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English debate was a duty, not a choice

There has been much discussion of late about Louise Harel's failure to participate in CTV's English Montreal mayoralty debate. Her supporters have argued everything from her discomfort in English to the fact that it is not really all that important. They have said that debating is a politician's personal choice, not a duty. In this case, we beg to differ.

What language a politician chooses to campaign in is certainly a matter of personal choice. If Madame Harel wants to ignore the 40 per cent of the City of Montreal that is non-francophone she is certainly within her rights. It's her campaign and she takes the risk of alienating voters if she wants to. She is sending a clear signal on marginalization, but at least it is being done in the free battleground of ideas and she knows the downside. The debate,

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How Harel spent some public bucks

By Beryl Wajzman and Dan Delmar

Although Vision Montreal mayoralty candidate Louise Harel is quick to criticize her opponent, Gérald Tremblay, for allegedly misappropriating public funds, she too has questions to answer about how government dollars have been spent under her watch.

For two consecutive years, the Quebec government funded a month-long event called "Rhythms for Palestine," which featured films and musical performances. Although the legitimacy of funding the events in

2000 and 2001 is not being called into question, the source of the grants is curious.

The program was funded by Harel's former ministry, Affaires municipales et de la Métropole, to the tune of \$50,000 for the 2001 edition. Also curious is the fact that the event was organized by a charity group called Medical Aid for Palestine-Canada (MAP). The group's president is Edmond Omran, Harel's long-time partner.

In a 2000 session of the National Assembly, Liberal MNAs went after Harel for her ministry granting MAP an additional \$11,000 grant from her discretionary

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Avec la collaboration de Daniel Laprès et Alan Hustak.

Louise et l'État : une histoire d'amour

Si les sondages des récents mois s'avèrent véridiques quant aux intentions du tiers des électeurs qui daigneront voter le jour du scrutin, Louise Harel a bien des chances d'être élue maire de Montréal. Mme Harel est connue en tant qu'ancienne députée du Parti Québécois et ministre de premier plan. Mais quelles sont son histoire et sa vision d'un bon gouvernement, et aussi, que planifie-t-elle pour Montréal ?

Harel is a career politician, having served the PQ in various capacities for the last four decades. A native of the north shore suburb of Sainte-Thérèse and educated in sociology, her record is marred with pro-big government policies, a tendency to

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Harel: « Je suis le contraire d'une bureaucrate ! »

By Dan Delmar

Avec la collaboration de Daniel Laprès.

Mayorality candidate Louise Harel went on the defensive in an interview with The Métropolitain this week, saying she does not favour big government, but rather one that is effective and close to citizens, and also harshly criticizing « certains journalistes Anglophones » who she says are jumping to conclusions about her vision for Montreal.

« Tous les gens qui me connaissent et qui ne me détestent

pas – parce que, évidemment, je peux vous parler de certains journalistes qui me détestent – tout les gens avec qui j'ai travaillé et dans tous les ministères où j'ai travaillé, les gens savent que je suis le contraire d'une bureaucrate! » Harel said on Monday.

Her goal is to « réduire la lourdeur bureaucratique de l'administration, » and, when it comes to blue collar workers, would only say that she would uphold « la plafond de la masse salariale » that she introduced as Municipal Affairs minister.

« J'ai toujours travaillé pour rendre des services à la population. J'ai créé Emploi Québec... J'ai réussi à négocier avec le fédéral le transfert de 1100 fonctionnaires fédéraux pour ajouter des fonctionnaires au Québec », Harel explained. « Si j'étais bureaucrate, je n'aurais pas été élue pendant 28 ans dans Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Je suis le contraire d'une bureaucrate ! »

Harel also lashed out at Montreal's Anglo media, saying that she was « excédée de voir à quel point certains

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MILLES MOTS • THOUSAND WORDS



PHOTO MARCIO MESQUITA

Several bricks fell from a 12-storey building under renovation on Ste. Catherine Street near Bleury St., damaging one car.

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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

DE AMHERST À DUPLESSIS EN PASSANT PAR TARDIVEL

Les rues de la honte

La rue Amherst conservera son nom. Échec déplorable ! Le principal reproche que j'adresse aux valeureux censeurs qui voulaient améliorer les temps présents en épurant les temps anciens, c'est d'en être resté au stade larvaire d'un projet par ailleurs salutaire. Montréal est sillonnée de long en large et de haut en bas, de rues aux noms douteux, pourquoi diable nous indignent des seuls méfaits du misérable Jeffrey Amherst, qui n'a même pas su mettre à exécution ses criminelles intentions — ce que les susnommés ignoraient, les grandes vertus faisant souvent bon ménage avec l'ignorance. « Plus le mensonge est énorme, plus il sera cru », disait Joseph Goebbels, je dis que plus la mission est impossible, plus elle anoblit ses héros. Nos redresseurs de torts ont commis l'erreur de ne pas voir assez grand.

Voici donc, pour le bénéfice de qui voudrait reprendre le combat, les noms de voies urbaines qui autant sinon plus que la rue Amherst doivent être débaptisées, tant les personnages qu'elles évoquent eurent de mauvaises pensées et commirent de mauvaises actions.

En 1764, Amherst planifia un crime contre l'humanité, qu'il n'eut pas l'heur de mettre à exécution. En 1696, Pierre Lemoyne d'Iberville commit à Terre-Neuve des crimes de guerre. En plus d'incendier St. John's, il détruisit trente-six villages de la péninsule d'Avalon habités par d'innocents pêcheurs anglais. « Méthodiquement, écrit Guy Frégault, Iberville parcourut le littoral de l'île, laissant un désert derrière lui. » Bilan de l'opération, écrit toujours Frégault, « 1838 hommes capturés et 200 tués, 371 chaloupes brûlées ou remises à des pêcheurs français, 193 300 morues enlevées dans les divers entrepôts, sans compter le bétail razié ». La rue d'Iberville doit changer de nom... ou disparaître !

Buade de Frontenac, gouverneur de la Nouvelle-France (et célèbre propriétaire d'esclaves), projetait d'envahir New-York et d'en déporter les habitants. Simple projet, direz-vous ? Ce qui ne peut servir d'excuse à Amherst ne peut servir d'excuse à Frontenac. Boycottons la rue Frontenac !

Jean-Baptiste de la Croix de Chevreton de Saint-Vallier, deuxième évêque de Québec, pratiquait l'esclavage. À bas la rue Saint-Vallier ! Beau Dommage modifiera volontiers une adresse mentionnée dans une vieille chanson, qui y gagnera

ainsi en dignité.

En 1867 l'avocat et journaliste, Gustave-Adolphe Drolet (1848-1904), s'engagea dans les zouaves pontificaux. Esprit belliqueux saturé de testostérone mis au service du pape le plus réactionnaire qui fut jamais. Allons manifester sur la rue Drolet !

Et parlons-en, de Mastai Ferretti, alias Pie IX. André Pratte nous le rappelait dernièrement : l'auteur du Syllabus (autre ignominie), soutenait que l'esclavage était « conforme au droit

publia L'homme cet inconnu en 1935. Le célèbre médecin s'y faisait le promoteur d'un eugénisme que n'aurait pas renié l'un de ses plus illustres contemporains : Adolf Hitler. En France, la faculté de médecine de Lyon de même que plusieurs rues portant son nom ont été débaptisées. Nous devons suivre le bon exemple et nous débarrasser de la rue Alexis-Carrel.

Combien de crimes les États-Unis n'ont-ils pas commis pendant le mandat écourté de John Kennedy ? La liste est interminable, je n'en mentionnerai que trois : l'assassinat de

Combien de crimes les États-Unis n'ont-ils pas commis pendant le mandat écourté de John Kennedy ? La liste est interminable, je n'en mentionnerai que trois : l'assassinat de Patrice Lumumba au Congo le 13 février 1961 ; le débarquement anticastriste dans la baie des Cochons le 17 avril de la même année ; le blocus partiel de Cuba à partir du 22 octobre 1962, qui déclencha la « crise des missiles ». La planète se retrouva au bord d'une guerre nucléaire et le pauvre Khrouchtchev subit une terrible humiliation. L'avenue Président Kennedy doit être rayée de la carte.

naturel et au droit divin ». Abolissons le Boulevard Pie IX !

Jules-Paul Tardivel (1851-1905) fonda et dirigea une feuille de chou vouée à la désinformation, La vérité. Calomniateur professionnel, ultramontain déchaîné, cet abject personnage — américain par la naissance — ne mérite pas que la moindre venelle, si obscure soit-elle, vienne nous rappeler qu'il foula notre sol et pollua l'esprit de nos aïeux. Que Tardivel ait été le premier promoteur de l'indépendance du Québec ne devrait pas nous intimider. Nous avons aussi à notre époque nos nationalistes grotesques. Qui serait assez stupide pour donner à un cul-de-sac le nom de Patrick Bourgeois ?

Alexis Carrel (1873-1944), Prix Nobel de médecine 1912,

Patrice Lumumba au Congo le 13 février 1961 ; le débarquement anticastriste dans la baie des Cochons le 17 avril de la même année ; le blocus partiel de Cuba à partir du 22 octobre 1962, qui déclencha la « crise des missiles ». La planète se retrouva au bord d'une guerre nucléaire et le pauvre Khrouchtchev subit une terrible humiliation. L'avenue Président Kennedy doit être rayée de la carte.

Je lance aux ennemis d'Amherst un appel pressant : reprenez le flambeau ! Mais reprenez-le vraiment ! Portez-le plus haut que le bout de votre nez. « Amherst et d'Iberville, soit ! Frontenac et Saint-Vallier, absolument ! Pie IX, Drolet, Tardivel, ça urge ! Carrel et Kennedy, au plus sacrant !

...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?

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ENGLISH DEBATE WAS A DUTY, NOT A CHOICE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

however, is another story.

If a candidate chooses not to do any debates, that is certainly a matter of choice as well. But to accept a debate in French and not in English is a clear signal of the politics of nullification and interposition. The segregation and marginalization of a substantial part of the city she seeks to govern.

Politicians don't have to try to balance all interests or particularities. Politics should be about principles not pandering. Tell voters to "follow me to the other side. It's better over there." So if a politician chooses not to debate at all, if for no other reason than they don't want to, that is fine. There are other ways to respect the public and get your message out.

But Madame Harel is a very intelligent

woman. She completely understands the profound alienation she will cause by not debating in English. If she is to debate in French, it becomes her duty to debate in English.

The question that needs to be examined by all voters is the legitimacy of the language issue being raised again. Montrealers have gone beyond the cultural wars and the big lies of the past 40 years. We have our own *modus vivendi*, our own realistic accommodation, on this island where more than 50 per cent of the people are non-francophone, and, as we wrote, in this city where some 40 percent are non-francophone.

This is a world class city. We are North America's second largest inland port. A leader in avionics and bio-pharma. A college and

university population greater than Boston's on a per capita basis. We can compete and succeed. And for most, including most Francophones, there is the recognition that as much as they are loyal and protective of their language and culture, the workday language of the world is English.

Montrealers are a "can do" people. It is sometimes hard to remember but in a 10-year period we overhauled our highway system, built a world exhibition, constructed a metro and staged an Olympics. We can do better than the insecurity and xenophobia of the past several decades. Our mayor, though not needing to reflect the views of all on every issue, must reflect — and sell — the diversity of Montreal on the national, continental and international

stages. For that, the Mayor must know English. This is not a job that can be done by proxy. And attracting business to this city is job one, make no mistake about that.

How is it that almost every candidate for federal office makes sure that they take an intensive course in French, yet the person who aspires to govern one of Canada's largest English cities — yes English as well as French — makes a point of reflexively marginalizing the fact that though she knows the language, refuses to use it. That in itself sends a message. A message of benign neglect to understanding the hopes and aspirations of four-tenths of the people she seeks to govern. It is a message Montrealers should heed, and overwhelmingly reject.

HOW HAREL SPENT SOME PUBLIC BUCKS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

budget.

"Je voudrais qu'on puisse m'indiquer en quoi ça fait avancer la cause municipale d'avoir donné une subvention de 11 000 \$ à l'Aide médicale pour la Palestine," asked MNA Roch Cholette. Harel responded by pointing out that many different ethnic groups received funding from her ministry: "J'y vais au hasard, bien évidemment."

