

China's Gulag

Forced labour is tragically all too common today, but only the party-state of China uses it to punish and suppress fellow citizens. Any Chinese national can be sent to a camp without any form of trial for up to four years upon committal by a police signature. No appeal is possible. Mao in the 1950s closely duplicated the work camp model set up in Stalin's Russia and Hitler's Germany, which in China alone continues today.

In China, only Falun Gong camp inmates are used as a live organ bank to be pillaged for sales to foreigners or Chinese nationals. Medical testing is required before organs can be matched with recipients, but only Falun Gong prisoners in the camp populations are tested medically on a regular basis. In the estimated 340 camps across China as of 2005, up to 300,000 "workers" toil in inhuman conditions for up to sixteen hours daily without any pay, producing a wide range of consumer

products, mostly for export in blatant violation of World Trade Organization rules.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Such practices are fully consistent with Beijing's rejection of the recommendations advanced by a number of governments, including Canada's, in a Universal Periodic Review by the UN Human Rights Council earlier this year.

The recommendations rejected by the government of China included: ending all forms of arbitrary detention, including labour camps; guaranteeing freedom of belief and the right to worship in private; implementing the recommendations of the UN Committee Against Torture, which included references to the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners and organ pillaging from them; and ensuring that lawyers can defend their clients without fear or harassment.

Trade with China has been in reality a costly proposition for many around the world. A host of its violations of international trading practices contributed to Canada's bilateral trade deficit rising in China's favour from \$3.9 billion in 1997 to \$26.8 billion in 2006, while ending many manufacturing livelihoods across Canada.

As the world suffers the economic crisis and seeks China's cooperation in dealing with its challenges, it is tempting to overlook Beijing's appalling human rights record. We must remind our leaders that to equivocate on China's record is a departure from Canada's own values of human dignity and the rule of law. We must caution them that trade with China at any price is costly both for the people of China and the world. We must remember the sacrifices of victims of the Tiananmen massacre and other abuses. We must demand that, instead of mocking the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, China should honour its provisions.



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The Right Stuff

Many people today seem unable to discriminate politically between what we might call a “good Right” and a “bad Right.” From their perspective, the Right is one seamless, monolithic, invidious bloc, admitting of no distinctions. This is especially the case in Europe whose cultural and political blindness will predictably lead to protracted social upheaval in the foreseeable future. The plot goes something like this.

With the passing of time, the Left-oriented European Union will increasingly find itself trapped in a pincer movement launched by two aggressive far-Right-wing forces that will spell the end of its dream of multicultural beatitude. The Islamic theocratic Right is gathering strength with every passing day, intent on imposing sharia law through incremental advances and, ultimately, to acquire hegemony across the long historical haul, creating an Islamic brutopia on European soil.

But this is only one side of the dilemma. Since the Leftist governing elite of the EU high councils puts up little significant resistance to the approaching takeover—peripheral bits of legislation passed by member states, such as France banning the head scarf or the burka, are not going to have much of a braking effect—the resentment animating large segments of the European public, which feels it has been betrayed by its leaders, is being co-opted by the indigenous parties of the hard Right. And in country after country, they are making important electoral gains. The fringe is fast becoming less fringe and, if not quite mainstream, is starting to resemble a rushing tributary.

These parties may vary in local particulars but they are united in their hostility to the foreigner in their midst, in their rejection of a transnational bureaucracy that both opens and dissolves the borders of the nation state, and in the expression of an authoritarian and chauvinistic species of nationalism. Supranationalism generates ultranationalism. Europe, with its long history of submission to totalitarian movements, has been there before and it appears to be heading inexorably toward the same political terminus. It is no paradox to say that, in the present context, the hard Right is the child of the soft Left. True, the latter does not advocate violence, but it is no less dogmatic and sworn to orthodoxy than the former.

One way or the other, Europe is on a collision course with the future. Bernard Lewis, the doyen of Middle East scholarship, sounded the European death knell in a briefing with the editorial staff of *The Jerusalem Post* (January 28, 2007). Under the rubric of “immigration and democracy,” Muslims “seem about to take over Europe,” he said; the only question is: “Will it be an Islamized Europe or a Europeanized Islam?” Allowing for topical differences, there is a salient historical parallel we might consult. Just as the Mamluks conquered their Egyptian masters and created a unique, 250-year Islamic dynasty, so the Muslim immigrant populations of Europe have, in their own way, embarked upon a march of conquest that would realize Lewis’ nightmare of dispossession.

But the situation has become far more complicated than even an authority like Bernard Lewis has been able to envision. When Europe awakens from its postwar fantasy of cultural and political harmony among peoples, it may well find itself back in the 20th century. It will have to face the growing strength of a far Right racist ideology that will not tolerate a repeat of a Mamluk-like ascendancy. And if the far Right achieves power, it will turn Europe’s multicultural clichés completely on their head, harrying or driving out the strangers among the heritage population rather than coddling and subsidizing them. In his 2004 book *The Empty Cradle*, Phillip Longman, an expert on population growth and decline, has made the same point from the viewshed of demographics, warning of “the possibility of a fundamentalist revival.” We have arrived, says Longman, at “the fundamentalist

moment.”

In the absence of common sense, adherence to the principle of civic stewardship and the consequent protection of core liberties, excessive tolerance has a way of ushering in the spectre of social repression. This is the lesson of the Weimar Republic we do not seem to have learned. It is no better today. Self-abasement, political correctness and the mantra of universal brotherhood—the European project—constitute a social pathology that can lead only to misfortune and collapse. Living in a multicultural rhapsody with its formulaic notion of the sacred equivalence of all cultural values, Europe now confronts a double danger: the invasion of radical Islam with its blood-hatred of its Western host, and the resurgence of the reactionary Right with its blood-hatred of its non-Western guests.

The only feasible solution to the quandary resides not in the Left suddenly rethinking its social, cultural, political and economic policies—this is not going to happen anytime soon—but in the rapid emergence of the parties of the moderate Right which recognize the threat emanating from both flanks of the political spectrum and are prepared to tackle the problem. In other words, conservatism is the only viable alternative to the double bind represented by a moribund but pernicious socialism and a renewed fascism, whether of the Islamic or secular varieties.

That is why, as I said at the beginning, it is vital to distinguish between the two Rights. There is the rational Right—as embodied in the Danish Freedom Party and Geert Wilders’ Party of Freedom in the Netherlands which, as political analyst Soeren Kern writes, have “called for stronger sanctions against totalitarian regimes and dictatorships, especially those in the Islamic world” (*Pajamas Media*, June 12, 2009), and which struggle to preserve the rights and obligations of citizenship against the multicultural fragmentation of national unity—and the irrational Right which finds its home in racist and intolerant organizations like the Freedom Party in Austria, Jobbik in Hungary, the National Alliance in the U.S., the Front national in France and the British National Party and its associated National Front, to mention only a few.

