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CHINA



OPPRESSION

Ce que nous devons
continuer dire aux Chinois

Dermod Travis

travis@themetropolitain.ca



Quelque soit les enjeux sur les droits de l'homme que le Premier ministre Stephen Harper mentionnent aux dirigeants chinois dans sa première visite officielle en Chine, le Canada pourrait faire bien pire que d'émuler Ronald Reagan, un autre dirigeant conservateur, pendant la visite de l'ancien président à Berlin-Ouest en 1987. Le voyage de Reagan sera gravé pour toujours dans l'histoire par ces mots célèbres : « démolissez ce mur. »

Quels mots, en effet quels actes, définiront notre relation avec la Chine? Nous devons être guidés en premier lieu par

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ORGANS

Our agenda with
China

The Hon. David Kilgour

info@themetropolitain.ca



David Matas and I visited about a dozen countries to interview Falun Gong practitioners 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 at times as subcontractors to multinational companies. This, of course, constitutes gross corporate irresponsibility and

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MONEY

Do you know who the
real bankers are?

Robert Presser

presser@themetropolitain.ca



This year has been a seesaw for the Canadian Dollar. Plunging to the 80 cent USD range during the onset of financial crisis of 2008 and retesting those lows in March of this year, our currency has recovered to trade in a relatively tight range of 92 to 97 cents US over the past two months. The recovery in our dollar has paralleled the recovery in stock markets and commodities, especially oil. Sadly, Canadians don't look at the broader currency picture – while our Loonie is stronger against the US greenback, the USD continues to fall to ever deeper lows against a broader index of

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Beryl Wajzman Editor & Publisher
wajzman@themetropolitain.ca

WWW.THEMETROPOLITAIN.CA

A season of conscience

Many people deride the generosity of spirit and selflessness of action that pervades our civic life during this time of year. They call it hypocritical. A passing fancy. They should not do that. This season of conscience is no longer limited to the twelve days of Christmas. It seems to start somewhere around mid-November – when lights begin to splash the city nights – and end around mid-January when they are taken down. Two months out of twelve where conscience trumps competition and compassion is prized above contempt. One-sixth of the year. It's not perfect, but we should make the most out of it.

It is appropriate that lights are the harbinger. There is a Hasidic group that calls their emissaries around the world “lamplighters.” They explain that in doing good works – acts of “chessed”, righteousness – we “correct” the world with the light of kindness. That is one of the purposes of our existence. Jesus called it the “Light of the Lord.” Our actions fulfill the injunction of Isaiah that, “. . . ye shall plead for the widow and orphan, seek justice and walk humbly with your God. . . .”

In years past many of us tended to think all's right with the world. Many believed the advertising, the gimmicks and the statistics. The reality is there is much wrong. The reality is there is much pain

I think it is less this year. I think this is so because after the funny-money games of the greedy masters of the universe that caused the greatest economic dislocation since the depression, people are waking up. I see more and more getting involved. More and more organizations springing up to do the necessary work that governments can't or won't. And the fleeting moments in these months when we decide to become more generous and giving, not only with money but with our time, often carry over into the rest of the year.

Many ask me where to start. And many others ask the purpose since we can never solve everything. My answer to the doubters is simple. When you see suffering, try and heal it; When you see injustice, try to cure it. When you see want, try and meet it. We have no obligation to bring all ills to an end. But we have the obligation to begin their end.

What is it that we're facing? I can start with the numbers. But they don't tell the story. As Mark Twain said, “Nobody lives on the averages.” Behind the numbers are real people with real hurt. So let me start with the faces. The sunken eyes and quivering lips. The pallid complexions and confused stares. The faces of the vulnerable, poor and hungry have become an identifiable visible minority. Regardless of color or creed. Seventy-six years since President Franklin Roosevelt declared freedom from want one of the essential freedoms, we are still grappling with the perplexing paradox of a society of abundance that has only a thin veneer of affluence.

The faces of pain. From the assembly line workers who lost their jobs to China and have no alternative, to the small business owner forced to close because of tight credit and high taxes, to the elderly eking out lives on insufficient social security, to the newly poor middle classes who have lost a lifetime of savings in financial catastrophe, to the working poor who work longer for the same pay, to women and visible minorities so often the last hired and first fired, to the children who cannot fend for themselves, to all those facing the groaning neglect of government bureaucracies that no longer work. This is – sadly - the new Canadian mosaic.

One-third of our urban households live below the federal poverty line of \$34,000 for four down to \$19,000 for one. One quarter of our working population is classified as working poor. Our seniors are our fastest growing part of our society, yet government pension plans cover less than one-third of minimum needs. Forty years ago they covered fifty per cent. We have the highest number of able-bodied Canadians not being able to find work since the depression. Some 24 percent. Yes the UI numbers range between 8-9 percent, but what they don't tell you are the numbers for those whose UI



benefits have run out and those who have fallen between the cracks.

The new reality is that the vulnerable, as disenfranchised as they may feel, are becoming the pre-eminent plurality. It is time to challenge traditional approaches that have been compromised and calcified through a dependence on rhetoric instead of an involvement with, and engagement in, everyday reality. An everyday reality that prizes hard work, loyalty, and endurance, and rejects ingratitude, false piety and lack of courage. An everyday reality that no longer hesitates to ask “Why should anyone suffer?”

Conscience is not about semantics. It is about the need to challenge interests, not merely balance them. It is about the capacity to see the world through the eyes of its victims, and to understand – viscerally - that the less educated are not any less intelligent and the less affluent are not any less human..

THE MÉTROPOLITAIN

Ensemble et Libres – Together and Free

Édifice Hermès, Tour A, Suite 155, 1470 rue Peel,
Montréal, QC, Canada, H3A 1T1

Tel: 514-759-8541

Fax: 514-759-8544

e-mail: info@themetropolitain.ca

Rédacteur en chef et Éditeur
Beryl P. Wajzman

Managing Editor and Deputy Publisher
Anthony Philbin

Rédacteur-adjoint principal
Daniel Laprés

Creative Editor
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Contributing Editor
Brigitte B. Garceau

Coordonnateur, Affaires internationales
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Strategic Counsel

Charles S. Coffey

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submissions@themetropolitain.ca

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Maison Joseph Battat

the
metrontario
group



Pierre K. Malouf

« Brasse-camarade »

malouf@themetropolitain.ca

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

L'ÉCOLE QUÉBÉCOISE ENNEMIE DU SAVOIR

Inutile de vous faire vacciner, la fin du monde s'en vient

Jean-François Revel écrivait que pour combattre le mensonge rien n'est plus efficace que la vérité. Contrer une fausse information en la censurant donne toujours de moins bons résultats que le simple fait de lui opposer une information exacte. Voilà un beau principe... auquel je n'ai jamais pu me rallier sans réserve. Un autre grand auteur, que j'admire tout autant que Revel, mais pour d'autres raisons, Eugène Ionesco, ne disait-il pas, preuves à l'appui, que « la vérité n'intéresse personne » ? Entre l'optimisme de Revel et le pessimisme de Ionesco, mon cœur à longtermes balancé. Aujourd'hui je suis fixé: des événements récents ont en effet démontré sans l'ombre d'un doute que Ionesco avait raison.

La vérité n'intéressant donc personne, sauf vous, chers lecteurs, j'en suis rendu, au lieu de perdre mon temps à combattre le mensonge à l'aide d'arguments rationnels, à promouvoir l'internement psychiatrique des crétiens qui propagent des rumeurs alarmantes à propos de la vaccination ou de la fin du monde, prévue, dit-on, pour décembre 2012. Je retire le mot « crétiens », c'est « idiots nuisibles » que j'aurais dû écrire. Idiots nuisibles... mais instruits, engeance qui prolifère à une époque où l'on permet à des analphabètes fonctionnels d'accéder à l'université, et d'y copier-coller un baccalauréat, une maîtrise, parfois un doctorat, après quoi ces imposteurs iront exercer des métiers honorables, voire prestigieux : enseignants, infirmières, ingénieurs, notaires, prophètes...

Vous direz que je vais trop loin en ce qui concerne les doctorants ou les « doctorés », que ceux et celles qui poursuivent leurs études jusque là sont à l'abri de loufoqueries comme la biologie totale, les théories du complot, la fin du monde, les chances du Canadien de remporter la Coupe Stanley. Détrompez-vous ! Il en va des théories fumeuses comme des proverbes : on n'y croit que si l'on est un peu bête, mais pour les inventer, il faut posséder un minimum d'intelligence.

Dans un livre récent, Normand Baillargeon écrit : « Un des plus précieux bénéfices qu'on puisse retirer d'une formation universitaire, disait-on hier encore, est la capacité à reconnaître

des croyances délirantes, absurdes et souvent dangereuses. Mais tout donne à penser que l'Université actuelle, loin de faire ce cadeau aux étudiants qui la fréquentent, est au contraire elle-même parfois devenue un important pourvoyeur de telles croyances — du moins dans certains domaines (1). » Cette bêtise dénoncée par M. Baillargeon, où la retrouve-t-on surtout ? Je vous le donne en mille ! Dans les sciences de l'éducation !