MAP is not to be confused with Medical Aid for Palestinians, an international NGO that offers services to those in need in the West Bank, Gaza and Lebanon. Omran's MAP is a Quebec-based organization that promotes Palestine-related issues in the province. According to the Jerusalem-based NGO Monitor, MAP has also "used its tax-exempt status to solicit donations to finance a legal fund," for Palestinian plaintiffs who filed suit last year against three Canadian corporations, accusing them of unlawful construction in the West Bank.

Harel has a history of strongly supporting Palestine and condemning Israel, speaking at numerous pro-Palestine rallies since she was first elected to the National Assembly in 1981. In June of last year, only months before she would resign as MNA for Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, she presented as motion in the Assembly calling that the Quebec government "recognize publically that the Nakba (the day of 'catastrophe,' when Israel was created) is a historic injustice done to Palestinians." Harel's motion goes on to describe Gaza as an "open-air prison" and chastises Israel for disobeying international law. The motion was not adopted by the Charest government.

While Harel was speaker of the National Assembly — a position requiring a fair amount of impartiality — she participated in a pro-Palestine march in 2002, raising the ire of the Canadian Jewish Congress and causing Liberals, in opposition at the time, to question whether she was fit for the job. It wasn't the only time Harel had used her position in government to further personal interests.

Also in 2002, Harel chaired l'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (AFP) meeting in Berne, Switzerland, where, in her opening comments, telling delegates to be vigilant in their defence of the French language and warned of "la menace Anglophone."

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WHO IS EDMOND OMRAN?

The long-time partner of mayoralty candidate Louise Harel keeps a low profile. What is known is that Edmond Omran is a longtime Palestinian rights activist and the founding president of Medical Aid for Palestine-Canada (MAP).

On top of collecting donations for medical care, as the name of the group implies, MAP also organizes cultural events and political demonstrations relating to the Palestinian cause. The group has also purportedly collected donations for plaintiffs from a Palestinian village who sued three Canadian companies last year, accusing them of unlawful development on the West Bank.

In 1981, a Palestinian information office opened on St. Laurent Blvd., which had a mandate to speak on behalf of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO); Omran ran the operation and was the PLO spokesperson for Quebec. Founded in 1964, the PLO is a political organization that acts as the official representative of the Palestinian people. Omran and other PLO members have had strong ties to the Parti Québécois, having been present at party conferences.

A harsh critic of Israel, Omran wrote in *La Presse* in 1982 that the State "pratique à volonté les moyens terroristes le plus sanguinaires et les plus meurtriers...L'OLP (PLO) jouit de la reconnaissance explicite, voire du soutien, des pays et des partis avec lesquels le Québec ou le PQ partage une certaine affinité politique ou culturelle..."

HAREL: « JE SUIS LE CONTRAIRE D'UNE BUREAUCRATE ! » SUITE DE LA PAGE 1

journalistes anglophones — je ne sais pas si vous en êtes vous-même — rendent tout négatif d'une vie parlementaire et politique de 30 ans. » Pointing to what she describes as megacity success stories in towns like Sherbrooke and Lennoxville, she said that « c'est pas tout le monde qui partage le point de vue de certains journalistes anglophones. »

Having a record of remaining far from neutral on the issue of the Israel-Palestine conflict, Harel said that she wasn't worried her pro-Palestinian positions, as reported in this week's edition, will eliminate members of the Jewish community as a potential voting block. She said she has met with several community groups and described the meetings as « cordial, » adding that she also has « beaucoup d'amis personnels dans la communauté juive. »

As Municipal Affairs minister, she helped finance the activities of a number of cultural organizations — Jewish, Arab and others — including Medical Aid for Palestine-Canada (MAP), whose founder and president is her long-time partner, Edmond Omran. Her ministry gave grants of \$50,000 for their « Rythmes pour la Palestine » events in 2000 and 2001.

« Comme pour toutes les communautés qui voulaient communiquer leurs valeurs, leurs cultures, je l'ai fait avec plaisir, d'autant plus que l'organisme de mon mari est un organisme à but non-lucratif, » she said. « [Omran] ne tire aucune bénéfice de ça. Il n'y a pas de conflit d'intérêt. Pourquoi aurais-je privé Montréal d'avoir ce festival du monde arabe ? Est-ce que je devrais discriminer toute la communauté Arabo-Palestinienne ? »



LOUISE ET L'ÉTAT : UNE HISTOIRE D'AMOUR, SUITE DE LA PAGE 1

bow down to unions and a desire to fast-track Quebec sovereignty. Louise Harel seems to take direction from no one. Not even from the father of the modern-day separatist movement, René Lévesque.

So says veteran journalist Jean-Jacques Samson, who spoke with The Métropolitain from his desk at the Journal du Québec earlier this week. Samson has followed Harel since the early 1970's and, like many in Montreal, is skeptical when she presents herself as the candidate who wants to reduce the size of the municipal government.

"Elle a la tendance à adopter le jargon des fonctionnaires et des bureaucrates," Samson nous a-t-il dit. "Elle a piloté des réformes très bureaucratiques, très technocratiques. Ce sont des plans qui sont toujours bien compliqués et qui alourdissent la fonction publique."

Un exemple caractéristique : l'introduction de la mégacité de Montréal, entre autres villes du Québec qui ont été fusionnées de force par une législation pilotée par Harel en tant que ministre péquiste des Affaires municipales, de 1998 jusqu'à peu avant que le parti soit chassé du pouvoir, en 2003. Aujourd'hui, Harel parle du projet de mégacité comme si ce n'était qu'une vieille histoire. De plus, elle éprouve beaucoup de difficultés lorsqu'il s'agit d'expliquer les contradictions entre le dédain apparent pour l'enflure bureaucratique qu'elle affiche désormais, et pour l'amour à l'égard de cette même approche bureaucratique dont elle a fait preuve tout au long de sa vie politique.

At the press conference in June unveiling Harel as Vision Montreal's new mayoralty candidate, she also refused to answer questions in English from journalists and could only manage to read a few scripted lines. The time to answer tough questions in English would be "tantôt," she said. It has now become apparent that she is unwilling to participate in a televised leaders' debate in English, plans for which have been scrapped by CTV.

Her fidelity is, of course, to Quebec sovereignty above all else. In the early 1980's, after the first referendum, Harel could have been described as a fundamentalist

separatist, saying that those who did not wish to make Quebec's independence an election issue again following the 1980 defeat, were not true indépendantistes. She was minister of cultural communities briefly in 1984, when she and several cabinet colleagues resigned over what they perceived to be Lévesque's "soft" stand on separatism.

Harel a incarné une large part de ce que René Lévesque craignait à propos du mouvement qu'il a lui-même popularisé : qu'un Québec indépendant serait dirigé par une cabale socialiste, étatiste et syndicaliste. Son ancien conjoint, Michel Bourdon, avait longtemps été un activiste syndical à la tête de la CSN-Construction. Harel a été, jusqu'à sa démission comme députée d'Hochelaga-Maisonneuve l'an dernier, l'une des plus importantes voix de l'aile-gauche social-démocrate du PQ. Harel, Lévesque, Parizeau, Bouchard et d'autres s'accordaient sur l'idée d'un Québec indépendant. Mais leurs désaccords quant à la manière précise dont le nouvel État doit être gouverné, de même que les guerres intestines entre les ailes gauche et droite du PQ, ont toujours été un handicap pour le mouvement.

Samson rappelle qu'Harel exerçait une constante pression sur Lévesque durant les congrès du PQ, au point où l'antagonisme profond entre elle et ce dernier était presque devenu un sport pour elle. Avant d'être élue député en 1981, elle était présidente pour le PQ des circonscriptions de la région de Montréal-Centre, qui constitue le cœur du territoire péquiste, et elle était alors une épine dans les côtes de Lévesque, cela au point de pousser son chef dans une irrépressible rage. Son irritation vis-à-vis Harel alla jusqu'au point où, selon les biographes Graham Fraser et Ivon Owen, il poussa par inadvertance quelqu'un durant une réunion du PQ juste parce qu'il voulait éviter tout contact visuel avec Harel. Au plus grand désarroi de Lévesque, Harel parvint à s'imposer en tant que vice-présidente du PQ.

Harel has been known to be difficult to work with, stubborn, and it remains to be seen how she will adjust to municipal politics. Does she still have the agenda of a

hard-line sovereignist?

As The Métropolitain reported last month, Harel has described Montreal's 19 boroughs (she originally proposed 27 be created) as "little homelands. What is important to understand is that there are little bits of patrie throughout Montreal, and the people are proud of it." 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 govern-

ment had "a right and an obligation to declare Montreal a French city."

"If we go from 19 to ten boroughs, but these boroughs remain quasi-municipalities as they are now, we will end up in the worst of situations because we'll have cities... an Italian city, a Haitian city, an Anglophone city, an Arab city - Ville St. Laurent - a Jewish city, etc..."

Quiconque est mis devant les propos controversés tenus par Mme Harel en mars dernier sur RDI au sujet de la création de cités ethniques, est justifié de s'inter-

roger sur sa vision pour Montréal, qui en est une d'uniformité française, selon laquelle Montréal deviendrait le moteur culturel et économique d'un Québec indépendant.

"Ce n'est surtout pas elle qui va alléger la bureaucratie," nous avertit Samson. "C'est une personne qui favorise l'intervention de l'État. C'est quelqu'un qui ne va jamais confronter les syndicats. Mme Harel n'est pas prête à décrocher de la scène publique... C'est une personne qui ne peut pas relancer Montréal."

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Prud'homme retires

Dignitaries from a number of Arab countries as well as Cuba and Russia attended a reception at Montreal City Hall Sept. 9 to honour the Dean of Canada's parliamentarians, retiring senator Marcel Prud'homme.

Prud'homme, who was described as the institutional memory on Parliament Hill was first elected as a Liberal MP in 1963 and never lost an election before Brian Mulroney appointed him a senator 16 years ago.

Prud'homme's outspoken support of Arab causes made him a political liability and he was confined to the back benches for all of his parliamentary career.

During the reception, Montreal mayor Gérald Tremblay took the opportunity of the captive audience to cultivate the Arab vote in upcoming municipal election by declaring that, although he wasn't a convert to Islam, he was observing the Ramadan fast out of respect to the faith and wouldn't eat any of the food being served at the reception.

The mayor introduced all of the ambassadors and consular officials present, then asked if he had missed anyone.

A voice in the crowd shouted the name of one dignitary, but they mayor didn't quite catch exactly what was said.

"Israel? Did I miss the Ambassador of Israel?" the mayor asked.

"No. He's not here," Prud'homme quipped to widespread laughter, "Next time, maybe."

Prud'homme warned the audience that the only politician who could speak as long as he



could was Fidel Castro. He then proceeded to deliver a rambling 45-minute speech recapping his political career, and his commitment to human rights.

Prud'homme was born into a political family; His father, Hector, was a Montreal city councillor during the years Camillien Houde was mayor, and his mother, Lucia, was a militant organizer for the Bloc Populaire, a forerunner of the Parti Québécois.

(A park in Dr. Hector Prud'homme's name was inaugurated in the east end by Tremblay earlier this year).

Prud'homme has always prided himself on being "a French Canadian Federalist in my

"Israel? Did I miss the Ambassador of Israel?" the mayor asked. "No. He's not here," Prud'homme quipped to widespread laughter, "Next time, maybe."

mind and a Quebec nationalist in my heart.

"Federalism is the only way for diverse people to live together," he says, "There's nothing wrong with being a nationalist, but good nationalist respect the pride of others. It's when people think that they are superior, when they have a superiority complex, that they are better than others, when the trouble starts." Prud'homme's interest in foreign affairs was sparked in the 1960s by Algeria's fight for independence.

In the 1970s Prud'homme toured the Arab world and befriended Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

He stubbornly supported the Arab position in the Middle East. When Arafat delivered a speech to the United Nations in 1974, Prud'homme rose to applaud in a standing ovation, and later invited him to Canada. The invitation was withdrawn by Prime Minister Trudeau. As a senator, Prud'homme once held a private reception for the King of Jordan atop the Peace Tower in Ottawa, which meant carting food and supplies to the top of the tower by elevator.

"I am not a provocateur. But you don't reach out to people by slapping them in the face," Prud'homme said. "We are often afraid to reach out to human beings."

When Canada introduced the \$1 coin in 1987 Prud'homme proposed putting former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's head on the money to replace the Queen's image. If nothing else, that put him in the books as Western Canada's favourite Quebec MP.