But if the rational Right fails to consolidate its base in the European political landscape, then the European Left will have brought its own eventual demise upon itself in the form of militant, illiberal and xenophobic parties of the extreme Right. It will, in fact, find itself squeezed between the jaws of an ideological vise of its own making, as two competing fascisms, one Islamic and the other indigenous, engage in a battle to the finish. Absenting the rebirth of a hardy and vigorous conservative movement, which does not shrink from instituting stringent immigration policies and enacting rules for the deportation of those who undermine the common peace, the long-term prospect for Europe doesn’t look encouraging. Even a best-case scenario is problematic: it may be too late for a conservative “revolution” to forestall either an Islamic or an ultra-reactionary denouement.

Europeans, says Walter Laqueur in *The Last Days of Europe*, idling away their future while Islamic political organizations patiently wait, “once the time is ripe, to launch mass violence” and the demographic time bomb is also ticking, are “quietly acquiescing in their own decline.” But, as I have argued, a growing number of Europeans are not, and the means they will adopt to counter the menace, whether successfully or not, will be harsh, coercive and turbulent. For as violence begins to move in from the Muslim enclaves in the banlieue toward the city center, as it were, and the authorities prove themselves increasingly helpless and vacillating before its progress, the reactionary Right will earn more and more legitimacy among the masses. We should make no mistake about this. The Jain-like attitude of

the stymied political classes toward their avowed enemies, resulting in an anemic lack of fortitude that has become chronic, can only energize the factions of the extreme Right. The same applies to the Islamophilic and ever-compliant media, operating in tandem with a complaisant political establishment, whose motto might well be: Have pen, will grovel.

The problem, however, is not confined to the Continent. It would be sheer folly to assume that we in North America are privileged spectators who are somehow exempt from the savage dialectic that Europe is now experiencing. It is starting to happen here as well. We may have a little more time at our disposal to try and come to terms with the predicament, but we are equally at risk. The gravest peril to America today is not an external enemy but its own developing fault lines. The tectonic plates that undergird the sense of national unity are moving apart. Strictly speaking, our situation is not identical to Europe’s, but close enough to warrant concern. If we are not vigilant and prepared to reconsider our generic assumptions about the culture of indiscriminate inclusion and the politics of spineless appeasement, Europe is our inevitable future.

Speaking at the National Press Club on June 10, 2009, Morris Dees of the Southern Poverty Law Center warned that a “perfect storm is brewing for the buildups of these hate groups,” of which the Center lists over 900. Many of the members of these cadres enlist in the army “to learn skills they will later take back to their groups while, in other instances, [they] work to recruit frustrated veterans.” Dees isolates the phenomenon of rampant Latino immigration as “the biggest engine generating increase in hate groups,” though Jew-hatred also figures prominently. But there can be no doubt that galloping Muslim immigration and high fertility rates, as well as the burgeoning influence of radical Islamic organizations, will fuel the rage felt and violence perpetrated by these virulent cells and networks.

There is only one way to defeat the extreme Right as it rises to its own depraved version of the defence of the West, and that is to disarm the common enemy and, by so doing, deprive a nascent fascism of its populist fuel. Which is another way of saying that immigration policies currently in place will need to be rethought and rendered more appropriate to the nation’s requirements, as is the case, for example, in Switzerland, the sole western European country that attaches a high value to citizenship. And unpleasant as this may sound, we will also have to become less tolerant of the intolerant Other which refuses to recognize our values if we are to avoid the pendulum swing toward a vicious intolerance of all perceived outsiders.

We will, in short, have to embrace the conservative tradition of the moderate Right, based on the liberty of the individual, the duties of responsible citizenship, a coherent pluralism that respects the customs of the majority culture rather than a fractious multiculturalism that corrodes them, and the robust defence of the homeland against the threats, both domestic and external, that mobilize against it.

Given that we can manage to avoid the Islamic future prophesied by Ottoman thinker Said Nursi who, in his famous Damascus Sermon, predicted that “Europe and America are pregnant with Islam. One day they will give birth to an Islamic state,” there is only one conceivable way out of the corner we are backing ourselves into. By electing moderate Right administrations, we may—just may—slip between the Clashing Rocks of the defeatist Left and the triumphalist Right.

To put it succinctly: assuming that Nursi’s prophecy does not come to pass—and that is a very big if—survival dictates that, as a society, we will have to “go conservative” and abandon the doctrinaire Left if we are not to succumb to the doctrinaire Right.

Mischa Popoff is a freelance political writer with a bachelor's degree in history.

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SOCIETY

Newspapers and the internet

My great-granddad bought the first radio in his neighbourhood back on the farm in Saskatchewan. Far from being a hayseed, he was literate and subscribed to many newspapers and magazines. He spent the equivalent of \$10,000 in today's money to own the best radio money could buy, about a quarter of the value of a new small tractor. It had a shortwave band on which he could listen to Radio Moscow in the evenings.

The neighbours said, "That's it! The newspapers' days are numbered." Of course, they were wrong. Even when radios came down to the price of a wood stove, then later to the price of a good bottle of vodka, the radio never replaced the newspaper. And neither did TV when it made its way into every North American home.

The newspaper is over 400 years old and has survived the onslaught of technology and totalitarian tyrants alike. And now the internet is taking a swing. But if the internet never ruined radio or TV – both infants compared to printed news – why does anyone think it will kill the newspaper?

You may have heard, they're also predicting the end of the book. Have you tried reading a book in electronic form? It's about as fulfilling as a televised church sermon. The only print medium that the internet slew is the pornographic magazine, and that's because it's a completely graphic-based medium. Print media that contain actual ideas can't possibly succumb to the mere pervasiveness or immediacy of the internet.

So, where did the ideas go? Of course



there are the many excellent pieces which the good editors and journalists at this newspaper write, but perhaps there's not enough such excellence. It's a longstanding, honourable and fundamental British tradition to engage society in debate. Could it be that newspapers are simply failing to engage a large portion of thinking society?

Advertisers want eyeballs on the page so their ads will be noticed. When people quit thinking they quit reading, and advertising revenues dry up. Sure, a few advertisers are ideological and only want to advertise in a newspaper that reflects their side of an issue. But the overwhelming majority of business



people simply want readership, which translates into customers, and the best way to achieve readership is by presenting challenging ideas.

The editors of this newspaper can hold their heads up high both for the editorials they write, and for some of the columnists they run. But Central Canadian and flagrantly Liberal viewpoints should be balanced with more Western Canadian, commonsense views. Dare I suggest more small "c" conservative viewpoints? The label has become a badge of dishonour in many media circles. But anyone with business acumen should ask whether this rejection of conservatism has had something to do with declining revenues at so many newspapers.

There's nothing wrong with any of the views being published in this country. I disagree with many of them, but they're all perfectly valid from both a democratic and a journalistic perspective. But, simple validity isn't enough to attract readership. Debate will; and debate is not only central to democracy, it usually makes for interesting reading as well.