Ce qui m'amène à affirmer que la situation est pire au Québec que partout ailleurs en Occident. La flopée d'ignares qui dénoncent la vaccination ou croient à l'imminence de la fin du monde n'est certes pas plus abondante actuellement au Québec

admirer, des coutumes aussi exotiques que les sacrifices humains chez les Aztèques, les massacres de sorcières dans l'Europe de la Renaissance, la lapidation des femmes adultères chez les musulmans, l'existence de vaches sacrées dans de lointaines contrées asiatiques, le nombre anormalement élevé de prêtres pédophiles au sein du clergé catholique (comme c'est beau la religion !), mais n'entendent jamais parler de Louis Pasteur, de Robert Koch ou de Joseph Edward Salk. Ils n'acquièrent bien sûr aucune notion élémentaire d'astronomie, ce qui leur permet de croire à l'existence d'une planète appelée Nibiru, qui viendra détruire la terre le 21 décembre 2012. Entre la superstition et la connaissance rationnelle, l'école québécoise

Ce qui m'amène à affirmer que la situation est pire au Québec que partout ailleurs en Occident. La flopée d'ignares qui dénoncent la vaccination ou croient à l'imminence de la fin du monde n'est certes pas plus abondante actuellement au Québec qu'ailleurs dans le monde.

qu'ailleurs dans le monde. Mais grâce à l'école québécoise, elle va bientôt proliférer. C'est que les bonzes constructivistes du ministère, qui marchent main dans la main avec les post-modernistes qui ont envahi les sciences de l'éducation, se sont donnés comme mission de saboter le système scolaire, d'empêcher les enfants québécois d'acquérir des connaissances, de détruire l'esprit critique de toute une génération. J'appelle ça la stratégie (qui rime avec tragédie) de l'intelligence brûlée. Le dernier coup d'éclat de ces vandales : le Programme éthique et culture religieuse implanté dans nos écoles il y a un an et demi.

Les enfants Québécois apprennent donc à respecter, voire à

a fait son choix. À bas la pensée logique, vive la pensée magique !

Et tandis que les autorités compétentes du ministère de la Santé incitent les citoyens du Québec à se faire vacciner ; tandis que les astronomes du Mont Mégantic s'échinent à démentir les élucubrations des astrologues ; au ministère de l'Éducation des relativistes patentés travaillent à empêcher les connaissances scientifiques de faire leur chemin dans l'esprit de nos enfants.

Inutile de vous faire vacciner, la fin du monde s'en vient.

(1) *Contre la Réforme, Presses de l'université de Montréal*, p. 69.

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

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

Citoyens Anti Gouvernement Envahissant

CAGE

Citizens Against Government Encroachment

www.cagecanada.ca



Beryl Wajsman Editor & Publisher
wajsman@themetropolitain.ca

WWW.THEMETROPOLITAIN.CA

Anti-poverty activists lead major protest over Quebec's "empty action plan"

One-third of adult Montrealers live below poverty line

Hundreds of anti-poverty and social advocacy leaders and activists turned out recently to protest the opening of the Quebec government's third phase of consultations on the formulation of a concerted provincial plan to significantly reduce poverty over the next ten years. Their complaints, which were first heard in the summer at the time of earlier phases of the consultation process, center around their perception that the government does not really want input from frontline groups and that these meetings are just so much window dressing. The hearings are taking place under the name "Le Rendez-vous de la solidarité 2009."

The significance of this protest was that it included almost all social service groups that serve Montreal's poor. The regional breadth represented was from the east end of the island to the west. Among the groups participating were the Regroupement intersectoriel des organismes communautaires de Montréal (RIOCM), the TROVEP de Montréal, the Table régionale des centres de femmes de Montréal/Laval, the Regroupement des organismes communautaires familles de Montréal (ROCFM), FRAPRU, Project Genesis, the Collectif Montréalais

de lutte à la pauvreté, the Table Régionale des Organismes Volontaires d'Éducation Populaire, Le Collectif pour un Québec sans Pauvreté and Federation CJA's social advocacy committee. The groups had the support of the Conseil intersyndical du Montréal métropolitain, a grouping of the Montreal area's major labour unions.

This was not the first show of frustration at the government's consultative process. Back in June, eleven leaders of major organizations walked out of the first phase. The hearings are being conducted



under the aegis of the Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity. The Minister responsible is Sam Hamad.

Among the complaints of the protesting organizations was that they were not really public and that there was a severe limit on who could talk. The hearings were by invitation only. One per organization. There was nothing inherently "consultative" in the structure of the hearings because there was only an atelier, formal presentations, no opportunity to ask questions and no room for individual victims of the poverty cycle to tell their stories and suggestions.

In addition, there were no formal allocation of briefs. The prepared agenda was filled with government representatives and bureaucrats speaking about their views and positions. What is particularly troubling to these leaders of frontline social service organizations is that this "benign neglect" is coming at a time when the province is seeking to download more and more responsibility to community groups and individuals. Yet there is no indication of what support can be expected. The province seeks to download other responsibilities to the city. Yet though anti-poverty initiatives are a provincial responsibility, the activists point out that the city has been given

little direction and less indication of where funding will be coming from and for what. These key questions the leaders say, are not being addressed in these consultations making the process moot.

In short, the community groups are disheartened by what they have called "an empty plan." The groups are demanding that the government create a real plan, through a dynamic process, which attacks the structural and root causes of poverty. "Minister Hamad's vision as he proposes it in the consultation's planning documents evacuates the central role that government needs to take in attacking poverty and downloads this responsibility to local communities without the necessary resources," said demonstration spokesperson David Faguy.

Even after the adoption of the first action plan to combat poverty and social exclusion in 2004, poverty rates have continued to grow. Amongst Montrealers aged 15 and over, 31.2% are living below the low-income cut off (before taxes) while the provincial average is 17.2%. More than 185,000 households living in rental housing spend more than 30% of their income on rent. Social aid payments add up to only \$588.92 per month.

"The poverty and social exclusion which prevails in Montreal are a

direct assault upon the right of people to live in dignity. The economic and social rights that the government of Quebec has undertaken to respect require a commitment to provide appropriate and sufficient resources for its accomplishment," said Lyse Cloutier of the Centres des femmes.

The groups believe that in order to be effective, any plan by the government needs to include across the board increases in welfare rates, increases in the minimum wage, long-term financing for building new social housing units to keep up with demand, and an end to deductions on child support payments.

Leah Berger, Coordinator of the FEDERATION CJA Social Advocacy Committee said that, "The FEDERATION CJA Social Advocacy Committee is preoccupied by the lack of acknowledgement and concrete action included in the government's consultation document towards ensuring the right of all Quebecers to live in dignity. In practical terms, this translates into guaranteeing that all Quebecers have the basic means to pay for lodging, food and transportation. Instead, we continue to witness a constant downloading of provincial responsibilities onto municipalities, community organizations, families and individuals who do not necessarily have the means to provide this assistance. Issues such as welfare, minimum wage and employment programs fall within the specific jurisdiction and mandate of the provincial government. In addition, the provincial government should be acting to reduce social inequalities, especially given that it is a key means in fighting poverty. There is an inherent contradiction between the government's commitment to support the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural

Rights, which deems the right to a decent wage as a human right, and the absence of sufficient concrete action to fight poverty."

On the problems with the consultation process itself Berger said, "After reviewing the proposed schedule for the Montreal regional consultations, we are concerned about the lack of direct exchange between the government and community groups and coalitions. Panel presentations by government representatives, for example, do not encourage the type of dialogue necessary for organizations and frontline community workers to impart their knowledge and experience to help create a constructive policy that will significantly reduce poverty in Quebec."

The problem Berger underlines has been voiced before, but now seems to have reached a crisis point. In the summer the spokesperson the Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain (FRAPRU), François Saillant, declared that the very words in the rulebook of the consultation process demonstrates that the government wants to shut out community groups like his from effective participation.

For his part Minister Hamad affirms that the consultations are open to receiving all briefs and ideas and that none have been rejected. He said, "We are in the process of taking in all ideas and we will evaluate them all later." Hamad has consistently stated that in no way or form will the Quebec government "neglect its responsibilities in the fight against poverty." He said that, "We recognize that poverty exists, that it is persistent and far too present in Quebec. Even with all that has been done, we recognize that the problems have not been solved and that there remains work to do to reach our objectives."

Enquêtes sur le monde de la construction : indépendante, la SQ ?

Le ministre de la Sécurité publique a chargé la Sûreté du Québec d'enquêter sur les faits et allégations entourant l'immixtion du crime organisé dans le monde de la construction et les affaires municipales où la corruption régnerait. Cela suffira-t-il à redonner confiance ?

Une organisation policière comme la SQ est une immense machine à renseignements où les haut placés apprennent tout d'en bas sans avoir toujours pleine latitude pour décider qu'en faire. En cas de dilemme, ils se croient obligés de consulter les autorités politiques, ce qui n'est pas toujours conciliable avec la prétendue indépendance du pouvoir judiciaire. Mais allez faire autrement quand telles ont toujours été les règles.

Quand certaines affaires non médiatisées risquent de créer des remous politiques, les gens au pouvoir préfèrent voir venir les coups plutôt que de les subir sans avertissement, surtout quand elles risquent d'entacher non seulement leur réputation, mais celle de l'organisme gouvernemental ou du parti au sein duquel ils ont des responsabilités ou des accointances. Aussi s'attendent-ils à ce que la police, leur police, les avise quand une affaire mal embouchée se dessine. L'état-major qui l'oublierait serait jugé déloyal et ne ferait pas de vieux os. Une prudente discrétion est alors de mise, car on ne sait jamais quand l'opposition ou la presse pourraient en avoir vent et frapper dans le tas.

Pour cette raison, certaines enquêtes policières délicates sont soumises au politique, ce qui place parfois celui-ci dans la fâcheuse position d'être juge et partie. Le ou les ministres consultés se voient dans l'obligation de trancher sur certains sujets ou de suggérer des voies à suivre, selon des intérêts pas toujours limpides. Quand, pour des raisons « supérieures », une enquête ou son résultat doivent être ajournés ou abandonnés, on peut toujours trouver un haut gradé, un haut fonctionnaire, un conseiller juridique ou quelque



substitut du Procureur général pour statuer que l'affaire est sans fondement ou que les preuves sont trop minces pour poursuivre. Les représentants de l'État qui s'en trouvent fort aise ne sont pas des ingrats et savent s'en souvenir quand vient le temps des nominations par arrêtés en Conseil. Mis à part les bénéficiaires de ces manœuvres, nombreux sont les policiers ou les avocats qui pourraient en témoigner si seulement ils avaient des couilles ou si la vérité les torturait.