In 1993, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney thought the Progressive Conservatives could win Prud'homme's St. Denis riding, which today is known as Papineau. According to Prud'homme, Mulroney offered him any patronage appointment he wanted to vacate the seat. "He started by offering me an appointment as Canada's ambassador to Tunisia, but in the end I set my own conditions for stepping down as an MP and appointed myself to the Senate. Mulroney agreed," he said.

The Conservatives lost the seat in the election that followed.

Prud'homme sat as an independent Senator, but had little influence.

In November 2007 he was awarded the Russian Federation's highest civilian honour, The Order of Friendship, and was a recipient of the Hungarian government's freedom fighters award.

By law, he has to give up his seat when he turns 75 at the end of November.

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

- George F. Lengvari, Sr.



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LIONEL GROULX EST SES CONTINUATEURS

Réponse à un jeune

« **A**ujourd'hui, quand on demande à un jeune [...] qui est Lionel Groulx, il répond que c'est une station de métro », déplorait Claude Béland, ancien dirigeant du Mouvement Desjardins et actuel président du conseil d'administration de la Fondation Lionel-Groulx, dans le Devoir du 13 août dernier.

Si un jeune me demandait à moi qui était Lionel Groulx, voici la réponse que je lui donnerais :

La mission principale du chanoine Groulx tenait à la sauvegarde de la langue française et de la religion catholique. Dans « L'Appel de la race », roman-phare du nationalisme québécois que Groulx publia en 1922, le personnage principal s'appelle Lantagnac. Issu d'une famille pauvre, il sera le seul des six enfants à faire de hautes études. Une seule chose lui manquait affreusement selon Groulx :

« l'éducation au patriotisme ».

Devenu avocat, Lantagnac commet « l'erreur » d'épouser une Anglaise, d'aller vivre à Ottawa et d'adopter la langue anglaise, dans laquelle ses enfants sont éduqués. Ayant adopté un milieu protestant et anglophone et pour cette raison tourmenté de l'intérieur, Lantagnac décide de revoir sa parenté francophone après vingt ans d'absence. Ayant laissé sa femme et ses enfants à Ottawa il renoue donc avec les « anciens de sa famille » et, en effectuant une visite au cimetière où reposent ses ancêtres, il recouvre « toute [son] âme de Français » pour ensuite courir se confier au « bon » Père Fabien. Voici un extrait de la conversation entre le Père Fabien et Lantagnac après sa conversion :

- J'ai promis à mes ancêtres de leur ramener, de leur restituer mes enfants.

- Bravo!

- Mes fils et mes filles, continua Lantagnac,

ont, par leur mère, du sang anglais dans les veines; mais par moi, ils ont surtout le vieux sang des Lantagnac, de ceux du Canada d'abord, puis, de ceux de France, les Lantagnac de Monteil et de Grignan. Soit quarante générations. Je me le suis juré : c'est de ce côté-là qu'ils pencheront.

- Bravo! répéta le Père Fabien.

- Je tiens à l'ajouter : l'avenir chrétien de mes enfants me préoccupe plus que tout autre chose. Mes études de ces derniers temps m'ont démontré par-dessus tout les affinités profondes de la race française et du catholicisme. C'est pourquoi, sans doute, on la dit la race de l'universel.

Plus loin, se plaignant des réticences d'au moins deux de ses quatre enfants à bien assimiler la langue française, il se rappelle ce mot de Barrès : « Le sang des races reste identique à travers les siècles! ». Et Groulx fit faire à son héros la réflexion suivante : « Mais

il serait donc vrai le désordre cérébral, le dédoublement psychologique des races mêlées! »

Édifiant, n'est-ce pas ? C'est sans doute le plus mauvais roman que j'ai lu de toute ma vie, ex aequo avec le roman de Jules-Paul Tardivel, Pour la patrie, et j'ai 57 ans. Le plus mauvais mais, hélas, le plus efficace, car au Québec nous sommes encore prisonniers de l'esprit qu'il contient, reflet d'une pensée unique où la langue est utilisée non pas pour ce qu'elle devrait être, c'est-à-dire l'instrument d'appropriation et d'expression de la culture, mais plutôt comme source d'un nationalisme sectaire.

Si jamais je retourne dans l'enseignement, je présenterais un cours que j'intitulerais « Qu'est-ce que le racisme ? » et je présenterais à mes étudiants le modèle raciste par excellence, celui du chanoine Groulx. Je leur

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Barack and the Straw Man

In the winter of 2008, knowing that the next president of the United States would be a Democrat, I decided that President Barack Obama, whatever his faults, would be preferable to President Hillary Clinton. This had nothing to do with their policy differences—which were scant—and everything to do with many Americans' deep personal dislike of Hillary Clinton. The country had just endured eight years of monomaniacal Clinton-bashing from the Right, followed by another eight years of equally unhinged Bush-bashing from the Left. Could America not use a leader whose detractors could oppose his policy agenda without hating his guts?

Silly me. I did not anticipate that left-leaning elites in the US media, intelligentsia and commentariat would leap to blame any and all opposition to Obama's politics on racism. I should have guessed that one fault line in American politics would simply be replaced by another. The partisan vitriol would rage on unabated, thanks to the profound revulsion felt by conservatives and even many independent voters toward the aforementioned insinuation. What else could result from so many liberals' readiness to paint Obama's critics with the brush of bigotry?

New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd fairly somersaulted onto that facile bandwagon on September 12, writing, "Some people just can't believe a black man is president and will never accept it." This, strictly speaking, was true: some of President Obama's opponents are doubtless racially motivated. Dowd was reacting to South Carolina Congressman Joe Wilson's disgraceful exclamation at the President during the latter's recent address to Congress. Wilson may indeed be guilty as charged. His membership in an organization called Sons of Confederate Veterans, and his leadership of a 2000 campaign to keep the Confederate flag flying over the South Carolina state capitol, are legitimate cause for suspicion. Yet Ms. Dowd and company are not content to denounce Joe Wilson alone; most or all Obama opponents have to roast with him.

Hence Dowd implied, for instance, that South Carolina governor Mark Sanford refused to accept stimulus funds from Washington because the President is Black. Appraising the raucous opposition to Obama-style healthcare reform at town hall meetings nationwide last August, Princeton economist Paul Krugman wrote that "the driving force... is probably the same cultural and racial anxiety that's behind the 'birther' movement, which denies Mr. Obama's citizenship." James Ridgeway of Mother Jones magazine declared that the "election of Barack Obama adds even more fuel to nativist rage." The Washington Post's E.J. Dionne likened the town hall confrontations to the lynching and disenfranchisement of Blacks in the Jim Crow South. Most recently, former President Jimmy Carter told NBC News, "I think an overwhelming portion of the intensely demonstrated animosity toward President Barack Obama is based on the fact that he's a Black man. [...] That racism inclination still exists, and I think it's bubbled up to the surface because of [the] belief among many white people... that African-Americans are not

qualified to lead this great country." Interminable is the list of leftists who have refused, as Reason magazine's Matt Welch put it, "to begin considering that limited government sentiment is not automatically a form of sublimated racism."

These allegations would be more convincing if there were some indication that a white Democratic president, one as liberal as Barack Obama, would have received gentler treatment from the Republican opposition. I think this question answers itself. It is difficult to imagine Caucasian Hillary Clinton arousing much less ire from conservatives, were she in the Oval Office today. Her equally Caucasian husband was hardly pampered by Republicans during his turn in the White House. So what basis is there for blaming Obama's opposition on racism?

Last spring, for example, actress Janeane Garofalo insisted that the anti-government activists at one "Tea Party" demonstration must be motivated by racism rather than by conservatism, because they had never protested George W. Bush's asinine fiscal policies. Of the protestors' hypocrisy on that score, there can be little doubt. Yet hypocrisy and racism are two different things; to attribute the former to the latter automatically is simplistic in the extreme. Far more likely is that these Tea Partygoers are Republican loyalists, and were reluctant to criticize their party's leader for any reason. This irrational bias is partisan in nature—not racial.

Lest I overstate my case, let me acknowledge that some of the opposition has indeed shown signs of racial bias. Most disturbing to me was a photo of one Tea Party marcher holding a sign reading "Stand idly by while some Kenyan tries to destroy America? HOMEY DON'T PLAY DAT!!!" This was only one example among many. Yet the photos and footage I've seen of Tea Parties and town hall protests suggested that such displays were in the minority. This is corroborated by the testimony of other direct observers (besides Ms. Garofalo, and far less partial). Smearing all the participants as racist is no fairer than characterizing all the anti-globalization protestors of yesteryear as violent anarchists. Lambasting President Obama's detractors in general as retrograde bigots is no more reasonable than dismissing all critics of the state of Israel as anti-Semitic. Would it kill Obama's backers to restrict their complaints to the truly bad apples in the barrel?

The principal case against "ObamaCare" has nothing to do with race, one way or the other. There are quite legitimate arguments to be made that the President's reform plan would exacerbate the federal budget deficit, gradually crowd out private health insurers by luring more and more Americans onto the public option and undercutting private insurance premiums, eventually lead to government rationing of healthcare and the around-the-block waiting lines that come with it, stifle innovation in medical technology, and so on. This viewpoint stems from a philosophical leanness of activist government. There are fair grounds for rebuttal of all of these arguments. These grounds do not include the claim that they are racist.

This left-liberal race-baiting is most damnable not in its unfairness

to its targets, but in its intellectual laziness, cowardice and perhaps even desperation. Whenever its proponents tire of making the substantive case for Obama-style healthcare reform, they resort to playing the racism card. In so doing, they are attacking a straw man, like Don Quixote tilting at windmills. Employers of this tactic do their own cause few favors, for they are unwittingly responding to only a minority of their political adversaries. These kneejerk allegations do nothing to discredit most of President Obama's critics, who would hardly be cheering on his big-government policies if he were white.

Liberals forget that two can—and do—play at that game. Does not one remember the political climate in 2002 and 2003, when right-wingers merrily impugned the patriotism of those who opposed the invasion of Iraq? They, too, were attacking a straw man. Most of the war's skeptics (within the US, at any rate) were anything but un-American. In any case, the point was moot, for even genuinely unpatriotic antiwar sentiment would not have made the war itself turn out any less disastrously. Likewise, even if ObamaCare's opponents were racist, that in itself would not make the President's plan any better an idea.

Can Americans really look forward to another 3 1/2 to 7 1/2 years in which the President's defenders see bigoted bogeymen behind all resistance to his policies? If so, we can probably expect the unnecessarily bitter partisan strife of the past sixteen years to worsen. The sentiments underlying Bush-hatred and Clinton-hatred can only be exacerbated by adding race into that already toxic mix. Can liberals imagine no legitimate, non-racist conservative (or libertarian) rebuttal to the change President Obama has in store for America? If not, then the President will have a hard time achieving his aim of bringing Americans back together. Roughly half the country will not take kindly to being portrayed as crazy or evil—or both.

One last issue bears mentioning. African-Americans, in my view, should be leery of glibly playing the racism card than anyone. First of all, perhaps no other community can less afford to risk undermining its own credibility by repeatedly crying wolf. Secondly, America's long-awaited "conversation on race" can only be poisoned by this thinly veiled indictment of so many of its intended participants. Moreover, unsubstantiated presumptions of bigotry arguably demean President Obama himself. Surely truly xenophobic opinions have no legitimate place in public discourse. If almost every iota of opposition to the President is held to be the product of white racism, then what are we to conclude? That his complexion should exempt him from virtually all criticism?

I doubt President Obama himself feels the need for such coddling—certainly not on account of his race. Nor, for that matter, should any African descendant. We are a people who suffered more than four centuries of enslavement, subjugation and persecution—and yet still produced innovators, entrepreneurs, financiers, physicians, scientists and, now, a leader of the free world. What we are not is a race of tenderfeet.

LIONEL GROULX EST SES CONTINUEURS, SUITE DE LA PAGE 7

dirais aussi que le chanoine a résumé dans son livre toute la stratégie de domination du clergé catholique sur les francophones. Je leur dirais que ce clergé, à qui les occupants britanniques avaient confié l'éducation des Canadiens-français, en a profité pour les maintenir captifs d'une éducation pauvre et à tendance raciste, par la désignation des Anglais comme race maudite et ennemie de la race pure. Mais les Canadiens-français sont d'une race supérieure et l'heure de la vengeance viendra, disait Lionel Groulx.