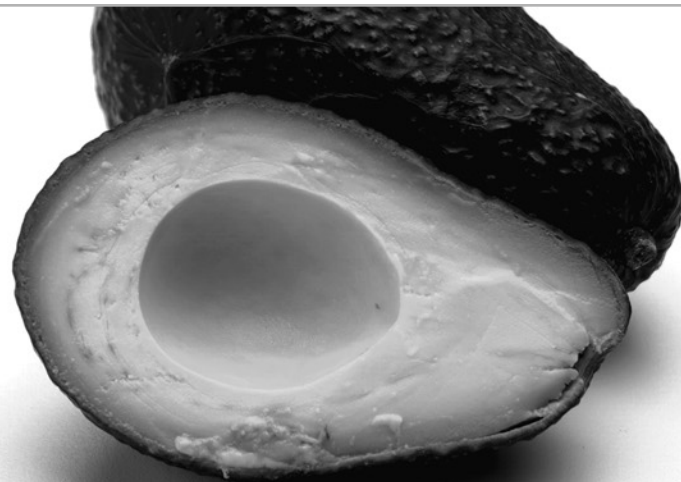
When it comes to selling advertising, a healthy juxtaposition of left and right-wing ideas is a winning formula. Indeed, that's why the National Post is holding its own while The Globe and Mail is floundering.

Blaming the internet for diminishing revenues in the newspaper industry is like blaming the space shuttle for bankrupting airlines. They're not even operating in the same airspace.

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No honour in murder

We need to take a step back and think about the use of the term “honour killings”. It has been much in the news of late as the horror of the deaths of the Shafia sisters sinks in.

On the one hand, the term gives a perverse cultural frame of reference for an act that can have no justification. On the other, since it is invariably used in reference to Islam, it denigrates a faith. Nothing in Islam justifies murder for the sake of a family’s “honour.”

According to the United Nations there are about 5,000 honour killings a year world wide. They encompass a variety of cultural and religious societies. And if we seem to see more attention focused on those cases from Muslim countries, it has little to do with mainstream Islam and everything to do with fanatics who have perverted purpose and principle. People who kill, maim or injure their relatives or children for the sake of perceived “honour” are simply cultural retrogrades from whatever ethnic or cultural group they come from. They are sociopaths.

But there is another injury done to our national psyche in the use of this phrase. Whether or not the allegations against the Shafias are true, Canada has become so suffocatingly politically correct, that one can imagine apologies being written about the need for mercy and “understanding” in cases of culturally-driven murder. After all, some of our more morally relativist academics would argue, even murder must be viewed in context. Every culture’s right to be wrong and all that. That is a dangerous mindset and it has sadly taken hold in this country in many other issues.

We as a society must decide what we are for as much as what we are against. Perhaps that was one great failing of the Bouchard-Taylor Commission. Its report did not speak to the issue of what we are for. For without that, amidst all the polite suggestions and painstaking political correctness, we are constantly left with the gnawing impression that we have lost our pride and our moral compass. That we accommodate ourselves not to reason but to fear.

We as a people need to be proud of what we are. And there is no shame in demanding that despite multiculturalism, newcomers accept a free lay society. And for our relativist academics and politicians we would suggest they remember the words of a great visionary that come down to us through the mists of time. He was the only politician to be assassinated in our history. His name was Thomas D’Arcy McGee. In 1865 he spoke these immortal words in Quebec City. “There is room in this Northern Dominion—under one flag and one set of laws—for one great people. There is no possibility for that greatness—under that same flag and those same laws—if we succumb to a hundred squabbling particularities.”

For the problems of perception, as Bouchard-Taylor stated, rest not just with new citizens who hold greater fidelity to the traditions and laws of their home countries and cultures, but also with ourselves who remain wedded to false notions of equivalency. Just as there is no honour in murder, there is no shame in pride.



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Shame!

I've walked by the home a thousand times. I've parked in front of it; knelt by its driveway to readjust heavy grocery bags in my hands; stopped my bike to tighten my kids' helmet; and dragged my children on their sleds over the mounds of snow that lay in front of it.

In a neighbourhood that has seen its share of tragedies – albeit mostly of the règlement de comptes and the occasional corpse-stuffed-in-trunk types – this one has shaken the reserve of Canadians beyond the HIP postal code.

As the Shafia sisters, Zainab, Sahar and Geeti, and Rona Amir Mohammed, lay dead at the bottom of the Kingston locks some 260 km away, kids went on swimming at the pool, running through the sprinklers and playing soccer at Parc Ferland, just steps away from their home. Old men accused each other of cheating at bocce or scopa, while parents and neighbours tended their beautiful lawns and washed their cars with care as the plethora of area daycares led their charges out for walks to the sandbox and swings. Just a typical day in Saint-Léonard.

If the allegations are true – that these deaths were in fact murders perpetrated by the father, mother and brother of the young victims, well there will be volumes to write about our outrage: the barbarism of such practices and the need to help immigrants understand that they – as the Kingston police chief said – have all the freedom and rights of expression of all Canadians.

But what is wrong with *us*?

If family members perpetrated these murders in some ghoulish effort to protect some grotesque notion of family honour, what is it about us as Montrealers, Canadians, westerners and democrats that led someone to believe they could do this and get away with it?

What is wrong with our measly and insipid defence of our own values that allows such monsters to cross our thresholds and carry out such a macabre exercise that continues to rise around the world?

Is it possible that as thousands of Canadian men and women take up arms in one of the planet's most egregiously failed sates to protect its women and children, one of that unfortunate country's wealthy expatriates sits in our neighbour-

hood, nestled against our parks and strip malls, plotting hate crimes against his own flesh and blood?

The mind boggles!

With the grieving parents inviting the media and indeed the world to witness their unimaginable pain as the sobbing duo bemoaned the tragedy of it all. Now Mohammad Shafia, his wife Tooba Yahya and their son Hamed, have been charged with first degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder.

If the allegations are false and this was – as has been suggested – a horrific suicide-murder orchestrated by the adult in the group, then our self-righteous persecution of a tragedy-stricken family will be our collective shame. It will be reviewed in law journals, condemned in candle-lit vigils, debated at dinner tables and in journalism classrooms, casting a shadow over our own reputation for generations.

But if the allegations are true, then

If the allegations are false and this was – as has been suggested – a horrific suicide-murder orchestrated by the adult in the group, then our self-righteous persecution of a tragedy-stricken family will be our collective shame.

any karmic justice that does exist will descend from the ether in a mighty maelstrom upon these miserable creatures.

If the allegations are true, then

shame on a world that values death more than life.

If the allegations are true, shame on our defence of nihilistic values couched as coffeehouse tolerance.

If the allegations are true, shame on us because these victims – viewed as unworthy of another breath – are part of our family, and we are more dysfunctional than we thought.

Will we sacrifice our individual rights to life, freedom from persecution, abuse or death to the namby-pamby notions of multiculturalism?

Come to Canada. Enjoy full rights as you step off the plane, maintain your value systems and live your life in peace. Hell, knock off your kids if they date out of the tribe. Just do it all in one of two official languages and you're on the team!

Who needs hockey, jazz and comedy? Are we going to be the honour-killing tourism capital of the world? This isn't the first such case in Canada in recent years.

What are we going to do about it? The souls of four women found dead in the Kingston Mills locks are waiting for an answer.



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“I was molested!”

An airport security check worthy of Penthouse Forum

I was molested. Seeing these three words in print is a stark reminder of my ordeal, from which I may never fully recover. He caressed my inner thigh, cupped my buttocks in his large, burly hands and gently ran his fingers through my hair. This trauma didn't occur during my childhood; it happened just last week.