Cependant, ici, tel n'est pas le cas, le scandale étant apparu du fait incontrôlable d'une presse indépendante qui a pris tout le monde au dépourvu. En semblable circonstance, les élus préfèrent ne pas se mouiller et annoncer une enquête conventionnelle, ce qui est l'option actuellement préconisée par le gouvernement.

Que la Sûreté du Québec ait le quasi-monopole de la conduite de l'enquête n'a rien pour étonner, quand on devine qu'en fin de parcours elle s'en remettra aux décisions du pouvoir ou de ses représentants, selon ce qu'elle découvrira. Serait-ce la raison pour laquelle le SPVM n'a pas été mis à contribution dans le cadre des vastes enquêtes annoncées, celui-ci échappant à l'autorité directe des ministères concernés?

Toutes ces affaires de corruption et d'intimidation furent uniquement le fruit du travail médiatique. Rien n'a

paru ressortir des œuvres de la Sûreté du Québec chez qui, pourtant, existe depuis la nuit des temps une escouade des Crimes économiques qui est censée s'occuper de semblables crimes.

Le gouvernement n'a aucun intérêt

à tenir une enquête publique sur un sujet aléatoire qui risque peut-être de l'éclabousser. Sait-on quelle tournure tout cela pourrait prendre? Politique municipale corrompue. Politique fédérale corrompue. Et la provinciale serait vierge?

Les médias feraient mieux de garder l'œil ouvert, sinon les enquêtes policières s'éterniseront jusqu'à ce que le poisson ait été noyé. Rappelons-nous Cinar et l'affaire Robinson où la GRC n'a pas rempli son rôle jusqu'au bout...

riosud
Vêtements mode pour la femme d'aujourd'hui

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www.riosud.com



Akil Alleyne

alleyne@themetropolitain.ca

WWW.THEMETROPOLITAIN.CA

Citizen Chen

I have always believed that the citizens of a free society should not be punished for acting, within reasonable bounds, to protect themselves or their property from criminals. When the police are able to deal with the robber or attacker in a timely and effective fashion, the job should indeed be left to them. When this is not the case, individuals who are able to bring the perpetrators to heel in a responsible manner should not flinch from doing so. Nor should the state penalize them for doing what needed to be done, which officers of the peace may have been unable—or unwilling—to do.

As an ongoing travesty of justice in Toronto in shows, Canada's criminal justice system would beg to differ.

It was last May that surveillance cameras at the Lucky Moose market in Toronto's Chinatown captured a man stealing \$60 worth of plants riding away with them on a bicycle. 51-year-old Anthony Bennett, a man with a petty crime rap sheet 33 years long, returned to the same store an hour later, presumably to help himself to some more merchandise. This time, however, he was confronted by the store's owner, David Chen, and fled on foot. Mr. Chen and several store employees gave chase and caught Bennett, reportedly hog-tying him with twine and trapping him in a delivery truck until police arrived several minutes later.

What happened next boggles the mind and makes a mockery of the very concept of justice. For apprehending the thief and restraining him until the authorities showed up, Mr. Chen was charged by police with unlawful confinement, assault, concealing a weapon (he happened to be carrying a box-cutter at the time), and kidnapping. Worse still, the perpetrator, who was originally supposed to serve a 90-day jail sentence at the prosecution's request, was able to finagle a mere 30-day bid out of negotiations with the court—in exchange for testifying against Mr. Chen.

I would love to be able to say that the Crown did the “decent”

thing by dropping the kidnapping and concealed weapon charges several months later. Unfortunately, decency had little to do with it. For the most serious charge, that of kidnapping, Mr. Chen would have had to be tried before a jury, where he almost certainly would have been acquitted. At any rate, the Crown initially offered to drop the more severe charges if Mr. Chen would plead guilty to assault and unlawful confinement—an offer he promptly refused. This plea bargain suggests that Crown prosecutor Colleen Hepburn's eventual decision to drop the aforementioned charges anyway was not made as a matter of conscience.

The legal case against Mr. Chen is that in Canada, such “citizen arrests” are lawful only when the perpetrator is in caught in the act of breaking the law. Since Chen ran Bennett down before the latter was able to filch any more goods upon his return to the market, the argument goes, what he did was illegal. Yet it appears that this is less clear than the Crown and its sympathizers would have it. According to University of Alberta criminal-law professor Sanjeev Anand, Canadian legal precedent permits such citizen arrests if there is reason to believe that the perpetrator has committed an indictable offence. The surveillance camera footage of Bennett's initial theft gave Chen that reason.

Yet even if the Crown is right, Chen's case raises an important normative question. Should Canada's laws be amended, as Immigration Minister Jason Kenney recently mused, to protect this sort of citizen's arrest from prosecution? I, for one, believe so, for I see nothing in Chen's action that should be considered worthy of punishment under the law.

Did Chen and his employees truly “assault” Mr. Bennett in any meaningful sense of the word? I think not. They applied perfectly reasonable force in stopping him; they did not beat the stuffing out of him, as others would. Did they “take the law into their own

hands”, as some have alleged? Hardly. They did not try to punish Bennett themselves, as real vigilantes do. They trussed him up—strictly to stop him from escaping—and turned him over to Toronto's Finest at the first opportunity.

Some argue, as the Globe and Mail columnist Marcus Gee did last month, that Mr. Chen endangered himself in pursuing the larcenous Mr. Bennett. What if the perp had pulled a knife or a gun on him? This flimsy argument, however, is annoyingly paternalistic in its implications. If an individual is willing to risk life and limb to catch a fleeing thief, that is his business. The government should not punish him for doing so in order to shield him from the potential consequences of his own actions. Eyewitnesses who report violent crimes or rescue their victims, or who testify against criminals in court, potentially make themselves targets for the perpetrators' reprisal as well. Are they to be prosecuted for that?

“In such an encounter, anything can happen,” wrote Mr. Gee. “That's why we reserve the right of arrest mainly to police... Passions run high when people think they have right on their side, and things can easily get out of hand.” This, of course, overlooks the countless incidents in which things have spun far further out of control than they did in David Chen's case, despite—and sometimes because of—police involvement. It also ignores the judiciousness Chen exercised by merely restraining Bennett until the police's arrival. What's more, since Bennett might have gotten clean away had he not been caught, Mr. Chen, if anything, did the police a favor. Had he handled this situation by the book, calling 911 when he caught the thief without giving chase, Bennett could have made a clean getaway before the police arrived.

Can law-abiding citizens afford to depend so heavily on law enforcement for their safety? In a perfect world, in which cops are impeccable angels who always arrive in time to collar the

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- George F. Lengvari, Sr.



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crooks, this would be the perfect approach. In the world we actually inhabit, however, that is too often not the case. To require citizens to wait for police to rescue them, even when the latter are unable to do so until it is too late, is nothing short of unjust. In some situations, that could cost a victim his or her life. This is one major reason why the law permits, for example, the use of violence in self-defense: because police are not always well positioned to take care of business. Case in point: as Chen and countless fellow shopkeepers—who have rallied to his defence—have pointed out, Toronto police generally give shoplifting cases short shrift. Store owners' tax dollars, it would seem, are not so hard at work.

This case relates to the larger issue of whether restricting individuals' ability to help stop crime discourages them from acting in cases where such courageous intervention could save lives. In the 1989 École Polytechnique massacre, the men in a

room commandeered by gunman Marc Lépine meekly obeyed his order to leave, allowing him to slaughter fourteen women left behind. Two summers ago, travelers in Western Canada fled a bus after one psychotic passenger savagely butchered another. (The RCMP, for their part, left the murderer alone on the bus for hours before boarding and arresting him, allowing him to decapitate and cannibalize his victim's body.)

A little retaliation on bystanders' part might have at least mitigated these tragedies. Consider, for instance, the shooting at Virginia's Appalachian School of Law in 2002, when a disgruntled student shot six people, killing three, including a school dean. Two other students ran to their cars to retrieve handguns from their glove compartments and confronted and disarmed the shooter. Such bravery need not be expected of all citizens—most of us are not cut out for such impromptu combat—but it is not to be punished either. It is easy to imagine how laws that discourage

that kind of intervention could infantilize and enfeeble the citizenry, enabling or exacerbating such crimes in the future.

The case of David Chen revives the age-old question of the proper relationship between the citizen and the state. Free men and women should not have to entrust any aspect of their destinies—their health, safety, prosperity etc.—to the agents of government so slavishly. In most cases, yes, the boys (and girls) in blue should be the ones to bring the bad guys to justice. Yet there are times when John Q. Citizen must do his part—beyond cooperating with investigations, serving on juries or testifying in court—to take a bite out of crime. This includes cases in which John Q.'s livelihood is violated by someone whom he can apprehend with minimal violence and without usurping the legitimate role of the police. Citizen Chen does not deserve to be put on trial. If anything, the rest of us should consider taking a page from his book.



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Handicapped woman meets rigid bureaucracy

Teri-Lee Walters has been in a wheelchair since the age of 13 and is hurt that, in 2009, handicapped persons are still have trouble exercising their most basic rights as citizens.

On Sunday, Nov. 1 – municipal election day – Walters and her 75-year-old grandmother made their way to the polling station at St. Gabriel School in Point St. Charles. It was not made clear, Walters said, that she was supposed to vote in advance because of her disability.