En fait, le plus important pour le nationalisme n'est pas la victoire ; c'est de faire croire à la victoire sans jamais l'obtenir, tout en maintenant les gens dans l'espoir. « Il faut toujours désigner un ennemi » (Charles Maurras). Dans un texte paru en 1919 sous le titre « Si Dollard revenait », Lionel Groulx, s'adressant à la statue de ce dernier, clame :

Descend de ton socle et de ton bras viril pointe-nous l'avenir et, s'il le faut nous te suivrons, frémissant comme des palmes, jusqu'à l'holocauste.

Évidemment, quelques bien-pensants, qui brillent toujours par leur inculture ou par leur hypocrisie, allègueront qu'il faut « remettre-tout-cela-dans-son-contexte ». Mais ceux qui se sont opposés aux idées racistes du chanoine Groulx à la même époque, ces mêmes bien-pensants les ont carrément évacués du « contexte ». Par exemple, où sont dans notre mémoire collective les libres penseurs comme Jean-Charles Harvey, les Jean-Louis Gagnon, les T.-D. Bouchard ? Pourquoi les Claude Béland de ce monde veulent-ils à tout prix que l'on se souvienne des paroles anti-démocratiques et anti-humanistes des Groulx et Tardivel, tout en les citant en exemple à suivre, alors que les défenseurs de la démocratie dans notre histoire

sont délibérément relégués aux oubliettes ?

Voici ce qu'il me plairait d'enseigner à ce jeune qui me demanderait qui était Lionel Groulx : « IL N'Y A PAS DE RACE ». Les jeunes d'aujourd'hui, si on leur offrait une éducation humaniste et impartiale, comprendraient aisément que « L'Appel de la race » de Lionel Groulx n'est qu'un torchon raciste et que son idéologie devrait être dénoncée en tout temps. Ceux qui n'ont pas encore le cerveau paralysé par la pensée unique nationaliste devraient lire les œuvres de celui qui a surtout contribué à abêtir des générations de Québécois. Ainsi, ils pourront remarquer la présence dans notre société de ceux qui continuent l'œuvre de cet idéologue infect. Vous voulez des noms ? Si votre intelligence n'est pas trop engluée dans le nationalisme, vous les trouverez vous-mêmes, et très facilement. Ils sont légion.

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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Zhao Ziyang -- major opportunity lost for China

The publication this year of *Prisoner Of State-The Secret Journal of Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang* contains important insights into modern China by a leader who for almost 15 years played a key role in the management of its economy. Tienanmen Square events in mid-1989 sidelined Zhao, but party-state governance has probably worsened since and his observations recorded before his death in 2005 are useful to any student of China.

From the time of Zhao's house arrest in 1989 until his death, he kept a secret audio journal at his home in Beijing—30 tapes of about one hour's length each—a copy of which was thereafter smuggled out of the country. They constitute an eloquent *cri de coeur* by an intelligent, reflective leader of integrity and candour, who sought always to do his best for the Chinese people.

Career

Zhao's career as a Communist party administrator began in Henan province after the Japanese invaded it in 1937, causing him to leave high school. He made his reputation as a reformer in Guangdong province in the '50s and '60s, becoming at only 46 years of age party chief in Guangdong. He was purged in Mao's Cultural Revolution as a "revisionist", specifically for ending agricultural communes and leasing land to farmers in an attempt to recover from Mao's disastrous 'Great Leap Forward' in which millions starved to death.

By 1971, Zhao was reinstated by the party leadership and two years later rose to become a member of its Central Committee. His next advance was to join the Politburo; only a year after that, he joined its key Standing Committee and at Deng Xiaoping's request later took charge of China's national economy as premier of the State Council.

Zhao's patron Deng, by 1986 firmly established as paramount party leader despite being purged twice by Mao, also made him leader of a group invited to propose a political reform package. As acting General Secretary of the Party later, Zhao proposed to separate the party from the government. He told Mikhail Gorbachev in 1989 that the rule of law should replace the rule of party officials and that more transparency was needed. The economy, he argued, needed an independent judiciary.

Tienanmen Disaster

During 1989, Zhao's immediate hopes for a China with acceptable governance were dashed. In response to the student demonstrations in April against corruption and other issues,

Zhao proposed a return to classes, dialogues and punishing only those who had committed crimes. Unfortunately, a few days later, Deng, then aged 85 and holding only the official position of chair of the Military Commission, condemned the protests to party insiders. When his remarks were circulated by hardliner Li Peng, events at Tienanmen escalated.

Zhao nonetheless called for the protesters to be dealt with "based on principles of democracy and law". A week later when Deng decided to impose martial law, Zhao showed enormous courage by telling his mentor that he'd find it difficult to carry out such an order. Two days later, he visited the square and pleaded with the demonstrators to leave, knowing that a brutal assault was imminent.

This was in fact his last public appearance as premier. Soon after the massacre of hundreds of students and others in and around Tienanmen Square, Zhao was stripped of all party offices and put under house arrest for 16 years until he died.

Three Key Insights

Deng

Deng Xiaoping, the acknowledged paramount leader after Mao's death between 1981 and 1997, is presented as sympathetically as possible by Zhao as his longtime friend and favourite, but overall Deng emerges as deeply flawed. He made Zhao premier and responsible for the economy and was in the process of making him General Secretary of the CCP when Tienanmen events intervened. Deng did support economic liberalisation after the crippling central planning of Mao since 1949, including various initiatives by Zhao in the '70s and '80s, but he opposed the rule of law, multi-party democracy and virtually every principle of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He also unleashed the terrible violence of Tienanmen Square upon his own people and encouraged a small group of like-minded hardliners, Li Peng and Jiang Zemin in particular, in effect to swallow the Party. China and the world would be much better places if Deng had continued to support Zhao.

Governance

In large part because of Deng's choices during 1989, the party-state of China continues to govern in the mould of some of the most authoritarian regimes of the present and past centuries. The country's constitution remains an empty vessel. Not even the party charter was heeded in its treatment of Zhao. For example, Deng and a few cronies decided at a meeting at Deng's home to remove Zhao as General Secretary of the Party,

but under the charter only the Standing Committee of the Politburo could do so. As Zhao notes, two of its five members (including Zhao) were not invited to attend. At a subsequent meeting of the Central Committee to censure Zhao, his statement of defence was not even shown to some of those present. He provides other examples of Cultural Revolution tactics used against the people of China since 1989.

Zhao notes that even during the height of the 'class struggles in 1962, Mao did not deprive Marshall Peng Dehuai of his personal freedom over his criticisms, sending him instead to do useful work. Jiang Zemin

as General Secretary claimed the party would govern according to the rule of law, but much of what happened to Zhao during his eight years as boss was a violation of both the laws of China and the party charter.

Economy

Zhao's insights into the reasons for his country's breakneck economic growth after 1978 are also important. In his view, the key elements were allowing direct foreign investment, the creation of special economic zones on the coast, expanded autonomy for enterprises and allowing land to be leased.

Here, I offer some personal views, not Zhao's, including my essential concurrence with Peter Navarro, a professor at the University of California, who argues that consumer markets across the world have been "conquered" by China largely through cheating on trade practices. These include export subsidies, widespread counterfeiting and piracy of products, currency manipulation, and environmental, health and safety standards so weakly enforced that they have made China a very dangerous place to work.

Navarro says new trade legislation by all of China's trade partners should achieve fair trade by the following:

All must refrain from illegal export subsidies and currency manipulation and abide by the rules of the World Trade Organisation(WTO);

For currency manipulation, he supports what the bi-partisan US-China Commission has recommended to the American Congress: define it as an illegal export subsidy and add it to other subsidies when calculating anti-dumping and countervail penalties;

Every trade partner must respect intellectual property; adopt and enforce health, safety and environmental regulations consistent with international norms; provide decent wages and

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ZHAO ZIYANG -- MAJOR OPPORTUNITY LOST FOR CHINA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

working conditions; and ban the use of forced labour;

Adopt a 'zero-tolerance' policy for anyone who sells or distributes pirated or counterfeit goods;

Defective and contaminated food and drugs must be blocked more effectively by measures which make it easier to hold importers liable for selling foreign products that do harm to people or pets;

Despite growing criticism, China's party-state continues to trade its UN Security Council veto for energy, raw materials and access to markets from Angola to Burma to Zimbabwe. Increased monitoring and exposure of China's party-state activities everywhere is important;

To reverse the 'race to the environmental bottom' in China, to require all to compete on a level playing field and to reduce acid rain and smog affecting populations abroad, all bilateral and multilateral trade agreements should henceforth include strong provisions for protection of the natural environment.

Many Canadians allow our respect for the people of China to mute criticism of their government. When apologists for its party-state insist that the situation for a growing part

The labour camps are outside the legal system and allow the party-state to send anyone to them for up to four years with neither hearing nor appeal. There is a link between the involuntary labour done since 1999 by tens of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners and other prisoners in these camps and the resulting loss of manufacturing jobs in Canada and elsewhere.

of the population is getting better, many of us appear willing to overlook bad governance, official violence, growing social inequalities, widespread corruption and chronic nepotism.

The Chinese people want the same things as Canadians, including, respect for all, education, to be safe and secure, good jobs, and a sustainable natural environment. Living

standards have improved on the coast and in other urban areas in China, but there is a cost. Most Chinese continue to be exploited by the party-state and firms, often owned by or contracted for manufacturing to multinationals, which operate today across their country like 19th century robber barons. This explains partly why the prices of consumer products 'made in China' seem so low—the externalities are borne by workers, their families and the natural environment.

Labour Camps

In doing our final report on party-state organ pillaging from Falun Gong practitioners since 2001, David Matas and I visited about a dozen countries to interview adherents sent to China's forced labour camps since 1999, who managed later to leave the camps and the country itself. They told us of working in appalling conditions for up to sixteen hours daily with no pay, little food, being cramped together on the floor for sleeping and being tortured. They made export products, ranging from garments to chopsticks to Christmas decorations as subcontractors to multinational companies. This, of course, constitutes both gross corporate irresponsibility and violations of WTO rules.

The labour camps are outside the legal system and allow the party-state to send anyone to them for up to four years with

neither hearing nor appeal. There is a link between the involuntary labour done since 1999 by tens of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners and other prisoners in these camps and the resulting loss of manufacturing jobs in Canada and elsewhere. One estimate of the number of the camps across China as of 2005 was 340, having a capacity of about 300,000 inmates. In 2007, a US government report estimated that at least half of the inmates in the camps were Falun Gong.

Such grave abuses would not be occurring if the Chinese people enjoyed the rule of law and their government believed in the intrinsic importance of each one of them. It is the combination of totalitarian governance and 'anything is permitted' economics that allows such practices to persist. Canada and other countries should ban forced labour exports.

The attempted crushing of democracy movements, truthful journalists, Buddhist, Falun Gong, Christian, Muslim and other independent faith groups, human rights lawyers and other legitimate civil society communities in recent years indicates that China's party-state must still be engaged with caution.

If its government stops abuses of human rights and takes steps to indicate that it wishes to treat its trade partners in a mutually-beneficial way, the new century will bring harmony for China, its trading partners and neighbours. The Chinese people have the numbers, perseverance, self-discipline, entrepreneurship, intelligence, culture and pride to make this new century better and more peaceful for the entire human family.

Conclusion

To return to Zhao's important book in closing, the people of China and the entire world can only regret that Deng did not allow his protegee to continue leading the party and the government towards the values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Imagine how much different China itself and so many countries from Sudan to Burma to Iran might be if the leader who was so much in tune with the values emerging in numerous authoritarian countries in the '80s and '90s had succeeded. The world must hope that the next Zhao in China will be allowed to succeed.



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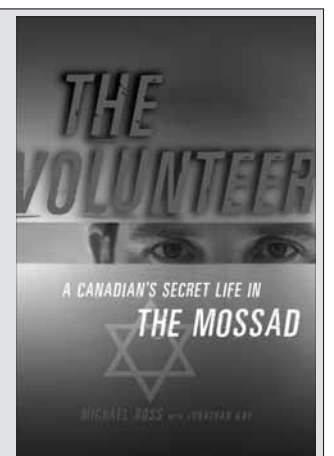
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Afghanistan and the Dilemma of Post-Conflict Elections

A growing dispute over election results in Afghanistan is threatening to further destabilise the war-torn state. On Wednesday – nearly 1 month after the country went to the polls – the EU confirmed widespread fears over the credibility of the elections by announcing that as many as 1.5 million of the 6 million votes cast could be fraudulent. According to the EU, as many as 1.1 million of these ‘suspicious’ votes were allocated to the incumbent President Hamid Karzai and only 300,000 to his rival Abdullah Abdullah. With the UN-backed Electoral Complaints Commission now undertaking recounts, there is a significant chance that Karzai’s current 54.6% of the vote could slip below the 50% threshold required for victory and thus trigger a run-off poll against Abdullah Abdullah.