I had managed to string together

five days in late July to vacation in New York City and was making my way through a security checkpoint at Trudeau International Airport when it happened. A U.S. Homeland Security agent pulled me aside and informed me that I had been selected for a “random” search. I was separated from other passengers and, with apologies to actual victims of sexual assault, was

fondled by the guard who evidently had mistaken me for a terrorist – or for his lady friend.

The regular search given to all passengers was not sufficient. On top of being checked for explosives with a handheld metal detector along with everyone else, the guard proceeded to literally give me a rub-down (with my clothes on, thankfully), from head-to-toe. This

man, who likely has no law enforcement experience outside of an airport, felt it necessary to study every contour of my body in order to secure his homeland. It was so thorough and invasive that he probably could have sculpted my likeness out of clay from memory. He didn't seem to understand my suggestion that he should have at least bought me dinner beforehand.

Adding to the Homeland Security circus is the fact that I, along with all U.S.-bound passengers, are still forced to remove shoes before boarding a plane. This absurd “security measure” is in response to Richard Reid's attempted shoe-bombing of a Miami-bound American Airlines flight out of Paris – eight years ago. I cringe to think what would happen if the evil plans of the Tampon Bomber ever come to fruition.

American Homeland Security agents arbitrarily search innocent civilians in airports worldwide every minute of every day, without rhyme or reason and, more importantly, without probable cause. There was no justification for searching me so thoroughly; all of my travel documents were in order, I had not been acting suspiciously, nor had any dangerous materials been detected in my luggage or on my person during the first search.

Although I make light of the “molestation” I suffered at the hands of the guard, the comparison is not completely inaccurate. He went overboard. It was uncomfortable and humiliating. My personal space was not only invaded, but rendered nonexistent. He did, in fact, feel up my backside and, toward the end of the search, said, “I will now search your hair.” I couldn't make this stuff up.

In retrospect, the most troubling part of the ordeal is that I let it happen to begin with. I was anxious to start my vacation and didn't want to start a fuss that would result in me missing the flight. The vast majority of air travelers let it happen, not conscious of the fact that their personal liberties have been completely disregarded. We're

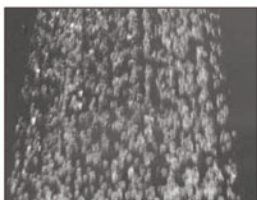
satisfied with the standard explanation that we all have to make sacrifices in order to prevent terrorism. Proper investigative techniques, logic be damned; the skinny Jew with no carry-on luggage could actually be a Bin Laden disciple with a bomb strapped to his...curly brown locks?

If the search was indeed “random,” as the guard suggested, then the likelihood of catching a terrorist is slim to none. Since they're subverting civil liberties anyway, why not ignore the 80-year-old grandmothers and others like myself who don't fit the profile and target those who do. A young 20-something man who grew up in Pakistan and a young 20-something man who grew up in Sainte-Adèle may both be citizens and deserve to be treated as such, but let's face it, one is slightly more likely to commit an act of terrorism than the other.

All the measures put in place by the U.S. government in airports worldwide aren't so much about security as they are about making people feel safe; there's an important distinction. A properly-trained law enforcement agent may have the ability to recognize a threat in a crowd of civilians. A hastily-trained welfare recipient-turned-Homeland Security guard given a job during a post-9/11 hiring blitz does just what his government tells him to do. Governments have been using 9/11 as an excuse to erode civil liberties since 9/12, conning voters into thinking that the politician who best protects them from the evildoers is the best fit to lead a nation.

Air travel has been and continues to be, statistically, the safest form of travel. The exaggerated security measures I went through are only good for calming the masses into submission. That's probably the reason why the Homeland Security agent felt me up in front of roughly 100 other passengers and not more discretely, in a back room. I can't figure out why I was chosen. All I know is the next time it happens, I'm going to say ‘no.’

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GREEN SHOOTS ROTTEN TO THE CORE

Statistical recovery masks suffering millions

One could be forgiven for being optimistic these days. The stock markets are up 30% from their lows of March 2009, even taking into account the recent correction; housing starts and new home purchases showed surprising strength in Canada in June; job losses in the US and Canada seem to be slowing; lower mortgage rates and gas prices have freed up cash in consumer's pockets and allowed more people to keep their homes; auto sales seem to be bottoming out.

Then again, there are the negatives; personal and corporate bankruptcies continue to rise; the threat of a trade war looms large over world markets; distrust in the US Dollar may leave all of us without a stable international reserve currency; massive annual deficits and the resulting mushrooming national debts of the G20 create the impossibility of repayment and igniting inflation in the long run.

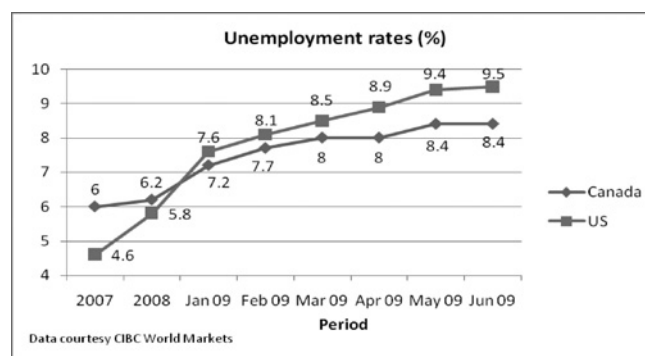
Which set of headlines do you wish to believe? The reality is that both are correct – the short term good news does not detract from the long term structural problems that will result from the immediate policies adopted to fight the economic crisis. There are segments of the manufacturing and service economies that will never be the same as we slowly emerge from the 21st century's Great Recession. Governments have a responsibility to be honest with those who will suffer under the "new normal" of its aftermath as well as be brave enough to adopt policies to encourage economic growth that do not rely on spending money that they do not have.

The North American economy fell off a cliff in the fourth quarter of 2008 as consumer finance dried up, corporate debt markets ceased efficient trading and the stock markets began to tank. The decline was so steep and sudden that as statistics begin to appear for the fourth quarter of 2009, they will use month over month comparisons against the depressed figures of the previous year; so even an anemic improvement will be hailed as evidence of a recovery. Take auto sales as the easiest example; auto sales were down anywhere from 30-50% (depending on the brand in question) in the final quarter of 2008. The annual US run-rate of new car sales had declined to 10 million units per year from 16 million in 2007, with the most recent annual rate coming in around 9.5 million units per year. Imagine if the US run rate improves to 10.5 million units per year in the fourth quarter of 2009? Statistically, this will show a 10% improvement, and will be trumpeted as additional evidence that the worst is behind us, that confidence is improving, or whatever other tired headline the newspapers will offer. Economists will mention, sheepishly, that this is still a long way from a healthy US auto market of 13-15 million units per year, but this more sane analysis will get buried next to the obituaries. Growth is growth, no matter how tepid! Hallelujah, the consumer is back!