When she showed up at the school, to her surprise, the facility chosen to welcome voters in the Point was not wheelchair-accessible. It is an oversight Walters describes as offensive and insensitive.

“I am tired of being treated like a second-class citizen,” Walters told *The Métropolitain*. “My grandmother, with bad knees, had to be assisted up the three steps with her walker, after we waited outside in the cold for 20 minutes to find out if we could both vote. She did get to vote, I did not.”

She said another area school and a recreation centre, both of which are wheelchair-accessible, are typically used for elections, but for whatever reason, this time she was directed to St. Gabriel’s. Other citizens offered to carry Walters up the stairs in her wheelchair, but she declined, fearing it could lead to an accident.

“The door that they were directing everybody into has three steps. I circled the building to see if there were other entrances (that were accessible), but there were none,” Walters said. “They told me that they were told they weren’t allowed to put anything down to make a temporary ramp...and legally, they’re not allowed to bring the ballot out to me. It’s respectable that there are security measures around polling stations and that’s the way it should be. But I should be allowed to vote. I was disturbed by this.”



DAN DELMAR PHOTO

The only clear answer that Walters received from election officials on-site was that she should have cast a ballot during the advanced voting period. “Too late for that now,” as she told them, “and how was I supposed to know that my polling station wasn’t accessible?” After doing some digging, Walters discovered that city of Montreal directives suggest that most polling stations “should” be accessible on voting day – no guarantees for citizens with mobility issues.

“In this day and age, we should have full accessibility. Our population is aging and there are going to be more and more people who are not going to be able to access polls. That’s unfair.”

Speaking on behalf of Élection Montréal officials, city spokesperson Gonzalo Nunez said that all advanced polling stations were wheelchair accessible and the voter’s card

indicates which station on voting day would have been able to accommodate Walters. A small logo appears next to the address of accessible polls. It remains unclear whether or not election officials would have been able to bend the rules to grant Walters a vote.

“It’s possible, depending on circumstances, to move a ballot box to facilitate the right to vote,” Nunez said. “It was done on Nov. 1 in some cases. However, it remains a judgement call for the person responsible in the room who needs to uphold correct procedures for the vote in general.”

One would think that the first person to come to Walters’ defence would be Lise Poulin, a newly elected borough councillor in the Canal district of Lachine. As of Nov. 1, Poulin was the first wheelchair-bound elected official in Quebec (former Lieutenant Governor Lise Thibault was appointed). She doesn’t see herself as a city-wide spokesperson for the disabled but a simple representative of citizens in her district.

“Nothing is perfect. We’ve gone a long way in the past few years,” Poulin said. “Of course it’s surprising,” but the Tremblay administration has done a lot to make the city more accessible, including the introduction of elevators in some Metro stations, added the Union councillor.

“If an individual business doesn’t want to be accessible, fine, that’s their loss. I’m not going to spend my money there,” Walters said – but a polling station being off-limits to a significant segment of the population? “I was extremely angry. I’ve seen how people treat me and how society treats me...we like to think it’s equal but it’s not. We’re not there yet. I have a university education, I go out, I do the same things that everyone else does. I have a full life. But then I couldn’t vote. I couldn’t express my opinion. It was a major slap in the face. It shook me up and I realized just how powerless I felt.”

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that captivate your

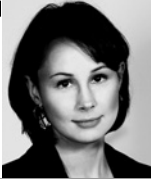
heart and soul.

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École polytechnique : Remember, remember the 6th of December

Just after dark on Wednesday, December 6, 1989 - a drizzling and foggy early winter day in Montreal - Marc Lepine walked through the doors of Université de Montréal's École Polytechnique with a hunting knife and a .223 Remington concealed in a bag.

He was dressed in a pair of blue jeans and Kodiak boots.

The 25-year-old gunman entered the engineering building shortly sometime after 4 p.m. But it took him an hour to finally make his way into a classroom filled with some 60 students, brandishing the semi-automatic rifle.

He told the students to separate. Men to the left, women to the right. But in their fear and confusion, they were slow to react.

The coroner's report sets the scene in chilling detail.

"They thought it was an end of session joke, and that the attacker was firing blanks," wrote Teresa Sourour, the investigating coroner.

"He said to them: 'Do you know why you are there?' One of the girls answered 'No'. He replied: 'I am fighting feminism.' The student who had spoken added: 'We are not feminists, I have never fought against men. He immediately started firing on the group, from left to right.'

Lepine roamed the school corridors shooting, wounding and killing seemingly at random. He murdered fourteen and wounded thirteen more.

Finally, twenty minutes after the first shot was fired, he sat next to his final victim on the dais of a third-floor classroom, removed his coat and lay down his rifle. "Oh shit," he said, before killing himself with the last bullet in the gun's magazine.

This year marks 20th grim anniversary of the Montreal Massacre. And while the facts are clear, after two decades its meaning remains elusive.

"We'll never manage to understand it," said Rose-Marie Goulet, who designed the memorial to the slain women that fills

the Place du 6 Décembre.

"But we need to continue to seek. To try and understand."

Leyton is a retired professor at Memorial University and an expert on mass killings.

Nothing since has come close to so profoundly shaking our national psyche, he contends.

"It was a catastrophic rupture with our past," he said. "It set a lot of things in motion."

The December bloodshed has entered Canada's consciousness through each annual vigil and through film, music and theater.

"It wasn't just in Montreal that the funerals were watched; that the hearts bled," Leyton said.

In Quebec, we've sought meaning through political action.

The night continues to colour our politics, most recently with the federal decision to repeal the long-gun registry.

The families who lost their daughters in the massacre and those who were on campus that night have been unyielding and vocal in their lobbying for more aggressive gun-control legislation in Canada.

Alongside gun control, it galvanized Canadians to fight violence against women.

"For some feminists it was a symbol of an anti-feminist movement," said Chantal Maillé, an associate professor of women's studies at Concordia University Simone de Beauvoir Institute and an expert on feminism and politics in Quebec and Canada.

"For others, it was a random act of violence."

The factions continue to disagree on the social interpretation of Canada's worst mass killing.

But in 1991, Parliament declared Dec. 6 as National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

Campus anti-violence campaigns were established, as were programs to encourage women to seek work in male-dominated

fields like engineering.

Men pledge never to condone violence against women in a white ribbon campaign that has become a December tradition across Canada.

According to Leyton, as one of the most appalling tragedies in Canadian history, no event - beyond the world wars - had such a resounding impact.

Maillé and Leyton agree women face fewer hurdles in Canada now than in 1989.

"There have been real changes in the way men conceptualize women," Leyton said. "Men are more likely to show respect and avoid macho dominance."

Murders of female wives and partners by their male counterparts has also been on a steady decline, he added.

Still, both agree change is still necessary.

"In 1989, violence on campus was not so common," said Maillé. "But now the issue of being safe on university campuses is becoming a major issue."

She also called the repeal of the long-gun registry "a major defeat."

Leyton's concern is that "the worst kinds of abuse continue to be possible and take place inside a home."

He added that there are few steps a society can take to protect itself from this type of carnage - as shown at Concordia University and Dawson College and many other sites worldwide.

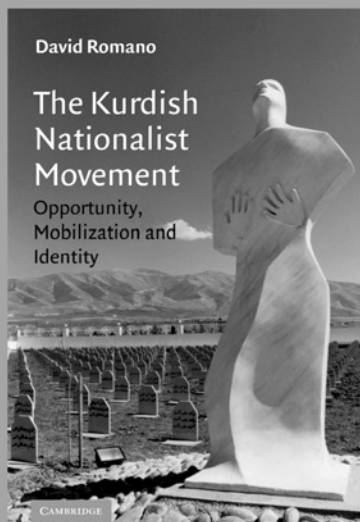
"Mass killings like this are a form of suicide," Leyton said. "This is their final statement of what their identity is."

One solution is to focus on educating people on the sanctity of life, be it through religion or secular institutions like the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, he said.

Then none of Lepine's victims will have died in vain.

"They died for nothing," Leyton said. "But they died for something, too."

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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Dermod Travis
travis@themetropolitain.ca

Dermod Travis is the Executive
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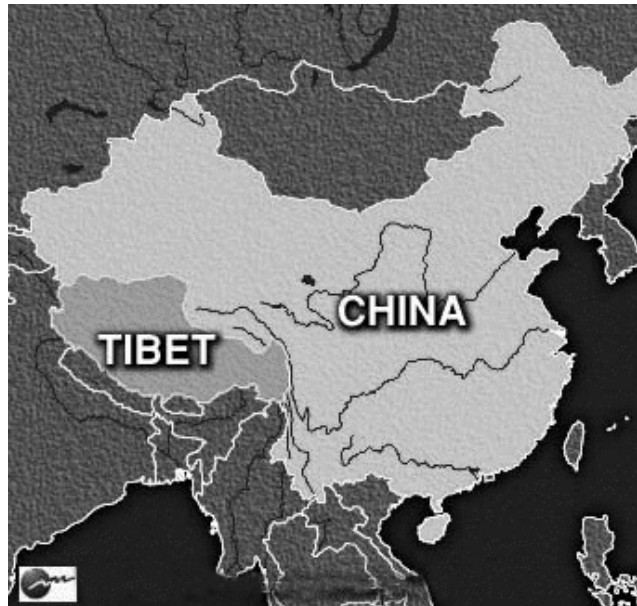
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CE QUE NOUS DEVONS CONTINUER DIRE AUX CHINOIS, SUITE DE LA PAGE 1

une analyse impartiale de l'interrelation entre la relation économique du Canada avec la Chine et le bilan brutal du régime communiste en matière des droits de l'homme. Les deux sont aussi inséparables avec la Chine qu'ils le sont avec le Zimbabwe ou la Birmanie.