Karzai’s campaign team were quick to respond to the EU’s announcement, labelling their accusations as ‘partial’ and ‘irresponsible.’ However, coupled with a low turnout of just 38.7%, the legitimacy of these elections and the hopes for a sustainable peace in Afghanistan are becoming progressively more questionable.

The promise of peace has consistently eluded Afghanistan ever since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. Despite large numbers of international peacekeepers and apparent breakthrough events such as the adoption of a new constitution in 2004 and initial elections in 2005, the country continues to suffer from organised violence, rampant crime, and widespread lawlessness. Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants is negligible, whilst extremists not reconciled with the peace process continue their struggle in outlying parts of the state. Indeed, even with the presence of some 300,000 NATO peacekeepers patrolling the country on Election Day, the EU still reported how voting was ‘marred by a number of violent incidents, including rocket attacks and explosions targeting polling centres and government facilities throughout the country.’

Such a context makes the term ‘post-conflict’ something of a misnomer, yet this is the label which the international community favours for all states that hold democratic elections as a demonstration of their commitment to peace. Their focus has hinged on an unerring belief that democratic governance, provided through periodic and genuine elections, offers the most effective

mechanism for managing and resolving societal tensions without recourse to violence. It is within this rubric that election observation missions – such as that of the EU in Afghanistan – come to the fore, and the subsequent media obsession with ‘free and fair’ elections is instigated.

However, to judge such elections in comparison with the prevailing standards of western democracies arguably misses the true strategic purpose of post-conflict elections. A key feature of post-conflict elections is that they are not simply a means of choosing representatives but are first and foremost, what the scholar Terrence Lyons calls, a ‘war termination’ tool. Post-conflict settlements include elections primarily as a means to induce warring parties to stop the killings and agree to a non-violent resolution of the conflict, and not – despite hopeful aspirations in some quarters – to instil a fully-functioning liberal democratic government. Essentially, post-conflict elections are always a support mechanism to the peace process; not the other way around.

This privileging of war termination over democratisation is a defensible policy in volatile post-conflict countries such as Afghanistan. Indeed, without a degree of stability, the more long-term transition to liberal democratic governance becomes unfeasible. A democratic transition can not be measured solely in electoral outcomes and must include less tangible elements such as levels of inclusiveness, accountability, and trust, all of which take generations – not votes – to develop. As such, the bar of what determines the success of a post-conflict election has arguably been set too high and exaggerated expectations of democratic progress can distract us from their chief purpose, namely to bring a halt to mass killings. Based upon a negative/positive analysis, post-conflict elections can therefore be said to comprise of

(a) the ‘negative’ tasks of ending violence and establishing the formal procedures of elections, and,

(b) the ‘positive’ tasks of deepening democracy, aiding inclusiveness and expediting a self-sustaining mechanism to handle conflicts without recourse to violence.

The precise balance between these two objectives, as the situation in Afghanistan illustrates, remains contestable. The EU’s reputation in election observation is strong and widely respected as objective and independent. Their statements are no doubt

founded upon credible evidence and their intentions to assist with the fostering of true democratic peacebuilding are laudable. Indeed, we only have to look at the backsliding of countries such as Cambodia, Bosnia, and Rwanda to understand that a pseudo-democracy is no guarantee of a peaceful future. However, what is equally true is that an Afghanistan torn by a disputed electoral process and governed by a President whose legitimacy is challenged will be weakened in its efforts to ensure the short-term stability necessary for long-term democratic consolidation.

Was the EU observation mission right to voice concerns about irregularities in the elections? And what should the response of the UN, US and wider international community be to these irregularities? Should

short-term stability is favoured over long-term democratisation? This is a dilemma sharpened by the silence of US President Obama on the election results, and who is also poised to send more troops to the war-torn state as part of a new US foreign policy that places Afghanistan at its core. Predictably, there is no easy answer to such a dilemma and the true consequences of any decision may not be known for several years. What is true is that although we may feel sympathy for the alleged irregularities in the Afghan elections (and let us be reminded that systematic fraud is still to be proved), it would be foolish to forget that the primary role of post-conflict elections is war termination, not democratisation. If the former is not achieved, the latter will be all but impossible.

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CANADA'S ECONOMIC REPUTATION ABROAD

Are we as good as we think we are?

According to the latest statistical data, the Canadian recession ended sometime over the summer and we will see slow growth in the third and fourth quarters of 2009. While this is likely to be a jobless recovery until sometime in 2010, Canadians believe that our conservative banking culture coupled with greater financial market regulation spared us the mortgage melt-down and destruction of consumer wealth that devastated other first world economies. While that may be the case, it does not mean that Canada is perfect on all major economic and government policy issues. This article takes a look at some major issues facing western economies and what international organizations like the World Bank have to say about Canada's success in managing them.

Canadian health care is not quite the model that everyone wants to emulate. As the debate over Obamacare rages in the United States, one of the rare points on which Democrats and Republicans agree is that they do not want the Canadian-style single-payer option, where the government pays the bills, makes treatment policy and private insurance is a minor tack-on for those who receive it through their employers. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Canadian governments are responsible for 70% of all health care spending in the country, which is slightly below the OECD average of 73%. Overall, Canada spends 10.1% of GDP on health care, far below the United States at 16% but still above the OECD average of 8.9%. Our spending per capita is more generous than most, as evidenced by the table below.

All is not wonderful in Canadian health care,

however. Canada has far fewer physicians per 1000 people, standing at 2.2 versus 3.1 for the OECD. We are behind in nurses per thousand at 9.1 versus 9.6 in the OECD overall, but where we really fall behind is in the availability of sophisticated diagnostic equipment. We have 6.7 MRI machines per million in population against 11 in the OECD, and for CT machines, the ratio per million is 12.7 against 20.2 – we are far behind in making equipment available that is critical for early diagnosis and testing.

The message for Canada is that while we may have access to government health care and spend more than most of our OECD associates we are not investing fast enough in the latest technology and our stock of doctors is insufficient to allow everyone access to a family physician, for instance. Given that Canada has an aging population that is not going to be rejuvenated by massive waves of immigration as it was in the early 20th century, we have to keep our population healthy and working longer. Aging boomers facing a health care gap as evidenced in the OECD study should either be prepared to pay for private diagnostic treatment or stand in ever-increasing lineups as demand on the public system becomes overloaded.

When it comes to trade and investment policy, the OECD correctly fingers Canada as a major hypocrite among OECD nations. We ask for free trade with our US neighbor and cry about the Buy American provisions of the US stimulus package, but we protect our own provincial and municipal procurement system from US suppliers. The federal government is trying to work out a deal with the provinces on this issue, but progress is slow. There are over 100 trades and

50 professions that are covered by provincial regulation in Canada, which means that Canada does not have a mobile labour market and this creates financial and employment distortions across the country. Jean Charest is working to create a common labour market with France, and if he is successful a plumber from Lyon will have an easier time getting accredited in Quebec than one from Belleville, Ontario.

The OECD points out that Canada has significant restrictions on foreign direct investment in the telecommunications, transportation and broadcasting sectors and this hampers modernization, international competitiveness and creates higher structural costs for consumers – there is a price we are all paying for protecting the “Canadian” players in these industries. Canada's own Competition Policy Review Panel tabled a report in 2008 that recommended liberalizing restrictions in these areas but the government has been reluctant to act and cherry-picked a few suggestions to make it look like we are making progress, like now the Minister responsible for the economic sector has to justify why an investment should not go through. This is instead of forcing the investor to demonstrate why it should go through – this is what passes for freer markets in Canadian investment policy.

Our banking sector comes across as a star, according to a July 2009 report by the International Monetary Fund. The IMF compared Canadian banks to a large basket of US, British, Swiss, Japanese and other international banks and determined that it was the conservative lending policies, capital funding from retail client deposits (which are more

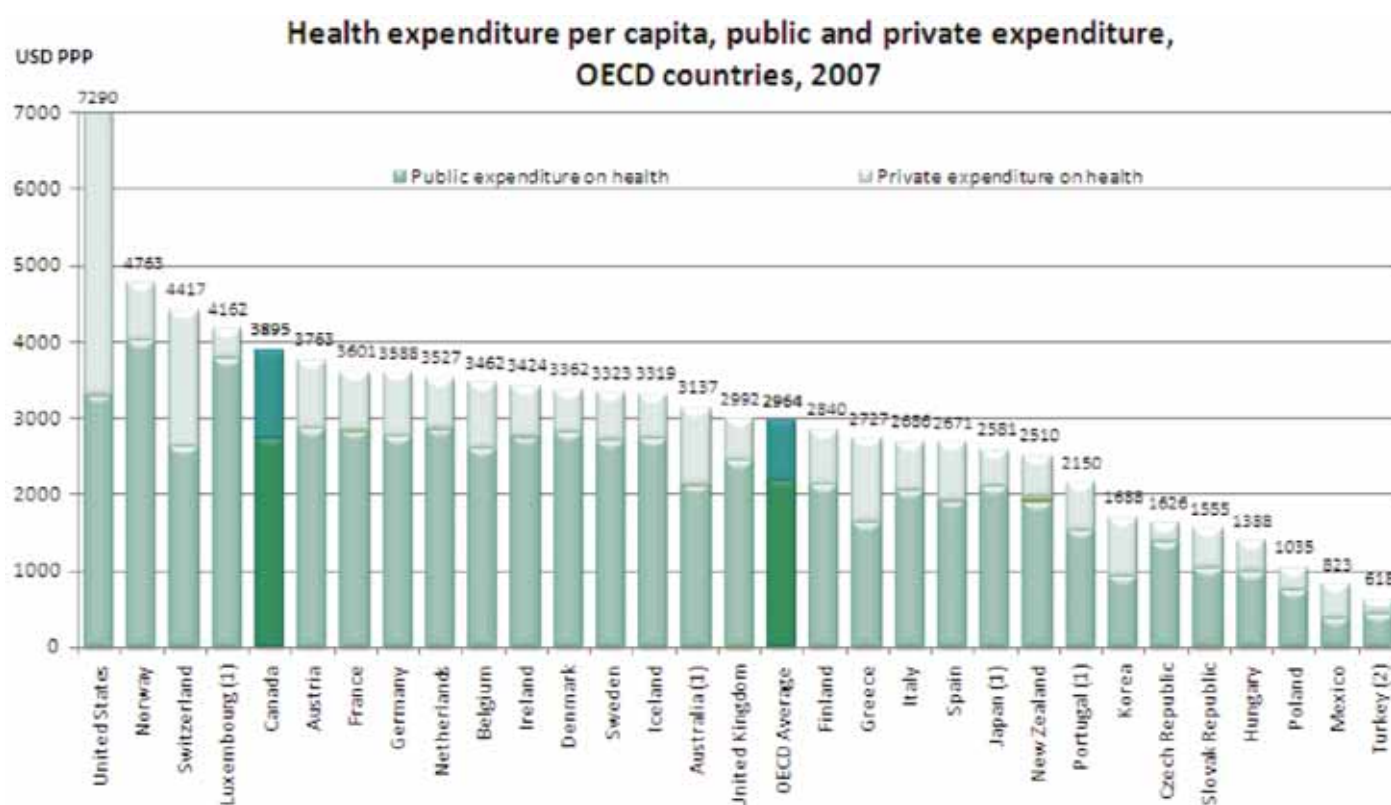
stable than wholesale funding models) and higher balance sheet liquidity that allowed our banks to withstand the financial tsunami. Our banks were less leveraged, the retail client was a stable depositor and our sane mortgage model avoided the massive erosions of capital that plagued the US and British banks. Ironically, prior to the crisis our banks were not the best capitalized on the list, landing in the third quartile; however our banks lost far less of their capital during the crisis than their international peers, many of whom saw capital declines of 70 to 85 percent and ran into the arms of government for relief funding.

The IMF report highlights that Canadian banks were exemplary in their limited exposure to troubled U.S. assets. While many international banks snapped up U.S. mortgage-backed securities because of their high rates of return (supposedly) the Canadian banks held their mortgages rather than packaged and traded them, so they had less liquidity for investment in riskier vehicles and had the incentive to make sure that the loans they were making were of high quality. Canada's regulatory environment also has more stringent capital requirements that gave our banks a more stable equity base when the capital markets started to slide.