Celebrating a minor uptick in auto sales will be cold comfort to the hundreds of thousands of former auto industry workers who have seen their jobs disappear, never to return. What's worse is that for many of them their employers went bankrupt, compromising the pensions that were once the top prize for years of auto industry employment. This misery extends to second and third tier auto suppliers as well; giant auto parts

manufacturer Lear filed for bankruptcy last week, demonstrating how the shock wave of automotive restructuring has dug deeply into the manufacturing economy. Aside from some minor modifications to unemployment insurance admissibility in Canada, neither the US nor the Canadian governments have any strategy to assist these workers to find new employment; their industry is permanently retrenched. If a sustained auto recovery arrives five to six years down the line most will be too old to rejoin the workforce in any position comparable to the ones they previously held.

US unemployment is likely to exceed 10% before this recession concludes and may continue to rise even during the recovery period as companies pursue restructuring. The Canadian unemployment rate has not risen as far and as fast, but may ultimately remain elevated if our exporters do not recover their lost markets or discover new ones, along with the hindrance of a Canadian Dollar that is more closely related to the price of oil than our broader economic fundamentals. The unemployment rates illustrated in the table below could see the US and Canada exchange positions as the US spends trillions to create jobs at home and seeks to exclude its trading partners from the benefits of its expansionist policy.



One bright spot in the Canadian employment figures is that Canadians are turning to entrepreneurship to counter the economic downturn. The CIBC table below providing a detailed analysis of Canada's employment statistics for June 2009 shows a significant rebound in self-employment, which is good news for the economy as a whole since small business creates 80% of all Canadian jobs and is almost entirely Canadian owned.

Canadians Hire Themselves in June

M/M chg, 000s	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Employment	-82.6	-61.3	35.9	-41.8	-7.4
Full-time	-110.9	-79.5	39.4	-58.7	-47.5
Part-time	28.3	18.2	-3.6	17.0	40.1
Paid workers	-54.6	-66.5	-1.1	-9.8	-44.6
Private	-30.4	-67.8	-10.4	-36.5	-39.3
Public	-24.2	1.3	9.3	26.7	-5.3
Self-employed	-28.0	5.2	37.0	-32.0	37.2
Part. Rate (%)	67.4	67.3	67.4	67.5	67.5
Unemp. Rate (%)	7.7	8.0	8.0	8.4	8.6
Avg. Hourly Earnings, perm. workers (y/y %)	3.9	4.1	4.3	3.2	3.4

Our big US brother is compounding the problem.

We are used to government not having all the answers, but the least it could do is not add to the problem. However, actions taken on many fronts by the Obama administration will permanently curtail growth in the US for decades to come. The

trillions of dollars of new US federal debt will require massive tax hikes on the middle class in order for them to be repaid one day. The taxpayer will have to find that money somewhere, and lower consumer spending will be the result. It is expected that consumer spending will decline from nearly 70% of the US economy in recent years to the long run average in the low 60% range from the previous 50 years. This amounts to a loss of approximately \$1 trillion in consumer spending, and all the jobs that go with it.

The Obama administration does not want to admit that the consumer, also known as the taxpayer, is tapped out. Consumers have been using their credit cards as a stop-gap measure to offset declines in their earnings, running up their balances in the hope that they will be able to pay them back in the future. The credit card reform legislation imposed on the banks by the US administration sought to curtail credit card profits on consumers' backs, but the end result will be more restrictive credit, higher interest rates for most (a great irony) and higher default rates. Improvements in consumer spending will likely be hampered by the tighter credit that will result, which is counter-intuitive to the original intent of the legislation.

The Obama administration is hindering the effectiveness of its own stimulus plan with its Buy America statute that even US manufacturers are having difficulty complying with. The result will be that higher prices will be spent for certain goods that will take longer to procure and the effect of the stimulus package will be delayed, most probably until such a point as it adds to long term inflation. Canada is the US's closest trading partner and we would import that inflation even if we were not responsible for creating inflationary conditions in our own economy.

While the US has clear, if also contentious economic policy, Canada is plagued with successive minority governments that limit the ability of parliament to act decisively. As is evidenced by the pressures to adopt a \$60 billion dollar stimulus package and the rancor over employment insurance reform, we are ending up with macroeconomic policy based on the lowest common political denominator. Canada is fortunate that it has entered this recession in the best condition of all the G8 nations but it risks losing that advantage if it does not address the increasing pressures for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions versus our reliance on natural resources for much of our export-driven wealth creation.

Surprise crises and lower growth will leave many behind.

Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the head of the World Bank made critically important comments at the last Davos conference regarding the quality of banks' assets worldwide. He said that financial crises do not truly end until the balance sheets have been cleansed – and the banks are far from having come clean on the true quality of the assets on their balance sheets. Estimates are that the banks have addressed about \$1 trillion US of troubled assets so far, but there could be up to \$3 trillion more in assets to be written off or restructured. This means that those holding the shares of these banks will be subject to additional rounds of wealth debasement as these assets are written down or off entirely. Small investors will be drawn back to the shares of financial institutions in successive waves, only

GREEN SHOOTS ROTTEN TO THE CORE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

to find out that another series of troubled assets will imply further losses. It is telling that in the recent run-up of shares from the March 2009 loans the banks issued hundreds of billions of dollars worth of new shares to improve their tier one capital, fully expecting that they will need that cushion in the future.

For middle-class North Americans who own equities as well as a home, they have seen calamitous declines in the value of their assets anywhere from 20 to 50 percent. If the predicted high-tax, slow growth, overly-regulated economic environment comes to fruition it will take decades for these families to rebuild their lost wealth. For many baby boomers, the rebuilding will take too long and they will never fully recover, forcing them to rely on the support of the state just as governments will

be seeking to reduce costs like pensions and health care. Many of the newly unemployed are being forced into entrepreneurial self-employment in an effort to rebuild their assets. One can only hope that many of them succeed, since North America will need all the entrepreneurs it can get to create more successful people to tax incessantly.

Welcome to Quebec, we're already used to it.

If anyone knows a thing or two about high tax and slow growth, it's Quebecers. We have lived with this destructive social compact of wasteful state interventionism funded by excessive taxation, overly-generous social benefits and coddling of labour and other special interest groups for over three decades, making us experts on what the US may look like at the end of the Obama administration. Much has been written

recently in The Metropolitan about how Montreal has come to represent the worst of these traits; over-governed and regulated, excessively taxed and subjected to the petty manipulation of its citizens by over-zealous bureaucrats. A full generation of Montrealers has grown up under this malaise and has accepted it as a fait accompli. One hopes that the Americans and less docile non-Quebeckers will resist this trend and their eventual rejection of its implications will spill over into our borders and effect real change in Quebec. Francois Legault put it best when he said that Quebec is suffering a quiet decline, unable to recognize its weaknesses and seek change. Americans may wake up a decade from now and find that they too have been stifled into the same slow decline, and hopefully they will muster their historical fight to overturn it.

The System is the Scandal!

"The ability of powerful corporations to influence politicians is one of the ongoing challenges to democracy. And organizations such as Democracy Watch play a critical role as monitors and whistle blowers, especially when all of the major Canadian media organizations are enmeshed with government." — *Hugh Winsor, Columnist, The Globe and Mail*

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No value in paper-based organics

I'm the first and only organic inspector to blow the whistle on the organic industry. My story was first covered by *The Western Producer* and then picked up by the CBC, CTV, Maclean's and Barron's. I paid a high price for going public, but it was the right thing to do.