Les groupes d'affaires, tel que le Conseil commercial Canada-Chine, ont féroceement menés de l'avant l'argument que mentionner la situation des droits de l'homme en Chine est mauvais pour les affaires canadiennes. Mais si mentionner des questions de droits de l'homme a eu un impact sur les affaires canadiennes, le bilan indique que le Canada devrait le faire plus souvent et plus fortement.

De 1997 à 2008, les exportations canadiennes vers la Chine ont grimpé de 2 milliards de dollars à presque 12.7 milliards de dollars. Les exportations sont en hausse de sept pourcents pour les cinq premiers mois de 2009. L'augmentation a été constante, excepté en 2002 où les exportations sont tombées de 400 millions de dollars. Comme pourcentage des exportations



En date de ce texte, 1 381 Tibétains qui sont emprisonnés attendent toujours leurs procès suite au soulèvement prédominamment paisible de l'année dernière qui ont eu lieu à travers le Tibet. Deux autres ont été exécutés par un peloton d'exécution le mois dernier. Les quelques procès qui ont eu lieu ont été menés en secret et en l'absence de contrôles juridiques et d'application régulière de la loi.

canadiennes totales, la part de la Chine a triplé à 2.71 au cours de cette période.

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Human Rights Watch a démontré un système judiciaire en

Chine si fortement politisé qu'il exclu la possibilité de procès équitables pour des Tibétains. Et tandis que le régime chinois rejette le terme « prisonniers politiques », ces 1 381 Tibétains sont en effet des prisonniers politiques dans leur propre patrie. La répression religieuse au Tibet est élevée et le contrôle du gouvernement chinois des monastères et d'autres établissements religieux est « extraordinairement serré », comme rapporté en octobre par le département d'État des États-Unis.

Un thème commun à travers le rapport sur les libertés religieuses internationales du département d'État est l'interférence par les autorités chinoises dans les normes et la profondeur traditionnelles de l'étude du bouddhisme tibétain.

Cette interférence s'étend de limiter le nombre de moines dans les monastères, à imposer des restrictions sur les endroits où les moines peuvent voyager pour la formation religieuse, au refus de fournir des passeports pour les voyages à l'étranger, même à refuser la permission de voyager à l'intérieur d'un comté, et de coopter l'éducation de jeunes lamas réincarnés à faire pression sur des employés de l'État pour retirer leurs enfants de toutes formes d'éducation religieuse.

Ce rapport documente également de nombreux cas de moines et de nonnes bouddhistes qui ont été « soumis aux punitions extrajudiciaires, telles que des agressions physiques et la privation de la nourriture, de l'eau, et du sommeil pendant de longues périodes, » tandis que « les corps de certains qui [...] sont mort pendant l'interrogation ont été débarrassés secrètement plutôt que d'être retournés à leurs familles. »

Le rapport sur les droits de l'homme en Chine du département d'État des États-Unis de 2008 note que « d'autres abus sérieux des droits de l'homme inclus... l'utilisation des travaux forcés, y compris en prison » et que « le gouvernement (Chinois) a continué de surveiller, harceler, détenir, arrêter, et emprisonner des journalistes, des auteurs, des activistes, et des avocats de défense et leurs familles, plusieurs d'entre eux cherchaient à exercer leurs droits en vertu de la loi. »

La résolution de la tragédie tibétaine prendra plus que des énoncés pro forma d'appui. Ces énoncés seuls n'apporteront pas l'avènement d'une résolution juste et durable pour le peuple tibétain. Ce qui serait efficace serait notre voix nationale parlant uniformément avec force pour les millions de réformateurs chinois qui cherchent un futur libre et démocratique pour la Chine.

En 1990, Nelson Mandela a visité le Canada pour rendre un hommage spécial à notre gouvernement pour avoir « continuer sur le chemin dressé par le Premier ministre John Diefenbaker, qui a agi contre l'apartheid parce qu'il a su qu'aucune personne de conscience ne pouvait se tenir de côté alors qu'un crime contre l'humanité était commis. »

Les Canadiens peuvent seulement espérer que les actes qui définiront ultimement la relation entre le Canada et la Chine résonneront clairement avec le gouvernement chinois. Nous devons toujours être francs et clairs que le Canada ne se tienne pas de côté quand des crimes contre l'humanité sont commis.



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

The Hon. David Kilgour

kilgour@themetropolitain.ca



OUR AGENDA WITH CHINA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

violations of WTO rules and calls for an effective response by all governments who are trading partners of China.

The labour camps, being outside the legal system, allow the Chinese Communist Party to send anyone to them for up to four years with neither any form of hearing nor appeal. There is a causal link between the involuntary labour done since 1999 by 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. 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 by legislation, which puts an onus on all importers to prove before entry that their products are not made in effect by slave labour. Prime Minister Harper should raise this issue at the highest level during his visit to China.

Killing of Falun Gong practitioners for their organs

The closely related crime against humanity that Canada must continue to raise in China concerns the killing of Falun Gong practitioners for their vital organs. David Matas and I came to the conclusion that Falun Gong practitioners in China have been and are being killed for their organs. We wrote a report that came to this conclusion, which came out first in July 2006. There was a second version in 2007. A third in book form was published this month as *Bloody Harvest*.

Falun Gong is a set of exercises with a spiritual foundation which began in China in 1992. Initially the government encouraged the practice as beneficial for health. By 1999, it had grown so popular that the Party became afraid that its own ideological and numerical supremacy was being threatened. The numbers of persons practising Falun Gong across China had grown from virtually none in 1992, according to

a government estimate, to 70-100 million. The practice was accordingly banned.

Practitioners were asked to recant. Those who did not and continued the practice and those who protested the banning were arrested. If they recanted after arrest, they were released. If they did not, they were tortured. If they recanted after torture, they were then released. If they did not recant after torture, they disappeared into the Chinese detention and forced labour system.

What happened to the disappeared? Our conclusion is that many of them were killed for their organs, which were sold for transplants to tourists. It would take too much time to set out how we came to that conclusion. We invite you to read our report, which is on the internet (accessible at www.david-kilgour.com), or our book. Briefly, two of the dozens of evidentiary trails we followed which led to our conclusion are these:

1) Only Falun Gong practitioners in work camps and prisons are systematically blood tested and physically examined. This testing cannot be motivated by concerns over the health of practitioners, because they are also systematically tortured. Testing is necessary for organ transplants because of the need for blood type compatibility between the organ source and the recipient.

2) Traditional sources of transplants-prisoners sentenced to death and then executed, voluntary donors, the brain dead/cardiac alive-come nowhere near to explaining the total number of transplants in China. There is no organized system of organ donations. There is a cultural aversion to organ donation. There is no national organ matching or distribution system in China.

The only significant source in China of organs for transplants before the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners began was prisoners sentenced to death and then executed. The volume of organ transplants in China went up dramatically shortly after the banning of the practice of Falun Gong. Yet, the numbers of those sentenced to death and then executed did not increase.

Since our report came out, laws

and practices in China have changed. A Chinese law on transplants in May 2007 required that transplants be performed only in registered hospitals. The Ministry of Health announced that from June 26, 2007 Chinese patients would be given priority access to organ transplants over foreigners. The announcement also banned all medical institutions from transplanting organs into foreign transplant tourists. The government announced in August 2009 that the Red Cross Society of China was launching an organ donation system, but only as a pilot project in ten locations.

With these changes, however, severe abuse continues. The recipients have changed from foreign to local, but the sources remain substantially the same. The government denies that organs for transplants are being sourced from prisoners who are Falun Gong practitioners. Yet, it accepts that organs for transplants are being sourced from prisoners. The only debate we have with the Government is which group of prisoners is the source of organs.

"Non consenting parties"

Sourcing of organs from prisoners is done without consent. Deputy Health Minister Huang Jiefu, at a conference of surgeons in Guangzhou in November 2006, said in a speech, "too often organs come from non consenting parties". The government of China accepts that sourcing of organs from prisoners is wrong. Huang at the time of the announcement of an organ donor

pilot project stated that executed prisoners "are definitely not a proper source for organ transplants". This principle, that prisoners are not an acceptable source for organs, is followed by the Transplantation Society and the World Medical Association.

So the question becomes, what is the "rule of law world" going to do about the Chinese party-state's abuse of global transplant ethics? Our report and book have a long list of recommendations. For space considerations, I will mention only two here.

One possibility is extraterritorial legislation. The 2007 policy giving priority to Chinese patients has cut down on transplant tourism to China, but such legislation would nonetheless be a useful statement of universal principle. The sorts of transplants in which the Chinese medical system engages are illegal everywhere else in the world. But it is not illegal for a foreigner from any country to go to China, obtain a transplant which would be illegal at home, and then return home. Foreign transplant legislation everywhere is territorial; it has no extraterritorial reach. Many other laws are global in their sweep. For instance, child sex tourists can be prosecuted not just in the country where they abuse children, but often at home as well. This sort of legislation does not exist for transplant tourists who pay for organ transplants without bothering to determine whether the organ donor has consented.

A second recommendation is that

any person known to be involved in trafficking in the organs of prisoners in China should be barred entry by all foreign countries.

Conclusion

In a 2007 UPI/Zogby opinion poll, 79 percent of Americans said they had a favourable opinion of the Chinese people, but 87 percent had an unfavourable opinion of their government. My guess would be that a similar survey done in Canada or any rule-of-law nation today would produce very similar findings. What would the vast majority of the Chinese people tell a pollster, if they could without serious risk of consequences, about the Party?