The great irony is that what saved our banks over the past two years is exactly what our banks used to be criticized for; too stodgy, focused at home, and too small to compete effectively in international capital markets for big deals. Going forward, if the US re-regulates the banking industry to look like what it did at the end of the 1970s then the American banks are likely to look and behave a lot more like Canadian ones. If US banks retrench in this way, then perhaps the Chinese and Indian banks will be the big risk-takers in the next wave of international finance.

Readers already know that Canada's national debt and annual federal deficit are lower than those of the European Community and substantially below the US deficit for fiscal 2009, estimated at 10% of GDP. The corresponding figure for Canada is estimated at 3% of GDP, which even at \$50 billion is still far less on a percentage basis than most of the deficits of the 1980s.

Politicians are often counseled not to waste a good crisis, and this one offers many opportunities to fix longstanding structural problems in Canadian economic policy because we are in a stronger position than most of our OECD competitors. Canada had better shape us fast, though, because our true challengers of the 21st century are China and India, not the US and Europe. The sooner we learn how to position ourselves to trade with these two giants the better, and we can learn to do so while our old-world competitors are still digging themselves out of a far deeper hole than ours.



(1) 2006, (2) 2005. Data for Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands are current expenditures (excluding investment). Source: OECD Health Data 2009, June 09.



Lack of regulation you say?

Some claim the global financial crisis was caused by a lack of regulation. But it was overregulation and community activism that caused the American mortgage crisis which precipitated the global financial meltdown.

The American mortgage industry is overseen by Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae. They are roughly equivalent to our Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the big difference being that unlike CMHC they participate directly in the mortgage market. Now hold that thought...

When anti-free-market lawmakers passed laws making it a basic human right to own a home – an effort begun under President Carter and concluded under Clinton – lenders did not at first play along. After all, who in his right mind would give a mortgage to someone who can't afford the payments?

Enter the federally funded Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) which launched coordinated protests against institutions that refused mortgages to anyone deemed worthy by ACORN, even if they were unemployed.

Lenders asked Congress how to deal with this and the answer was to go ahead and write the mortgage, then sell it... wait for it... to Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae! Problem solved... at least temporarily.

These "toxic" mortgages were repackaged and sold on the global investment market, thus turning what should have been an American problem into a global problem. Other factors like skyrocketing oil prices compounded matters, but no one denies that bad American mortgages are the foundation of the mess we're still in.

One of the ways the lenders dealt with being forced to write

mortgages to those who couldn't afford them was to invent the sub-prime mortgage whereby a low introductory interest rate was replaced by an astronomical rate on the renewal date. Anyone, even greedy capitalist lenders, could see this would turn out bad for lender and homeowner alike. And while one could certainly imagine regulations prohibiting such practice, the simple fact is no one in Washington, not even the nicest Obama Democrat, plans to outlaw this practice.

Guess how many separate regulators already oversee the FMs?

President Obama promises to transform the role of the Federal Reserve to prevent a repeat of the debacle. He couldn't very well just insist that existing laws be enforced; to do so would be to accuse Frank, Dodd and other ranking Democrats of dereliction of duty.

The answer is 200, each replete with fancy offices, computers, filing cabinets (you know... the usual bureaucratic trappings), and of course full staffing. Each is charged with the duty of overseeing a specific aspect of mortgage lending in the U.S., like making sure enough minorities receive mortgages, but also ensuring only good mortgages are written. Oops! Looks like the regulators failed on the latter.

Then there are politicians like Congressman Barney Frank and Sen. Chris Dodd (Democrats) who were given princely budgets for extra staff to help them oversee these 200 regulatory bodies. Rather than enforce existing laws, Frank and Dodd both lied about the stability of the FMs right up until both lenders

imploded.

President Obama promises to transform the role of the Federal Reserve to prevent a repeat of the debacle. He couldn't very well just insist that existing laws be enforced; to do so would be to accuse Frank, Dodd and other ranking Democrats of dereliction of duty. But as long as he's in the mood for writing more regulations, you'd think Obama would at least deal with the source of the problem. But guess at how many times the FMs are mentioned in the president's proposed bill? The answer is 0

(zero). It will be business as usual for these "regulatory" entities.

It's the anti-free-market legislation mentioned above that makes it a right for every American to own a home, and which casts racist aspersions on any lender that doesn't play along.

But, in trying to help more African-Americans, North American Indians and Latinos own their own homes, this legislation has only succeeded in shoving more African-Americans, North American Indians and Latinos out of their homes.

Whining for more government control of financial markets is just a diversionary tactic for the Democrats. Imagine how it might've turned out if the government wasn't involved.

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David Solway is the award-winning author of over twenty-five books of poetry, criticism, educational theory, and travel. He is a contributor to magazines as varied as the *Atlantic*, the *Sewanee Review*, *Books in Canada*, and the *Partisan Review*. His most recent book is *The Big Lie: On Terror, Antisemitism, and Identity*.

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From Small Beginnings

Global warming...has become the most powerful myth in human history, sending much of the world into a downward helix of economic decline. It is a tenuous hypothesis supported by ill-founded computer models and data from botched measurement, dubiously processed.

John Brignell, *March of the Zealots*

Global warmists, environmentalists and ecological redeemers are a mixed bunch and come in every shape, size and color. There are those, of course, who adopt a sane and responsible attitude toward preserving our natural heritage. One notable instance involves a new class of wealthy philanthropists, called eco-barons, such as the Chilean Sebastian Pinera, the American Douglas Thomas, and the Swiss Ernst Beyeler and Hansjörg Wyss, who have purchased, preserved and reconstructed millions of hectares in Chile, Argentina, the United States and South Africa. They are to be commended, not only because they are materially contributing to the planet's well-being rather than whipping up public hysteria, but because they are not in the business of profiting from the latest environmental scare.

But the majority of our ostensible benefactors, it seems to me, harbor a different set of motives. Some are clearly in it for the big bucks, others are displaced religious zealots who have embarked on a messianic quest to purge the planet of the devil's corrupting influence—aka, us—and still others are utopian primitivists who believe in restoring mankind to a presumably harmonious “state of nature.” All do inestimable harm.

For example, the cap-and-trade system proposed by the current American administration has already proved a dismal failure in Europe. According to Christopher Horner, author of *Red Hot Lies: How Global Warming Alarmists Use Threats, Fraud and Deception to Keep You Misinformed*, cap-and-trade, which assigns quotas to individual companies that are otherwise compelled to buy hot air credits, has increased not only “energy costs and economic uncertainty” but has sent manufacturing jobs to other countries—all in the name of “a problem that evidence suggests does not exist.” Horner expresses the hope that the American government “will recognize that this once plausible theory, grounded solely in computer models, has suffered badly under the past decade of observations.” Climate modelling is notoriously capricious, which may explain why many of its forecasts are conveniently projected a century or more into the future when they cannot be refuted by opponents of the theory.

Benny Peiser, editor of CCNet science network, speaking at the Heartland Institute's 2009 climate conference in New York, sounded the death knell of the green movement in Europe owing to enormous costs and minimal results (*Climate Realists*, March 11, 2009). Environmentalist Lawrence Solomon quotes Spanish economist Gabriel Calzada whose studies show that “every green job created ploughs under 2.2 jobs elsewhere in the economy” and that green jobs are proving to be unsustainable since the creation of even one such job costs \$1 million in government subsidies (*National Post*, March 31, 2009). These are costs that may be suffered in other ways as well. The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) in its 2008 Annual Report, published in 2009, jubilates over the replacement of motorized vehicles by “bicycle rickshaws”—which, it must be admitted, will certainly help to decongest Los Angeles traffic. That it would

reduce America and the West to Third World Status does not trouble UNEP overmuch. Perhaps that is the plan.

Then we have the much-ballyhooed T. Boone Pickens strategy of introducing large-scale windmill technology, which is now proving to be a thoroughly quixotic project, unsightly, land-consuming, expensive and totally inadequate to its declared purpose of meeting even a fraction of our electricity needs. (Pickens has interesting cinematic company: the limp and effeminate Eloi in the film version of H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* are also keen on windmills.) Alex Alexiev of the Hudson Institute has laid the cards on the table for all to read: green electricity bills are rising exponentially. Europe is gradually abandoning its green energy programs and reverting to nuclear power, as are India, China and Japan. And, as of the end of 2008, American solar and wind-power stocks had lost 80% of their value (*FrontPageMagazine*, March 31, 2009). New Zealand has repealed its carbon tax scheme and Australia is poised to follow suit. The U.S. Congressional Budgetary Office gauges that green legislation, such as the Waxman-Markey bill, will cost the average American household \$1,600 per annum, which, given the guesstimation record of government bureaus, is obviously a lowball figure (*U.S. News*, June 25, 2009).

This bill has been championed by scientists domiciled at the Woods Hole Research Center who in an open letter of June 19, 2009 to the members of the U.S. Congress proclaimed that “The Waxman-Markey bill now being considered by the Congress offers a powerful advance and must be enacted this year. But at its best it will be only a first step in the direction that scientists now recognize as necessary to protect local and regional climates.” The denizens of Woods Hole might be better advised to read geologist Dale Allen Pfeiffer's analysis in *GlobalResearch.ca* for August 17, 2009. Pfeiffer calculates that the U.S. would require 59% of the planet's entire land surface to generate sufficient solar energy “to replace its current daily oil consumption.” Biofuels, “which are dirty and environmentally destructive,” are equally unproductive. Perhaps Woods Hole should be renamed Wookey Hole, famous for its caves where cackling witches cast spells to entertain tourists.

And yet the ignorance and preposterousness of such people is by no means the whole of it. There is another group of crusading zealots who would go even further. David Graber, a National Park Service biologist, reviewing Bill McKibben's *The End of Nature* for *The Los Angeles Times* (October 29, 1989), writes: “Human happiness, and certainly human fecundity, are not as important as a wild and healthy planet...Until such time as *Homo Sapiens* should decide to rejoin nature, some of us can only hope for the right virus to come along.” David Foreman, leader of Earth First!, is chillingly explicit: “It may well take our extinction to set things straight” (cited in *The Freeman*, Volume 40, Issue 11, 1990). Then there is Paul Watson, Greenpeace co-founder and head of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, who famously described human beings as the “AIDS of the Earth.”

We seem to be involved in a strange conflict between the otherworldly and the primordial. On the one hand we appear to be striving for transmundane existence, an angelism of the mind and heart. On the other, we seem to be willing a kind of phylogenetic regression to the level of the early primates, as if we were eager for the day when we might find ourselves once again swinging from the trees and munching greenery.

I have little doubt that Jim Jones and the Reverend Sun Myung Moon would today be staunch environmentalists. In fact, Jones' “apostolic socialism” movement was called the Peoples Temple Agricultural Project, which culminated, as we recall, in “revolutionary suicide.” And one of the central concepts in the Reverend Moon's *Divine Principle* is the responsible stewardship of the earth and a caring attitude for the entirety of nature, although this did not prevent him from incarcerating and brainwashing the members of his Unification Church, operating a car manufacturing plant in North Korea, dealing in munitions and maintaining mansions, castles and large properties around the world. For some of the shadier characters in the salvation business, solicitude for nature can become a most profitable proposition.

More to the point, predictive failure does not deter an ideological extremist, who feels sure that a disaster must arrive some day to confirm his predictions and justify his program for salvation. It matters little if his timetable is off by 10, 20 or 1000 years since, under the aspect of eternity, a cataclysm is bound to happen in *seculae seculorum*, proving him right. And even if it doesn't, the mathematics can always be redone in the light of a grisly but accommodating future to which only he has privileged access. It is he who stands before the burning bush of the world and hears the voice of the Lord. For this pixilated mentality, being wrong over and over is a sure sign that he will be right once, the psychology of the end-of-the-world fanatic who merely keeps revising his calculations, relying on “new” information to perfect his reckoning and reinforce his delusion. But what he has really accomplished is to turn science into divination.

Abetting this strategy of endlessly renewable computation is the complementary trick of selective disinformation. A good example of this technique is provided by the recent controversy over the discovery of a “mutant” fish near Lake Athabasca in northern Canada, which was immediately blazoned in the media and among environmental groups as indisputable evidence of oil sands pollution. Unfortunately for the proponents of this canard, the “mutation” was nothing of the sort but a natural development that follows on decomposition. Only one scientific journal, *Fort McMurray Today*, reported on the reassessment of the find. Like enthusiastic anglers, environmentalists reel in any fishy story they can find and immediately amplify its size to impress their audience. And the media follow suit.