Now comes news about a study by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine saying organic food is no more nutritious than regular food. The immediate response from top representatives of the organic industry has been that they never said organic food was more nutritious, only that it contains fewer harmful chemicals.

First of all, countless organic marketing campaigns have indeed implied or stated outright that organic food is more nutritious. But second, and of far greater importance, to claim we should pay more for organic food because it's produced without harmful synthetic fertilizers and pesticides is just wishful thinking

given that organic fields are not tested.

I saw many questionable claims while working for North America's largest organic certifying bodies in Canada and the United States. But without field testing I was powerless to do anything about it.

Imagine if they quit testing athletes at the Olympics. Imagine if, instead, athletes signed affidavits swearing they were clean. Imagine if Olympic inspectors called ahead to see if it was all right to drop by to collect a sample and allowed their schedule to be dictated by the athlete. That's how the multi-billion-dollar organic industry runs. It's an honour-based free-for-all.

There's no way to know if any of this industry's advertised claims (many of which you subsidize with your taxes) are true. There are many honest organic farmers who work hard to bring high-quality, pure organic food to market. But, unless all organic farmers are

forced to comply with the standards through routine organic testing during surprise inspections, these honest organic farmers go unrewarded for their hard work. Many of them are leaving the industry, unable to compete with cheap, untested "organic" imports which account for a whopping NINETY PERCENT of the organic market.

Industry defenders say organic food is the most highly regulated food in the world. But so what? Regulation is useless unless it's backed up with surprise field visits and lab tests. This is 2009, not the 1960s. Why aren't we testing organic farms?

I've campaigned for this since I became an inspector in 1998 and most organic farmers agree with me. But those running the industry vehemently disagree and attack my integrity instead of responding to the issue. It's no surprise that a British study found organic food to be no more nutritious than regular food: no one's minding the store. We can't even begin to assess the value of organic methods if an unknown number of players are cheating. And

where's the incentive for honest organic farmers to even bother trying harder?

I always thought organic food was supposed to be purer AND more nutritious. Am I missing something here? It's also supposed to be easier on the environment, but we're miles away from even considering whether that's true.

I appreciate there's no way to guarantee absolute purity. The world is, sadly, a much polluted place. But why can't we test organic farms to at least make sure farmers follow the rules? Isn't that the place to start?

Governments tried to implement organic field testing but were beaten back by the industry and a mere paper-based honour system was implemented instead. So tell me, do you think that, maybe, there's a much larger problem here than just a lack of nutrition?

Full Disclosure: Mischa Popoff is a former organic inspector with a bachelor's degree in history. He has been paid by some organic farmers to get their crops tested on a not-for-profit basis. You can visit his website at www.isitorganic.ca

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By Eric Sibliin House of Anasi Press,
320 pp. \$30.00

Eric Sibliin has a foot planted firmly in two musical worlds. A film maker and widely travelled Montreal free-lance journalist and documentary film maker who cut his teeth as a newspaper pop-music critic, Sibliin, 48, has entered the so-called classical sphere with his first book by deconstructing J.S. Bach's cello suites. It is an extraordinary effort, a free-wheeling literary riff about the art of making music. Like travel writer Bruce Chatwin, Sibliin condenses worlds into pages and leaves a reader hungry for more. He became fascinated with the "dark moody tones" of the cello suites nine years ago after hearing them for the first time played at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. "I had no reason to be there," he writes, "... but I might have been searching for something without knowing it. Top 40 tunes had overstayed their welcome in my auditory cortex, and the culture surrounding rock music had worn thin. I wanted music to occupy a central part in my life, but in a different way."

With the violoncello as his muse, Sibliin set out to tell the story of the history of the suites. In the course of his investigation he deftly blends biography, history, travel writing, autobiography and music appreciation. He is not only interested in the music, but also in the air of the suites neglect, their history, how they are played and why in a time of rock and rap, they continue to captivate. "Connect the notes, and a story emerges," he assures us. And what a story it is.

The six chapters in the beautifully designed book each represent one of the suites. Each chapter then has six sub-chapters that correspond to the six movements in each suite. Sibliin takes us to the Royal Library of Belgium to examine

Bach's autographed manuscripts then jumps from the baroque period to introduce us to the Catalan cellist, Pablo Casals, who discovers the suites in Barcelona in 1890 when he was only 13 years. The book then paints an intriguing portrait of Casals, who exiled himself from Spain in 1938 after fascist dictator Francisco Franco came to power and rescinded Catalan autonomy and banned the Catalan language.

In pursuit of his story Sibliin leaves no string unplucked, so to speak. He explores the number symbolism in Bach's compositions and managed a chance encounter with Walter Joachim, the very first cellist with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra was especially serendipitous. "To stumble across Walter was to befriend the cello suites," he writes, "He embodied their history from his days as a student in Germany to hearing Casals play to surviving the Second World War."

Sibliin became a card carrying member of the American Bach Society, and, taking Joachim's advice, even went as far as to take cello lessons, "practicing alone in my Bach shed with 50-odd amateurs doing the same elsewhere." From him we learn firsthand how difficult an instrument it is to play. "The amazing thing about playing the cello is its deep resonance," he writes, "how the tones fill your entire body as if it were a sound box of flesh and bone." He eventually gave up on the cello and began learning a Bach suite on his guitar.

The intensity of Sibliin's commitment in an age of iTunes and YouTube throbbing with rock and rap and new age music is enviable. His musings on the contingent nature of music are especially observant. "Will U2's oeuvre still be performed three centuries from now? And will music scholars still be sifting through old shoe boxes in search of lost U2 compositions?" he asks. "It is very possible. One also expects that Bach will continue to be a major musical figure, but there is only so much music that posterity can possibly have time for."