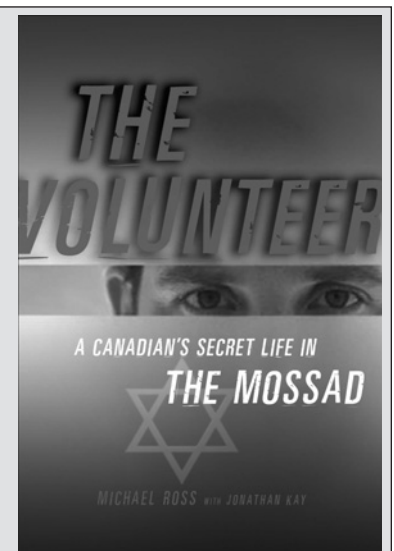
The attempted crushing of democracy movements, truthful journalists, Buddhist, Falun Gong, Christian, Muslim and other independent faith groups, human rights lawyers and other civil society communities in recent years indicates that China's party-state must be engaged with great caution despite the severe ongoing world economic problems. If it 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. Its people have the numbers, perseverance, self-discipline, entrepreneurship, intelligence, culture and pride to help make this new century better and more peaceful for the entire human family.

THE VOLUNTEER

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

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

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





David T. Jones

info@themetropolitain.ca

David Jones, co-author of *Uneasy Neighbo(u)r(s): Canada, the USA and the Dynamics of State, Industry and Culture*, is a former U.S. diplomat who served in Ottawa. He now lives in Arlington, Virginia."

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Remembrance 2009: Past and Present

It was a cold, wet, and grim Remembrance/Veterans Day in Washington this year. Perhaps more than even in the most recent past, moods were irritated, marked by a puzzled frustration over the future of the United States and the most effective manner of management for a multiracial/multicultural/multi-multi society.

The previous day, the state of

Virginia had executed the "Washington Sniper" for murdering ten people (wounding three) and, along with his teen age "Robin," terrorizing the Washington metropolitan area for three weeks in October 2002. Not even the normal anti-death penalty media had much to say in his defense, and his Islamic name, John Allen Muhammad, further reduced the numbers of ritualistic sympathizers. But there

was more of an angry, "finally got it over with" muttering than satisfaction at the end of the seven year slog to his execution.

Simultaneously, the United States was in mourning for the slaughter of 13 armed forces members at Fort Hood, and the wounding of 29 others. The perpetrator, an Army major and devout Muslim, Nidal M. Hassan, reportedly leaped on a table and shouted "Allah Akbar" (God is

great) before opening fire on unarmed soldiers and health care providers. Among those he killed were a pregnant woman, an Asian-American, a Hispanic-American, and an African-American.

Even more stunning, Hassan was a trained psychiatric doctor with years of experience counseling soldiers returning from and going to combat zones as a resident at the flag ship Walter Reed Army Medical Center. So what trumped his commitment to the Hippocratic Oath that first a doctor should do no harm?

Hassan reportedly gave a variety of indicators that he hated U.S. military action in Afghanistan and Iraq; supposedly he wanted to be released from the Army (which had paid for his medical education) and desired to avoid a pending assignment to Afghanistan. Professional explainers/excusers are muttering about "secondary PTSD" supposedly the consequence of listening to the traumatic stories of those returning from war zones. However, Hassan had hardly exhausted options either for obtaining release from the Army or avoiding the Afghanistan assignment. Indeed, as a final resort, he could always have sought refuge in Canada.

Concurrently there are reports regarding Hassan's communications with a radical Islamic cleric were monitored by U.S. intelligence specialists, but determined not to be actionable, and his general hostility to USG action against Islamic countries. Nevertheless, there is no indication at this juncture that Hassan was some Islamic style "Manchurian Candidate" directed from al-Qaeda or elsewhere. And those now outraged at authorities ignoring ostensible "signals" would have been matched by others outraged if his "privacy" had been violated by official action based on suspicion rather than direct proof.

But this was doubtless a terrorist act. And recognition of this reality is one to which senior U.S. officials are in desperate denial. The alternative is to face the appalling prospect that a significant number of Islamic-Americans are nascent

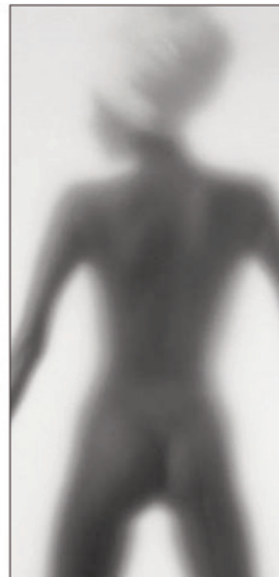
terrorists. For it is not as if Hassan has been without precursors. In 2003, Sergeant Hasan Akbar fragged and shot fellow soldiers at the 101st airborne division base camp on the eve of the invasion of Iraq, killing two and wounding another fourteen. And in June a Muslim convert fired on soldiers at a military recruitment center in Arkansas, killing one and wounding another. But what does one do with the some 3,000 Muslims currently in the armed forces, let alone the estimated 2.5 million Muslim-Americans in the U.S.?

But it was not always this way and differences can be illustrative. On November 3, we commemorated the 65th anniversary of the Japanese-American 442nd Regimental Combat team's victory to free the "Lost Battalion" from surrounding Germans. In the fighting, 800 Japanese-Americans were killed to save 217 other Americans. (For perspective 840 U.S. forces have died in Afghanistan since the beginning of fighting in 2001.) Throughout the war, approximately 14,000 Japanese-Americans served in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, winning almost 9,500 Purple Hearts and 21 Medals of Honor; an estimated 20,000 Japanese-American males were in military service. This commitment came despite a United States society that in the 1940s was racially segregated and, following the attack on Pearl Harbor, forced Japanese-Americans on the mainland into concentration camps. Total Japanese population in the U.S. and Hawaii at the time was approximately 270,000 and over 100,000 were interred. For the record, there is not a single recorded instance of Japanese-American sabotage.

One Korean-American when told to transfer from the 442nd due to historical Korean-Japanese animosity declined. He is quoted as saying, "They are Americans. I am an American. And together, we are going to fight for America."

Would that the Hassans of this world learn this lesson.

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Thomas O. Hecht is a leading Canadian businessman, activist, philanthropist and founder of The Begin-Sadat Centre.

Thomas O. Hecht

info@themetropolitain.ca



Part 2 of 2:

Statist Islam:

A continuing challenge to civilization

History has a tendency to repeat itself. In the days of expansionist communist Russia, the country was comprised of Russians who just wanted to live in peace, yet Russian communist leadership was responsible for the murder of at least 20 million of their own people. The peaceful majority was irrelevant.

Prior to that, 80 million Germans were not all confirmed Nazis, but they were irrelevant when Hitler and his murderous minions caused the death of one-third of the Jewish population in the world and brought about WWII.

The so-called German majority was too uninvolved to care. And we are learning today how the ordinary citizens of Germany, Poland and the Ukraine stood silently by while trains and trucks transported Jews to be murdered.

China's huge population was peaceful, but Chinese communists under Mao Tse-tung managed to kill 30 million people in China.

History's lessons, when analyzed, are simple and blunt. Peace loving Muslims have been made irrelevant by their silence, just as the majority of Germans, Russians and Chinese. It is the extremists like Ahmadinejad, the Wahabists in Saudi-Arabia, who dictate policies, set the agenda, and cause the majority to remain silent and to progressively even lose their naturally endowed rights to human freedom and dignity.

Like Nazism, like cruel communism, Islamofascism – the extremists – must be defeated not only for the sake of the silent majority in the Islamic world, but also for the sake of our own survival in World War IV, which we are waging today.

President Obama has inherited massive policy challenges, but one of the most challenging will be the existential struggle between societies of freedom and societies of fear – our way of life against those who advocate the Sharia and limit human development.

Sharia

Under Sharia law, if you are accused of stealing, a hand and foot from opposite sides are amputated. If you are caught having an affair, the woman is stoned to death and the man is given 80 lashes. If you change religions, you can be charged under apostasy laws and given the death sentence by a legal Sharia court.

Through Sharia, Islamists govern the private lives of individuals as well as regulate the social, political and economic aspects of society. Islamism crosses national borders, with the final goal of asserting the Muslim ummah (the Muslim community) globally, with all non-Muslims as second-class citizens. It is a totalitarian ideology, and Islamists do want to make Europe and the U.S. Islamist states.

It is time for policy makers to realize that Sharia is a system of hate and it must not gain any influence in American society. It denigrates women, non-Muslims and the U.S. Constitution. Policy makers must define the limits of religious accommodation in light of the Islamist agenda. Otherwise, democracy and true tolerance will be mere words with no meaning, as Islamism spreads in the West.

The new president will be a leader in a conflict which will either be characterized by appeasement – a cold war – or a massive conflagration, that can only be avoided with powerful leadership articulating our values, which must be forcefully defended against usurpers and challengers to this our way of life.

The menace of Iran

Today, the main leader of the forces facing us is the president of Iran, Ahmadinejad, who wishes to establish his influence across the entire region of the Middle East. Facing him are America, pacifist-oriented Europe, America's alleged Sunni Arab allies, with Israel – Ahmadinejad's target for elimination – as the only democratic state allied to the values of the West, surrounded by a sea of cultural, intellectual and socioeconomic decay which describes the current Muslim Middle East.

Iran, in its challenge to the West, is supported by Syria, Hamas, Hezbollah, endowed with the fervor of religious energy. It is supported in its vision by Al Qaeda, the Sunni branch of Islam, in challenging our values, with the latter being responsible for such horrendous deeds as 9/11.

The wide-circulation Iranian Daily Kayhan has clearly defined the participants in this struggle: "In the power struggle in the Middle East, there are only two sides, Iran and the U.S."