Once minds are set, it is very hard to change them, which would be like transmuting *National Geographic* into *Playboy*, as much as that result is to be desired. *Playboy*, at least, doesn't disguise much, but in a damning spread on the Alberta oil sands, *National Geographic* suppressed every bit of positive copy: that reclamation efforts are extensive and ongoing, and that virtually 80% of the oil product derives from deep-extraction processes. But the enviro-activist frenzy continues unabated. Even Reuters wire service has joined the chorus, sponsoring a Facebook page and an environmental blog advocating the anti-carbon cause while filtering out all counter-evidence.

But the most damaging aspect of the movement for ecological purity is political in intent. Glen Beck in his just published *Common Sense* warns us about “what is really going on: leaders who want more government control over our businesses, economy and personal lives...need a vehicle

to take them there...climate change is that vehicle." Similarly, in his new book, *Left in Dark Times*, French philosopher Bernard-Henri Levy speaks of "the former Reds who have now turned Green and the friends-of-nature type of Greens who have now become greens of the revolutionary jihad variety." President Obama's (now former) Green Jobs "czar" Van Jones was very explicit about this blueprint, or greenprint, for the acquisition of centralized social and political power. "So the green economy," he informs us, "will start off as a small subset and we are going to push it and push it and push it until it becomes the engine for transforming the whole society" (*Uprising Radio*, April 2008). From small beginnings.

Frank Tipler, professor of Mathematical Physics at Tulane University, writing in *Pajamas Media* for August 9, 2009, has diagnosed the problem clearly. "How did we ever come to this?" he asks, and answers: "Government financing of scientific research caused it." The political establishment, in its quest to gain ever-increasing control of public and

economic life, has seen to it that AGW (Anthropogenic Global Warming) scientists are "the only ones with federal grants, and, moreover, these malleable scientists "are much more likely to get university jobs, since universities are now almost wholly dependent on federal money...Soon there are none but true believers in the field: a consensus has been reached!" Many of the major scientific journals have also been adulterated. Their editors "are no longer outstanding scientists—as was the case before federal funding—but people who took the job after they failed to get tenure at any research university." In the absence of "independent checking by skeptics," these frauds and true-believer scientists have proliferated.

And this is the real dilemma we are facing. Liberal environmentalism is the cutting edge of the movement for bureaucratized state control of both private life and free market economics, conscripting not only the media, the NGOs, government departments and the intellectual classes to advance its agenda but shrewdly operating through the

very corporations it seeks to regulate by offering tax and other incentives to ensure compliance. And it seems to be working.

To take a recent illustration. The UK utility Npower has initiated a new promotional campaign inviting children to apply for a "free climate cops challenge diary" with a view to informing on their parents who might be committing "climate crimes." Children are prompted to build up a "climate crime case file" not only on their parents but on "uncles, aunts or friends from school" (*London Sunday Times*, July 27, 2008). Shades of the communist and fascist dictatorships, and more recently of Taliban Afghanistan where, as Khaled Hosseini writes in *The Kite Runner*, "the rafiqs...taught children to spy on their parents, what to listen for, whom to tell."

An exaggeration? But, as in the Lenny Bruce joke about a Catholic murderer who confesses that his pathological career "started with bingo in the Catholic church," we should never underestimate small beginnings.



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Wiesel in Montreal: “You are not alone! Somebody cares.”

Individuals should never think there is nothing they can do to help solve society's ills, professor, Nobel Prize laureate and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel told an audience of more than 2,200 at Théâtre St. Denis recently.

Wiesel's speech was a presentation of Côte St. Luc's Beth Israel Beth Aaron Synagogue, Lasalle's St. Jean Brébeuf parish and the Mike Dym Memorial Lecture Series sponsored by the Dym Foundation headed Mike Dym's son Jack, one of this city's most engaged philanthropists and community leaders who has provided critical support - moral and material - for many causes and projects ranging from the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, the MADA Community Centre, the Montreal Children's Hospital and several anti-poverty groups. The event was moderated by Rabbi Reuben Poupko and Father John Walsh.

Wiesel told the audience that perceived indifference and solitude are “the worst feelings” to those suffering, whether from political persecution, poverty or illness.

“When the tormentors of Nazi Europe, of the Communist prisons, wanted to force the prisoners to give names and to surrender a piece of their dignity and honour and personality by betraying their fellow fighters, they would say, ‘come on, don't you know that you are abandoned, nobody cares, your own friends forgot you.’ That is the worst thing that can happen, and the person feels nobody cares anymore. Such as the person who suffers from AIDS in a hospital bed, or the child who is hungry in Africa. Nothing is worse than a person who is either a victim of society or a prisoner of destiny. We say ‘oh no, I can't help them, I don't have the key to open the prison or the [ability] to save the person from his or her disease.’

“But one power I do have is to tell that person that he or she is not alone, that somebody cares.”

Wiesel said Holocaust survivors have a right to be indifferent to the sufferings of others.

“Some of you here went through the same trial that I did,” he told survivors in the audience. “That memory has never left us — never left us. It cannot leave us, it's too overpowering, overwhelming an experience that is part of our life, every fibre of our being.

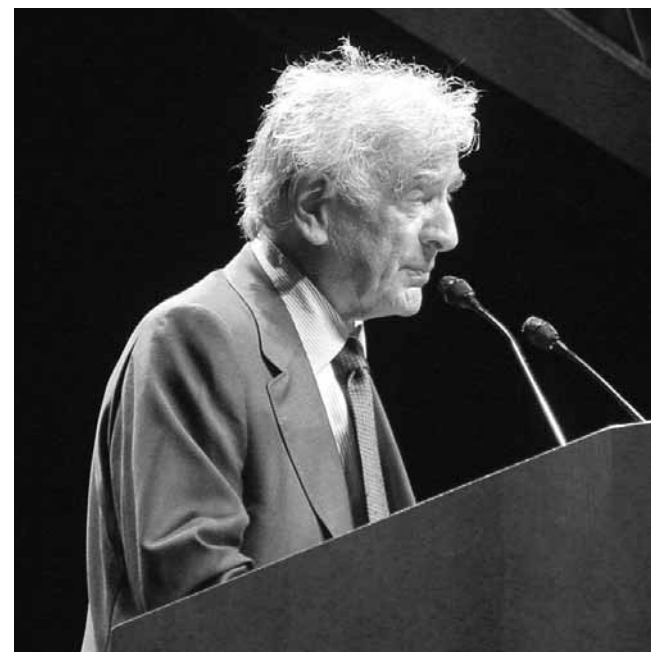
“We have the absolute right to give up on humanity, to say we were abandoned by it. ‘We needed you, and you didn't help us so therefore, leave us alone. Don't come to speak to me about other people's suffering, I suffered more.’ We had the right to do that, and we could have done that, but we did not invoke that right, just the opposite.”

Wiesel said that, in general, the answer to society's ills “is always in your hands.

“The choice is yours,” he added. “Remember that the individual has a role to play, not only in his or her own life or the family, but what single people have done for the history of humanity is amazing, in good or bad. A single person discovered remedies against certain forms of cancer. A single person made decisions that affected so many others. It always begins with a single person.

“Don't say ‘what can I do?’ In Darfur, people say ‘only governments can do, only presidents can do.’ Our answer is mobilize yourselves, wherever you are, high schools, colleges, universities. Write petitions, send them to the White House, to your prime minister, to the UN. They have an effect. If somebody comes and needs you, don't let the question of your powerlessness harm the person who needs you — you can help.”

Wiesel said his recent contribution was full-page New York Times and International Herald Tribune ads, featuring the



JOEL GOLDENBERG PHOTO

signatures of 15 Nobel laureates, expressing solidarity with the “young, courageous people in Iran who had the audacity, the courage to face Ahmadinejad, who had all the powers of the police and the army.

“They came out and publicly, with open faces, they dared to oppose and say what they thought of him. And nobody cared. We decided they should at least know that we cared. Their leaders said ‘at least somebody cares.’

“That is something we have learned. God alone is alone. Human beings are not, must not be. When a person is alone, you can help the person break the walls of solitude and say ‘you are my friend, my ally, my companion, my brother, my sister.

“We had all the reasons in the world to give up, but we didn't. Nor should you.”

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 that captivate your
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TREMBLAY'S TRIUMPHANT SEASON

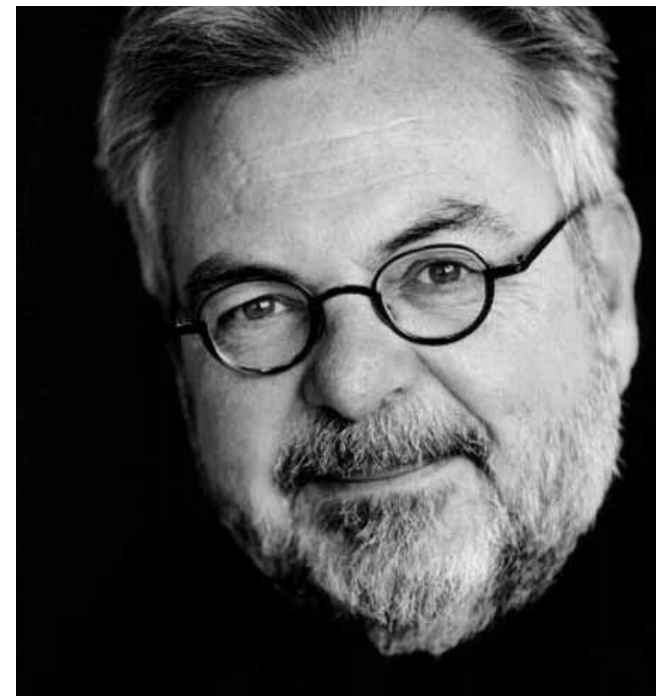
Michel Tremblay, that is.

If there's any doubt that Michel Tremblay is a national resource, all you have to do is look around. He's everywhere. Tremblay's latest play – his 30th – *Fragments des mensonges inutiles*, is at the Theatre Jean Duceppe until October 17. His fifth novel, *La Traversée des sentiments*, comes out in November, and a musical based on his classic, *Les Belles-Soeurs*, (lyrics by René Richard Cyr and music by Daniel Bélanger) will be staged next spring at Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui, and is already a box office hit. Tremblay is also doing the French translation of Steve Galluccio's farce, *Piazza San Domenico*, which opens the Centaur season Oct. 6. Michel Tremblay is also a character who banters with Jack Kerouac in George Rideout's play, *Michel & Ti-jean*, at the Centaur in February. A production of *Albertine* in Five Times is at the Shaw Festival until mid October, and next year, Stratford will produce *For The Pleasure of Seeing Her Again*.

A gentle, bespectacled bear of a man with a full moon face, Tremblay turned 67 in June. He helped create a cultural revolution in Quebec when he broke with convention and first spoke to audiences in working class slang with *Les Belles-Soeurs*. A film buff, with a taste for B-movies, Tremblay's plays, peopled with melodramatic misfits, have often been compared to those of Tennessee Williams, but Tremblay's characters are much more visceral than anything William created. *Le Monde* said it best; "He is an inventor of language who takes the sounds from the mouths, minds and flesh – living words still warm – then uses them to build coloured palaces of hard stone." Embarrassed by the attention, Tremblay is nevertheless, clearly aware of his place as a master who blends nostalgia with hard core reality. *Fragments des mensonges*, like many of his other plays, is unique in that it allows characters from the past to relate and interact with those in the present. "I am pretentious

enough to believe that I invented this kind of theatre," says Tremblay. "I invented it. It belongs to me. I like to play with shifts in time and go from past to present. I always try to let it serve me in different ways."