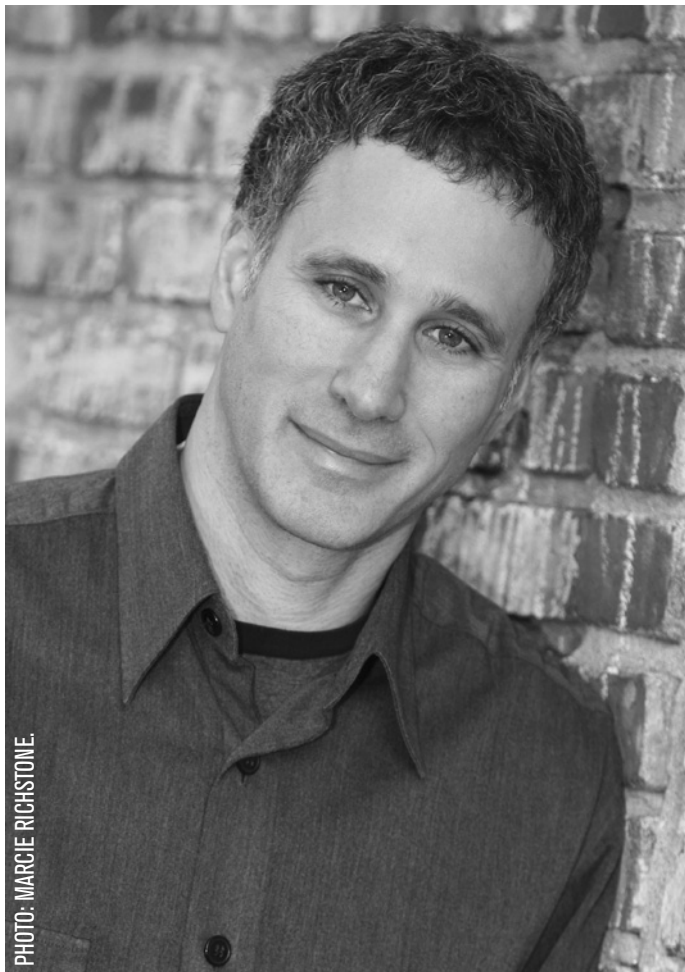
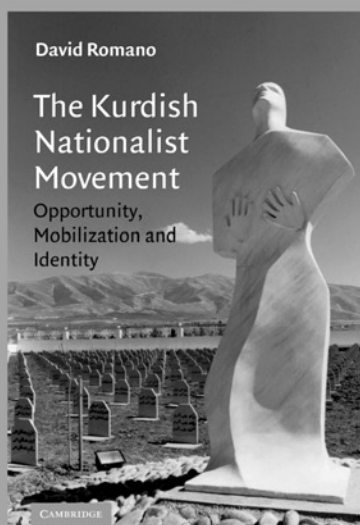


PHOTO: MARCIE RICHSTONE

Cambridge Middle East Studies



David Romano focuses on the Kurdish case to generally try and make sense of ethnic nationalist resurgence. In a world rent by a growing number of such conflicts, the questions posed about why, how and when such challenges to the state arise are becoming increasingly urgent.

Throughout the author analyzes these questions through the lens of social movement theory, considering in particular politico-social structures, resource mobilization strategies and cultural identity. His conclusions offer some thought-provoking insights into Kurdish nationalism, as well as into the strengths and weaknesses of various social movement theories.

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Darwin : sur le fil très ténu d'une humeur simple

GIRAUD, Marc, *Darwin c'est tout bête!*, Paris, éditions Robert Laffont, 2009, 344 p.

C'est tout bête?

La sélection naturelle, l'adaptation au milieu, l'évolution des espèces, et quoi d'autre encore? Ah oui: les histoires de fous aux Galapagos, les singes qui parlent (on en connaît tous!), l'architecture de l'embryon, les fleurs musicales, les hirondelles de Tchernobyl et les batailles de mouches, constituent quelques exemples figurant au palmarès de ce livre extraordinaire, Darwin, cest tout bête, qui relate, avec un humour imparable, la vie du célèbre naturaliste et scientifique Charles Darwin. L'auteur, Marc Giraud, a frappé dans le mille, en proposant aux néophytes en la matière toute la rigueur de l'activité cérébrale de Darwin, mais sous une forme ludique particulière, où l'interrogation se dresse de tous bords, tous côtés.

Tu parles, Charles!

Je conseille vivement à tous cet ouvrage fort instructif et réjouissant, truffé de mille anecdotes sur la vie de Charles Darwin et sur ses travaux. Impossible de résister à un livre pareil, tant tout y est intelligent, lumineux, cohérent, savoureux! On imagine souvent Darwin comme un être austère, un peu fou, coupé du monde et avec un caractère de chien. Or, il n'en est rien: Darwin était un tendre, un doux, un passionné, un être d'une extrême sensibilité, à la

larme facile et rempli de bonté et d'amour pour tout ce qui l'entourait. Il avait également un humour communicatif, doublé d'un esprit scientifique rigoureux, pointilleux sur les détails, en somme, des caractéristiques ayant fait de lui un génie universel.

Ce livre, en plus d'explorer la théorie darwinienne, propose de dépasser les préjugés figeant la pensée d'un seul homme, tel un gourou dogmatique, pour chercher les contradictions - et les richesses - de la théorie initiale. En effet, le darwinisme a dépassé Darwin. Aussi, au fur et à la mesure de notre lecture, nous prenons concrètement conscience de l'importance à défendre courageusement la mémoire de Charles Darwin et de ses héritiers, particulièrement à l'heure où les fondamentalistes religieux, qui se montrent de nos jours de plus en plus agressifs, le caricaturent grossièrement, déforment les propos de Darwin, les ridiculisent et le trahissent lâchement.

Il est vrai que pour se faire, le génie de Darwin a été traîné dans la boue, qualifié de blasphématoire par les créationnistes qui ne pouvaient supporter l'hypothèse que l'être humain n'est pas « la » création de « Dieu ». De ce fait, la théorie de Darwin n'est plus au programme dans les écoles sous influence fondamentaliste ou intégriste, et son enseignement, qui faisait figure d'autorité dans le monde de l'éducation, ne va plus de soi.

Marc Giraud
Darwin,
c'est tout bête!

Mille et une histoires d'animaux
pour comprendre l'évolution



Robert Laffont

De toute manière, aux dépens de l'orgueil crasse des hommes ancrés dans leurs certitudes superstitieuses ou surnaturelles, Darwin a choisi son camp: les bêtes! Ainsi, sous un rapport objectal extrêmement ténu, il reste un fil d'humeur: son amour pour les animaux, lesquels le lui rendent d'ailleurs bien, qui lui permit, en attendant de devenir célèbre, de s'amuser follement de ses observations, qu'il nota dans son journal personnel. Figurez-vous que Darwin jouait du piano pour des vers de terre afin d'observer leurs réactions, en plus d'avoir découvert des fossiles spectaculaires qui furent des éléments-clés de sa renommée naissante. De plus, il alla jusqu'à mettre un scarabée dans sa bouche, lequel, par mécanisme de défense, lui brûla immédiatement la langue en expulsant des substances

chimiques. En somme, l'originalité des observations de Darwin laisse sans voix, tant il s'est rendu loin dans l'expérimentation.

Aussi, on comprend parfaitement grâce à Darwin que la loi du plus fort n'est pas toujours la meilleure. Avec la même pertinence, il a montré que le sexe constitue le moteur de l'évolution. En effet, la sexualité, cette machine « à faire du différent », donnerait un avantage dans la lutte pour la vie. En apprenant à raisonner ainsi, on admet que l'acte sexuel ne se réduit pas à la reproduction, parce qu'au contraire chaque être né de deux parents est entièrement nouveau et original. Aussi, des comportements homosexuels ont été recensés chez quatre cent cinquante espèces animales différentes, dont trois cents de mammifères et d'oiseaux. De plus, certains animaux sont bisexuels et même multisexuels, dont l'exemple le plus célèbre demeure les bonobos. En fait, les animaux homos perturbent la théorie de Darwin et il a fallu attendre jusqu'à 1999 pour que des chercheurs signent de nouvelles conclusions.