Team America so far has been losing on many fronts. How come? Thomas Friedman, in the New York Times, gave a short answer to this: "Iran is smart and ruthless, America is dumb and weak. And the Sunni Arab world is feckless, unreliable, and divided."

Recent history teaches us that the Iranian/Syrian/Hezbollah alliance rules Lebanon, even though western powers have hypnotized themselves into believing that Lebanon's Prime Minister Fuad Siniora is their friend. Recent polls indicate that the most powerful politician in the Arab world other than Ahmadinejad is Sheik Nasrallah, the Shiite chieftain of the Army of God Hezbollah. His thugs rule Beirut, control the Lebanese airwaves, and as a result of this hegemony of power, have basically sold out Lebanon to Syria, which means Iran.

Ehud Yaari, Israel's outstanding political commentator, calls the present Middle East Pax Iranica. Historians will tell you that in the past, there was Pax Romana when Rome ruled, there was Pax Britannica, because the British Empire ruled the waves and therefore the world. There was Pax Germanica in 1940, because Germany had hegemony over Europe. Then there was Pax Americana after the end of World War II and at the end of the Cold War. We let it slip from our grasp and Iran seems to call the shots today in the Middle East, with an Islamic Jihad motivated by religious inspired fervor to recreate a Persian empire and Muslim Caliphate.

Iran, in the short period of time since Jimmy Carter capitulated to the Ayatollahs, has progressively influenced events in the Middle East. Today, it strongly influences Iraq's Shiite Prime Minister

Nuri Al-Maliki. It manipulates virtually all the Shiite militias in Iraq, has built Hezbollah into a military force equipped with 50,000 rockets that controls Lebanon and threatens Israel, while strengthening in Gaza the creation of a Hamas-administered proxy, even though of a different Islamic persuasion, the latter being Sunnis.

Yaari concludes by saying that anyone who will want to take out Iran's atomic facilities will create a massive conflagration in the Middle East involving the Lebanese, the Palestinians, the Iraqis and the Emirates. The realization of this possibility creates a strategy of deterrence from action, meaning that neither the western powers nor the United Nations will want to face such an event.

The weakness of the west

Deplorably, the Bush administration – in eight years, with two different secretaries of state – has managed to put America in a position where it is not liked, not feared and not respected. The American writer Aaron David Miller, a negotiator with both republican and democrat administrations, says: "We stumbled for eight years under Bill Clinton over how to make peace in the Middle East, and then we stumbled under George Bush over how to make war, with the result that America is trapped in a region which it cannot fix and cannot abandon."

Without using forceful power leverage, Western diplomacy will fail, because states have no friends, only interests. When you possess this type of leverage, you can create situations by formulating economic, diplomatic or military pressures that the other side finds either too tempting or too frightening to ignore.

The weakest party in the struggles of the Middle East is the Sunni Arab world, according to the New York Times: "The Sunni Arab world is either so drunk on oil it thinks it can buy its way out of any Iranian challenge, or is so divided that it cannot make a fist to protect its own interests, or both."

The Shiite Crescent, as we have seen, has achieved significant political success. On the other hand, the Sunni powers, basically funded by Saudi Arabia and the Emirates, use their soft power to propagate Islam throughout Europe – which Bernard Lewis refers to in his writings as Eurabia – with large parts of Europe having large militant Islamic populations, from England to Scandinavia to Germany, a situation probably to be witnessed also in the U.S. in the not too distant future.

This phenomenon has also had an impact on the perception in Europe of Israel as a Jewish state. Muslim propaganda has succeeded in presenting the establishment of the State of Israel as a sin committed by the Europeans against the world of Islam. Israel became an easy way for Europeans to atone for their cooperation with Nazi Germany in making the Holocaust happen, at the expense of the Arabs who continue to feel entitled to a land known as Israel.

But it is Shiite Iran's global ambition of fighting the infidel and bringing true faith to the world which politically threatens the stability of our

system, by its aspirations for nuclear technology, in contravention to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaties and multiple U.N. resolutions. We the western world have been led to negotiate with Iran in a manner not dissimilar to the way Hitler played with Western powers in the 1930s. Ad nauseam negotiations led to the concept of appeasement before it was reversed. It had caused 50 million victims.

The lessons of history

Iran's global ambition also manifests itself with an increased influence in Latin America, particularly Venezuela and Bolivia, and in Africa, be it the Sudan or Somalia, where Islamist bridgeheads for future domination have been established. There is also Afghanistan and Pakistan, where Shiite and Sunni interests tend to converge, like the mutual interests of Maoist and Stalinist communism, in order to eliminate western capitalism, notwithstanding their internal differences.

It was probably Churchill who alerted us in his writings at the end of the 19th century, when he wrote the following in his book *The River War*, pp. 248-250. This is an extensive quote which is given here in its entirety:

"How dreadful are the curses which Mohammedanism (Islam) lays on its votaries!

Beside the fanatical frenzy, which is as dangerous in a man as hydrophobia in a dog, there is this fearful fatalistic apathy.

The effects are apparent in many countries. Improvident habits, slovenly systems of agriculture, sluggish methods of commerce, and insecurity of life and property exist wherever the followers of the Prophet rule or live.

A degraded sensualism deprives this life of its grace and refinement; the next of its dignity and sanctity. The fact that in Mohammedan law every woman must belong to some man as his absolute property, either as a child, a wife, or a concubine, must delay the final extinction of slavery until the faith of Islam has ceased to be a great power among men.

Individual Muslims may show splendid qualities, but the influence of the religion paralyzes the social development of those who follow it.

No stronger retrograde force exists in the world. Far from being moribund, Mohammedanism is a militant and proselytizing faith. It has already spread throughout Central Africa, raising fearless warriors at every step; and were it not that Christianity is sheltered in the strong arms of science, the science against which it had vainly struggled, the civilization of modern Europe might fall, as fell the civilization of ancient Rome."

Churchill's admonition to the world when Chamberlain returned from the Munich Conference in 1938 practicing his policy of appeasement, has deep relevance today: "We are existentially threatened by the malice of the wicked, enhanced by the weakness and hesitation of the allegedly virtuous."

History has a tendency to repeat itself.



DO YOU KNOW WHO THE REAL BANKERS ARE?, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

international currencies. The US is pursuing a weak dollar policy despite public statements to the contrary and Canada is along for the ride.

The graph from StockCharts.com tells the long term story: the USD has been in decline since the days of Ronald Reagan and the large (for that era, anyway) deficits that his administration unleashed onto the international debt market. The USD enjoyed a recovery period during the Clinton era when prosperity raised tax revenues and a Republican Congress actually behaved like the conservatives they purported to be and controlled federal spending. Since the Bush II era, the USD resumed its downward trend as deficits swelled anew and an administration engaged in two overseas wars made matters worse by cutting

multiple trading agreements.

Ben Bernanke, chairman of the US Federal Reserve is busy showering the US economy with practically free money to re-inflate the banks' balance sheets, real estate and get consumers spending again. Regardless of his efforts, consumer credit is still contracting, down approximately 6% over the past year. Consumers are saving again, trying to pay down debt, and consumer spending as a whole is expected to fall from 70% of US GDP in 2007-8 back to 62%, the long run average of the past fifty years. That's 1 trillion dollars of spending that is not coming back, no matter how low interest rates go. Canada is in a bind since our economy will recover more quickly than the US, but Mark Carney of the Bank of

are having serious difficulty competing for consumer and industrial capital goods in international markets. The Europeans are now in the position that the US was in three or four years ago; their consumers are spending billions more Euros on Chinese goods in their home markets and increasing the trade imbalance between the two economic zones, which will prove just as unsustainable for the Europeans as it was for the US. The US and the Europeans would like to see the Yuan revalued to at least 6 Yuan/USD as a start, and moving to 5 Yuan/USD over several years would be greatly appreciated towards reversing the massive US and Eurozone trade deficits with China.

Jean Claude Trichet, the President of the

no way to wean European consumers off cheap Chinese goods unless the Chinese decouple from the US Dollar and allow the Euro to fall against the Yuan, which would provide trade rebalancing and employment relief across the entire Eurozone. If the Euro stays strong, there will be political unrest in France and Germany calling for the dissolution of the currency to return monetary policy flexibility to the sovereign governments of these nations in place of the European Central Bank. China is the real banker in charge of the Euro's future, and the populace living within the Eurozone is growing impatient as they await improvement in their economic fortunes.

China would be smart to allow the Yuan to appreciate in value. Firstly, pricing for costly commodities like oil, copper, magnesium and the like (quoted in USD) would fall for Chinese buyers and allow local manufacturers to cut prices for domestic consumption. The Chinese government has made stimulating the domestic consumer economy a critical objective to sustaining economic growth and lowering costs for producers supplying the domestic market is key to achieving that goal. A rising Yuan would help address the massive trade imbalance between the US, Eurozone and China and allow those economies to begin to experience employment growth. While a stronger Yuan would devalue the \$800 billion in US federal debt (within total foreign reserves of \$2.3 trillion USD) that China now holds, it would be a controlled devaluation. The alternative would be to see an international run on the USD, a spike in gold prices to several thousand dollars an ounce and a much more massive devaluation of China's USD holdings. It is not good business policy to run your best clients into bankruptcy, and the Chinese recognize that their trading success of the past 20 years has bred serious financial imbalances that they can address in a controlled fashion, or allow to continue unchecked until an economic earthquake results.