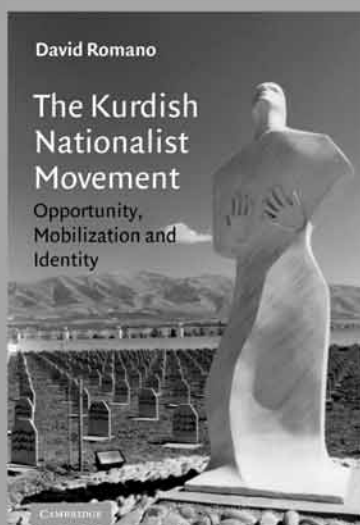
Fragments des mensonges inutiles is a psychological drama that explores attitudes toward homosexuality and whether anything has really changed over the past 40 years. Like many of Tremblay's plays, the approach is clear eyed and clinical. The characters on the left hand side of the stage inhabit the grand noiceur of the 50s; those on the right hand side, live in the politically correct beige world of the present. Jean Marc (Olivier Morin) and Manu (sGabriel Lessard) command the stage as lovers across the divide, connected only by their sexuality. All dramas are about lies, and this play is no exception. The lies in this play are the lies we tell each other and ourselves about homosexuality. In spite of huge strides that have seen equal rights for gays in the workplace, gay marriage and a more tolerant attitude toward homosexuality, many adolescents are terrified at the thought of coming out to family and friends. "We have evolved as a society, certainly," says Tremblay, "To be a homosexual in Quebec is no longer taboo. But just because society has evolved, doesn't make it any easier for the individual, for those who would like to be completely at ease with their sexuality and open about it to others." Forty years ago, for example, it would not have been possible to stage the opening scene which depicts the nude, teenaged lovers in a graphic sexual embrace. Like shadows in a dream, the other characters flit through the piece. A priest of the 50's, (Roger La Rue) a psychiatrist from 2009 (Gabriel Sabourin), Jean Marc's parents, (Maude Guerin and Normand D'Amour) and Manu's politically correct mother and father, (Linda Sorgini and Antoine Durand). Like many of Tremblay's plays, the approach is clear-eyed and



clinical without much sensuality. Director Serge Denoncourt shows his affinity for Tremblay's work, eliciting electric performances from his cast, especially Maude Guerin as Jean Marc's mother, Nana. Lessard and Morin are mirror images of each other, and totally unselfconscious in their demanding roles. The play is as much a piece of verbal music as it is a drama. Like a concerto, there are movements, solos, spoken duets and quartets.

"When critics say my work is realistic, that's an insult," says Tremblay, "The public must always be aware that they are theatrical. Theatre exists to be aggressive. It has to be aggressive to be interesting. Starting with *Belles Soeurs* audiences must surely know the actors are there inhabiting a role, and trying to convince people to believe that what they are seeing is real, even though they know very well that's not the case.

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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Ladies and Gentlemen... Leonard Cohen!

Still your man

He may have written Death of a Lady's Man but Leonard Cohen is not, repeat, not dead. As of last week, he's 75 years old and pulling in a pension but the man's alive, the man is well and as far as we know, he still knows how to make the ladies sweat.

Edmonton's Allison Akgongor's Longing for Leonard knows what she's talking about when she writes

*Leonard's sounds entice us
His words carry us away*

...and last Monday, that's what happened when over 24 Montreal poets met to read some of their poems as a present to celebrate Cohen's 75th birthday. Organized as a benefit for the Montreal's Foundation for Public Poetry, the reading included work published in Jack Locke's Leonard Cohen-You're our man. Locke's book is a collection of poetry in which 75 different poets reflect how they were affected by Cohen's work and what it means for them and their writing. Locke's choice of poems reflects the reality of modern media as everybody gets their chance claim their share of Cohen's work and his music. Suzanne isn't just a song. She's a post-modern substitute for Franz Schubert's Ave Maria and everybody knows what Cohen is talking about when he sings about the jazz police. Last winter, three different covers of Cohen's Halleluiah made it to the top 10 list in England but when K.D.

Laing sings her version, there's not a dry eye at the bar, especially if it's ladies night in Montreal's Village. Montréal's Jeffrey Mackie nails it in his Response to Cohen inspired by Cohen's All There Is To Know About Adolph Eichmann.

*It's true, if you saw him on the bus
You would assume
He was just another commuter
Everything about him was average.*

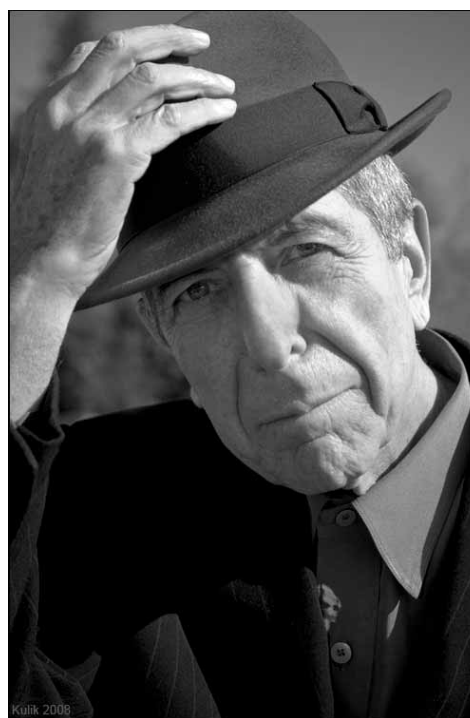
And Montreal's Grace Moore gets it right in her The Serious Governance Of Canada; inspired by Cohen's The Only Tourist In Havana Turns His Thoughts Homeward.

*Which of our parties
Will make an entente
To fill in the vacuum
Of a leaderless state.*

Montreal poets David Solway gets it just as much as does Jessica Mailas who seems to know a thing or two about what happens in a bar when it's late and it's time to go home.

*i did not call your name
as we crossed, back to back
in the midnight swell of revelers
i found it unbecoming
and strange*

Other women had far more definite ideas about what they could and would do for the poet if they ever got their chance to meet and properly greet him. In Snow Is Falling Somewhere Montreal's J.R. Carpenter writes



*When I was fifteen I fell in love with
And secretly wanted to be the nude girl
In Leonard Cohen's poem, Snow is Falling.*
Inspirée par ce que Cohen écrit dans I Will Be Your Ghetto Jew, Nelly Roffe récita un poème qu'elle avait écrit immédiatement après avoir traduit celui de Cohen. Sa réponse

franchement érotique fut d'une telle qualité que ce poème mérite bien sa place comme une franche réponse à celui de Cohen. En effet, ce juif perdu dans son propre petit ghetto pourrait bien apprécier faire la connaissance de son paire après avoir lu ce que Roffe lui offre ayant entendu ce cri d'amour désespéré.

Montreal's Erica White was more succinct when she wrote

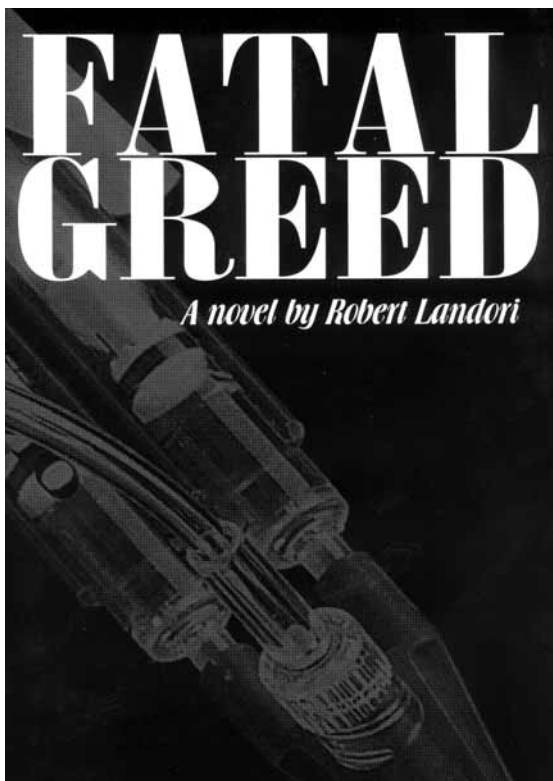
*I have loved so many men
Who loved women who
Were in love with you
And so they never felt
Like they had really been
Loved properly.*

Locke's book is an honest contribution to the city's poetry and the city's various poets. However, poetry is not therapy and once published, belongs to all who read it.

*Today I'm seeing
A lot of people
Who look like people
whom I know.*

*Waiting at the train station
And you don't show
Have I forgotten your face
Or is your train really late?*

Katherine Beeman's enigmatic Lineup has something to say about Cohen's work which every reader understands as the fundamental truth which affects all of our lives.



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Ce n'est pas ma fête

J'aime beaucoup les anniversaires. Ils nous invitent à déclarer des sentiments trop souvent tacites, qui vont sans dire, mais qui vont tellement mieux en les disant. Ils invitent aussi à la rencontre avec le passé, à des retours vers ce que l'on fête, à des prises de consciences renouvelées vers soi, comme l'air de dire : « J'ai eu de la chance ». Ainsi, je m'amuse à évoquer les mille et unes réflexions se situant au cœur du dernier livre de Milan Kundera : Une rencontre.

La structure de cet ouvrage se démarque complètement d'un recueil classique de réflexions. L'auteur informe le lecteur au travers

des passages aux titres évocateurs, comme s'il était en fusion avec lui-même. Ce livre est vivant, organique, en quête d'une jouissance suprême, toujours inaccessible. Ainsi, on assiste à l'union des liens qui ont marqué Kundera, « le Je dans tous ses états », celui qui souffre d'avoir souffert, qui a connu « la salope, la pute, l'agace-pissette, la reine des pétasses », et qui tourne maintenant la page la plus douloureuse de son histoire. En effet, l'exil fut pour Kundera une providentielle libération, après avoir été injustement accusé d'avoir dénoncé un compatriote, en 1950. L'histoire de la fuite de la

Tchécoslovaquie communiste vers la France est d'une réelle beauté, car ainsi il s'affranchit de tous « ces directeurs de mémoires », ces « tyrans », ces « dictateurs à l'esprit totalitaire, sans pensée créatrice, sans atome artistique, sans pouvoir intellectuel extraordinaire ».

Après des années de silence, il publie aujourd'hui cette rencontre. Symboliquement, cela veut dire beaucoup. Un essai, certes, mais aussi, et surtout, une réhabilitation magistrale de l'importance qu'ont eue tous ces liens sur sa vie, afin de comprendre l'horrible mécanisme de la dictature stalinienne. Ainsi, loin des sentiers battus,

on traverse avec lui l'enfance, la sienne, son enfance. Soudain, on comprend tout. En elle on aperçoit le vide, le manque, le trou scandaleux. Peu de livres m'apparaissent aussi essentiels que celui-là, car la chair même de l'auteur, par sa nature jaillissante, par son miel, se loge en nous, dans l'indicible, dans l'insaisissable. Ce livre fait partie des inoubliables. Il parcourt avec nous, tel un autre œil, tout l'espace sensuel et jouissif des mots. Kundera est un événement rare, tant dans le mouvement des idées que dans sa manière toute naturelle de tisser avec assurance des réseaux de solidarité entre les êtres. En somme,

on pourrait affirmer que ce livre est un ouvrage de recherche humaniste.

Tout y passe : les arts, la politique, la peinture, la poésie, les sciences, les recherches et les idées. Tout y est classé, comme dans une bibliothèque anglaise : avec ordre et méthode. Les subdivisions, en neuf parties, puis en sous-parties, sont en soi un modèle littéraire de rigueur et de discipline. Néanmoins, cela n'empêche pas Kundera d'être en symbiose avec ses « personnages » : il parle au travers d'eux, sans détour.

Finalement, le texte interroge l'oubli et la mémoire. Les citations, fort nombreuses, interrogent l'art et son rapport au monde. Tout cela est fascinant : comme une grande musique ! Comme les mouvements d'une pensée ! Ce n'est pas un livre ordinaire, il court et s'échappe à la pensée de l'individu. Puis il revient, il avance plus lentement que la vie humaine, il a peur de se briser entre nos mains, sous nos yeux. Il risque une nouvelle identité, celle qui va bien, qui ne trompe pas, qui place l'écrivain sous ce signe : celle d'un homme ayant dépassé le deuil. Puis, sans crier gare, il a soudain besoin de se coucher sur la littérature, dans ce superbe exercice de discussions savantes, de jeux de mots, de vacheries brillantes, d'études critiques, puis aussi des banalités, ce tissu de tous les jours, et de la vie en opposition à toutes ces listes noires, à tous ces petits mémos et directeurs de conscience.

Plus qu'un carnet d'humeur, ce livre brasse des critiques sur l'art, parle des musiciens, des peintres, des passions littéraires cherchant à devenir beauté, c'est-à-dire la beauté lavée de la saleté affective, la vraie beauté dépourvue de la barbarie sentimentale. Un livre de raison ? Je ne sais pas, mais en tous cas, un discours fleurant la modernité, exigeant une nouvelle écoute, plus sérieuse peut-être. Bref, vous êtes prévenus : ce livre vous marquera pour la vie. La vie belle.

Une rencontre, Milan Kundera, Paris, Gallimard, 2009, 203 pages.

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