Finalement, on comprend que la science de Darwin est toute faite de mouvement et de vie. Les animaux s'expriment, de même que les végétaux, et cela est à lui seul extrêmement fascinant. Moins connu que L'Origine des espèces, mais fabuleusement innovant pour son époque, Darwin signa un livre: L'Expression des émotions chez

l'homme et chez les animaux, dont le contenu fait littéralement hisser les cheveux sur la tête, tellement il nous met le nez dans la troublante animalité de l'être humain.

Bref, dépasser la loi de la jungle, c'est la capacité pour l'homme de sortir de ses affects, pour entrer de plain-pied dans la raison. Si on aime les droits et libertés, il faut sortir de la loi de la jungle afin de permettre à la diversité humaine de cohabiter de façon pacifique. Certes, la barbarie n'est jamais bien loin, cherchant à pénétrer, voire à défoncer les portes, mais nous sommes des êtres humains, et ce qui nous est propre en tant que tels ne doit pas ignorer le fait que, tôt ou tard, devra s'opérer la symbiose entre tous les peuples de la Terre. En effet, aussi anarchique soit notre organisation sociale et cosmogonique, nous sommes obligés de prendre conscience de l'importance d'un échange constructif avec autrui, non seulement en matière de civilité, mais aussi, à plus long terme, pour la sauvegarde de la civilisation. N'oublions pas non plus que tous les animaux vivent dans les affects, dans un mode "action/réaction", sans Histoire, ainsi que l'étaient jadis les quelques peuplades primitives qui occupaient notre planète.

Bref, en plus d'être un remarquable travail de vulgarisation scientifique, ce livre de Marc Giraud mérite une place de choix dans nos bibliothèques, tant personnelles que scolaires.

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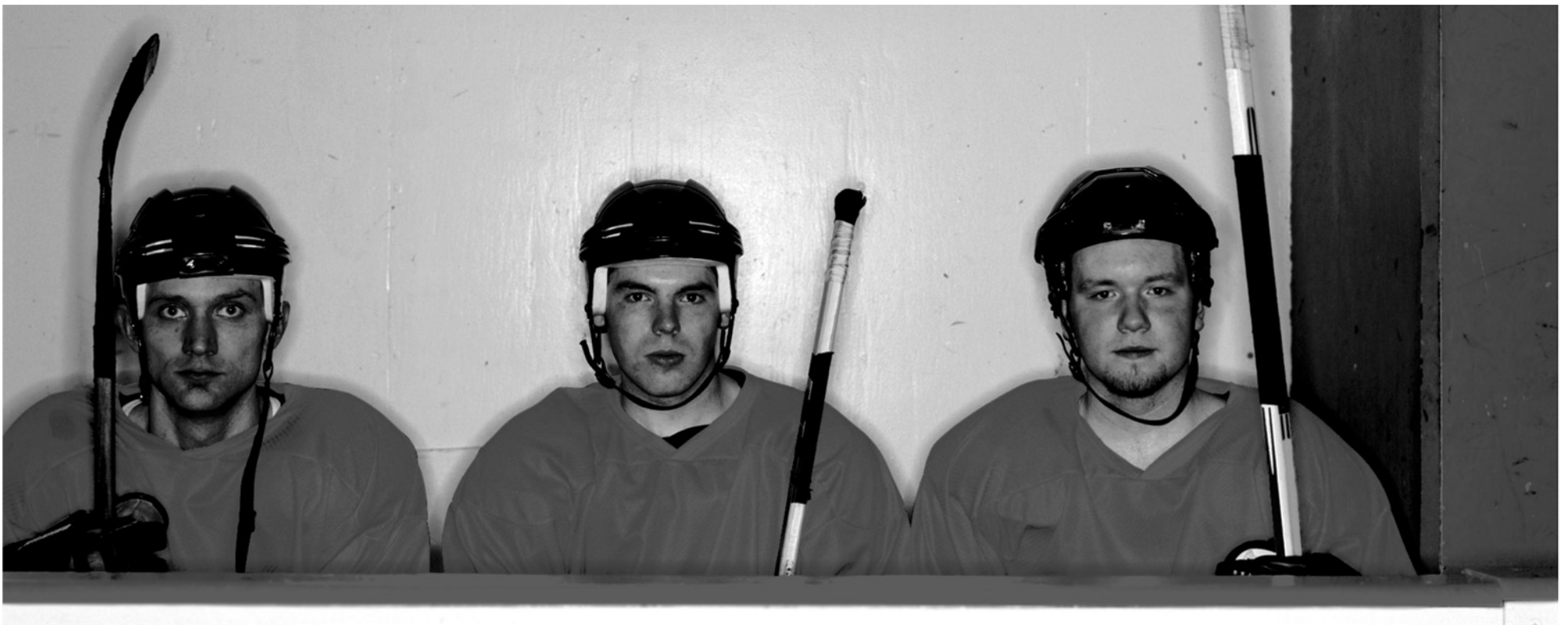
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Le charme de la Polonaise

Malgorzata Kubala séduit au Canada

La tournée qu'a effectuée la cantatrice Malgorzata Kubala au Canada n'est pas passée inaperçue, notamment dans la communauté polonaise. La présence de cette grande cantatrice polonaise au Canada au cours du mois de juin 2009 constitue une preuve supplémentaire de l'engagement du nouveau consul de la Pologne dans la métropole québécoise, Tadeusz Zylinski, en faveur de la culture. En effet, pour donner une nouvelle impulsion aux relations liant la Pologne à Montréal, M.Zylinski, dans des déclarations qu'il avait faites à nos micros, affirmait vouloir faire de la promotion



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La soprano Malgorzata Kubala, accompagnée magistralement par la pianiste Justina Gabzdel.

culturelle un thème majeur, voire la priorité de son mandat à titre de consul.

Lors de sa prestation, la soprano Malgorzata Kubala, accompagnée magistralement par la pianiste Justina Gabzdel, avait interprété, pour la première fois, six compositions de Frédéric Chopin avec les textes de Pauline Viardot (1821-1910), grande amie de ce premier. Une interprétation qui a rejoint l'assistance dans les tripes. Au crédit de Mme Kubala, une gamme vocale quasiment proche de la perfection, sans oublier le côté théâtral très présent qui personnifie l'art de la cantatrice. Pour certains, sa voix chaleureuse et puissante a donné une expression lyrique évidente aux œuvres de Chopin.

L'intro, qui s'est déroulée uniquement en polonais, avait pris trop de place, comparativement au temps imparti à la prestation des deux artistes. Erreur qui a été corrigée lors du concert qui s'est tenu par la suite dans la capitale fédérale canadienne, où les deux artistes ont été invitées à performer à l'ambassade de la Pologne à Ottawa et au Centre Interculturel de Rawdon. À Ottawa, et pour le plus grand plaisir des spectateurs, l'introduction a été très brève et s'est déroulée dans les deux langues officielles du Canada. Rien à reprocher également côté conception et direction artistique du concert. Soulignons enfin que la soprano Malgorzata Kubala et la pianiste Justina Gabzdel ont doublement fait salle comble à Montréal et à Ottawa. Grâce aux deux artistes, les admirateurs de Chopin ont été visiblement enchantés, a constaté un journaliste de l'Agence de presse «Média Mosaïque».

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