The Chinese may be the ultimate masters in the currency and trading universe at the moment, but they are in no less trouble than the US and the Eurozone when it comes to finding a mutually beneficial outcome to the current crisis. The solution involves a Yuan that appreciates slowly, a USD that stabilizes as the government gets its deficits and national debt under control and a Eurozone that avoids the collapse of former Eastern Bloc nations and holds together in the face of old political divisions between Western European powerhouses. This is a fairytale scenario, but all the political actors involved know that they must work towards this end. Otherwise their nations could still drift into a deflationary depression that would decimate the remaining savings of their middle classes and cause political unrest not seen since the aftermath of the first world war.



taxes to sustain consumer spending.

Any Canadians travelling in Europe, for instance, would notice that our Loonie buys you very little on the continent. Dinner for two in Paris can easily run you 100 Euros, and that's the price of a nice lunch in London where the British Pound is even stronger than the Euro. Canadians are caught in a policy bind between a strengthening Canadian Dollar against the USD and declining purchasing power on an international scale. Because our commodities are in strong demand from our US neighbor and our economy is in better shape, we appear more attractive for those willing to invest on this continent, but against the rest of the world, we are tied to the deteriorating status of the US because they are our greatest trading partner and our economies are integrated through

Canada will not raise interest rates since pushing the Loonie over par with the USD will decimate Canadian manufacturing. So, Canada, meet your real central banker: the Federal Reserve Bank of the United States.

Canada and the US are both nervously watching what China plans to do concerning the value of the Yuan. It is currently pegged at 6.83 Yuan to the USD, but the Bank of China has sent a signal that it is ready to revalue the Yuan higher, though they will not let the Yuan float freely as has been asked by President Obama as a means to correct serious trade imbalances between the two countries. The Eurozone has been especially shrill with the Chinese since the strength of the Euro against the falling USD/Yuan has made Chinese goods so inexpensive that European manufacturers

European Central Bank, is running a currency plagued by internal problems. Not a single Eurozone nation is respecting the guidelines governing membership in the Euro, notably that annual deficits have to be contained to 3% of that nation's GDP or less. Several Eastern European member nations are economic basket-cases seeking new loan packages from the organizations like the IMF to prevent their economies from spiraling into a deflationary and unemployment plagued period that could provoke political instability not seen since the fall of the Eastern Bloc 20 years ago. Trichet has argued that the time will come to raise European interest rates to combat a resurgence of inflation, but any such move would further strengthen the Euro and provoke further unemployment in all member nations. There is



Multiculturalism questioned at fiery Fraser debate

The recent debate on the merits of Canadian multiculturalism between secular firebrand Djemila Benhabib and Montreal civil rights lawyer Julius Grey began to get personal after Benhabib accused the Canadian government of moral and intellectual cowardice. Hosted by the Fraser Institute at Peel Street's Café Ferreira, an erudite crowd full of assorted academics and civil servants were especially eager to hear what Benhabib had to say about the province's ongoing multiculturalism debate. Even as she read off a prepared text, Benhabib continued to insist responsible governments (especially those in the west) must continue to stick to their secular guns.

"Multiculturalism is a failure," she said as she rejected any possibility for any kind of cultural or theocratic compromise. "It is leading to intolerable social contradictions which cannot be accepted in a free and democratic society."

Citing her own experience as a

young woman in Algeria who was condemned to death before she managed to escape to Canada, she made her point about how secular societies are the only ones who can offer women their rights, justice and real freedom. While much of her scorn is reserved for traditional Islam and its brutal offhand treatment of women, she said she is willing to fight till her last breath for "the beauty, the passion and the intelligence" she finds among women in a free and democratic society.

"My fight is not so much a feminist's fight for women as much as it is a woman's fight for freedom," she said.

As ever known for his ongoing battles for civil liberties, Julius Grey rejected Benhabib's blanket rejection of multicultural accommodations because he believes an individual's adherence to a culture or a religion is nothing less than his or her choice guaranteed under Canada's charter.

"Can we accommodate individual



Djemila Benhabib (left) and Montreal civil rights lawyer Julius Grey.

expressions such as a headscarf, a kirpan or a turban... Yes," said Grey. "Can we accommodate collective

expressions of cultural or religious associations such as schools or hospitals... No."

Unfortunately, Grey was also forced to admit most of Québec's collective institutions were not only tolerated but some actually received the highest level of subsidies offered to private and parochial schools in the entire nation. Based upon such arguments, Benhabib continued to denounce the government's flaccid moral and intellectual position after which voices were raised as tempers began to fray at the seams.

Following Grey's arguments about religious symbols being a question of personal choice, Benhabib quickly pulled the audience to her side as her personal experience as a Muslim woman in a theocratic state continued to trump Grey's convictions about civil rights and an individual's ability to choose.

"Every Muslim woman knows even a headscarf isn't only a matter of choice," said Benhabib. "It's an iconic symbol and it represents the implicit rejection of a secular society where women are free and allowed to make their own choices."

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The kids will be alright!

There seems to be only one issue that unites politicians of all colours and creeds. It became painfully obvious how omnipresent this theme was as I had the painstaking task of interviewing dozens of candidates – some competent, some not – vying for city council seats leading up to last month's election. In order to be considered as a credible politician, it appears as though one has to make the supposed plight of children a focal point in a campaign. More specifically, how to protect our little tykes from speeders, drug dealers, pedophiles and a myriad of dangers that lurk around every corner.

But what appears at face value to be genuine concern, is often just a thinly-veiled attempt to tap into your worst fears and exploit paranoia. Hack politicians at every level engage in this type of fear mongering. One city council candidate had nothing more to recommend

him than the boast that he had more speed bumps and crosswalks in his ward than any other. The delivery is different, certainly with varying levels of sophistication, but the message is the same: "Vote for me, only I can keep you and your loved ones safe."

Negative politics has unfortunately become the standard. Most politicians don't offer a vision of any substance; it's not about what we can make happen, but what we can prevent from happening. And nothing strikes a chord with voters more than protecting their vulnerable offspring.

Of course, children are no more vulnerable than they were ten or twenty years ago. There's no evidence to suggest a significant increase in the number of child abductions, hit-and-runs or molestations in recent years, save perhaps for revelations of incidents involving the Catholic Church. But in a post-

9/11 world, where terrorist pedophiles could be enrolled in a flight school near you, politicians will stop at nothing to convince voters that they, and not their opponents, are the ultimate protectors of the most vulnerable members of our society.

While interviewing a candidate who would, to my relief, go on to lose her bid for a city council seat last month, I was struck by how far said candidate would go to protect children in her district: Speed bumps and bollards on every street, across the board speed limit reductions, an end to child hunger, etc. I asked this candidate how she plans to feed all the borough's kids, she replied, "sadly, we cannot make sure that children have three meals a day."

Then why invoke children in the first place? It's not in this woman's power as a municipal politician to end hunger just as much as it's not in any politician's power to prevent the occasional, tragic car accident or kidnapping. This non-too-subtle, callous exploitation of parental paranoia needs to end.

It's not clear if these policy decisions are even thought out in most cases. It could be an involuntary Tourettes-like tic. Kids! Protect kids! Or it could just be one of many empty thoughts or catch-phrases that float around in political discourse. It's one sign among many of the degeneration of political discourse. If we don't demand substance, we will continue to be manipulated by those who engage in crass fear-mongering to get elected.

To be fair, not all those who use children as a focal point of their campaigns are being manipulative. I'm sure there is some genuine concern in the push for a national Children's Commissioner. This office would listen to those who, as MP Marc Garneau has put it, "have no voice, no voting rights and no formal way of expressing how they are affected by government policy."

The goal of the Commissioner in Garneau's proposed bill would be to "advance the principle that children are entitled to special safeguards, care and assistance, including appropriate legal protections." Garneau is one of the most serious and sincere MPs there is. But we still need to realize some fundamental societal realities.

Children are vulnerable and can easily be taken advantage of by perverts or others who mean them harm. But there is an important barrier between kids and dangerous sociopaths that we sometimes leave out of the equation when discussing new legislation: Parents. When that fails, there is the social safety net and, as a last resort, protection of

the most basic of rights under the Criminal Code.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was intended as a message to less compassionate – and less legally mature – societies like Thailand, for example, where child prostitution is rampant. Does that kind of nasty business happen in Canada? It does, but rarely. If Canadian law or culture encouraged, or even passively tolerated the abuse of children, perhaps this commissioner would be necessary. But we don't and we should consider how much more bureaucracy we can stand.

The cause of the child is also used to bolster arguments for a plethora of issues. Climate change for example isn't perceived as serious as climate change extinguishing our children's future. Poverty is a forgotten issue, but child poverty is horribly worrisome (there is no child poverty, as there is no child wealth, only poverty – period).

Instead of incessantly focusing on the plight of children, why not focus on the plight of people. The scene that keeps replaying in my mind is that of a hysterical Helen Lovejoy, the pastor's wife on *The Simpson's*, bursting into a Springfield city council meeting, shrieking, "won't somebody please think of the children!" It is a brilliant social comment that illustrates how an increasingly paternalistic society sometimes clouds the good judgement of otherwise reasonable decision-makers. Throwing children into the political mix, kissing babies and the like, is cheap, tacky and a clever way to completely bypass larger issues.

It will be an interesting day indeed when a brave politician responds to a Helen Lovejoy by saying, "I don't care about the children!" That is to say, kids should not drive public policy decisions more than any other group of people. Coddling children and speaking of them in terms of being victims-in-waiting will not serve the kids themselves well either. Parental paranoia has given rise to an antisocial generation who hide behind computer screens, cell phones and iPods. Let's not continue depriving children of an essential part of growing up: Uncertainty. You won't always know what is around the corner (or in the nondescript van with tinted windows), but good parenting can prevent a million tragedies.

Don't count on politicians to protect your precious little ones. Be wary of those who claim they can. And, please, don't rob your children of all life has to offer because of your own irrational fears. The kids will be alright!

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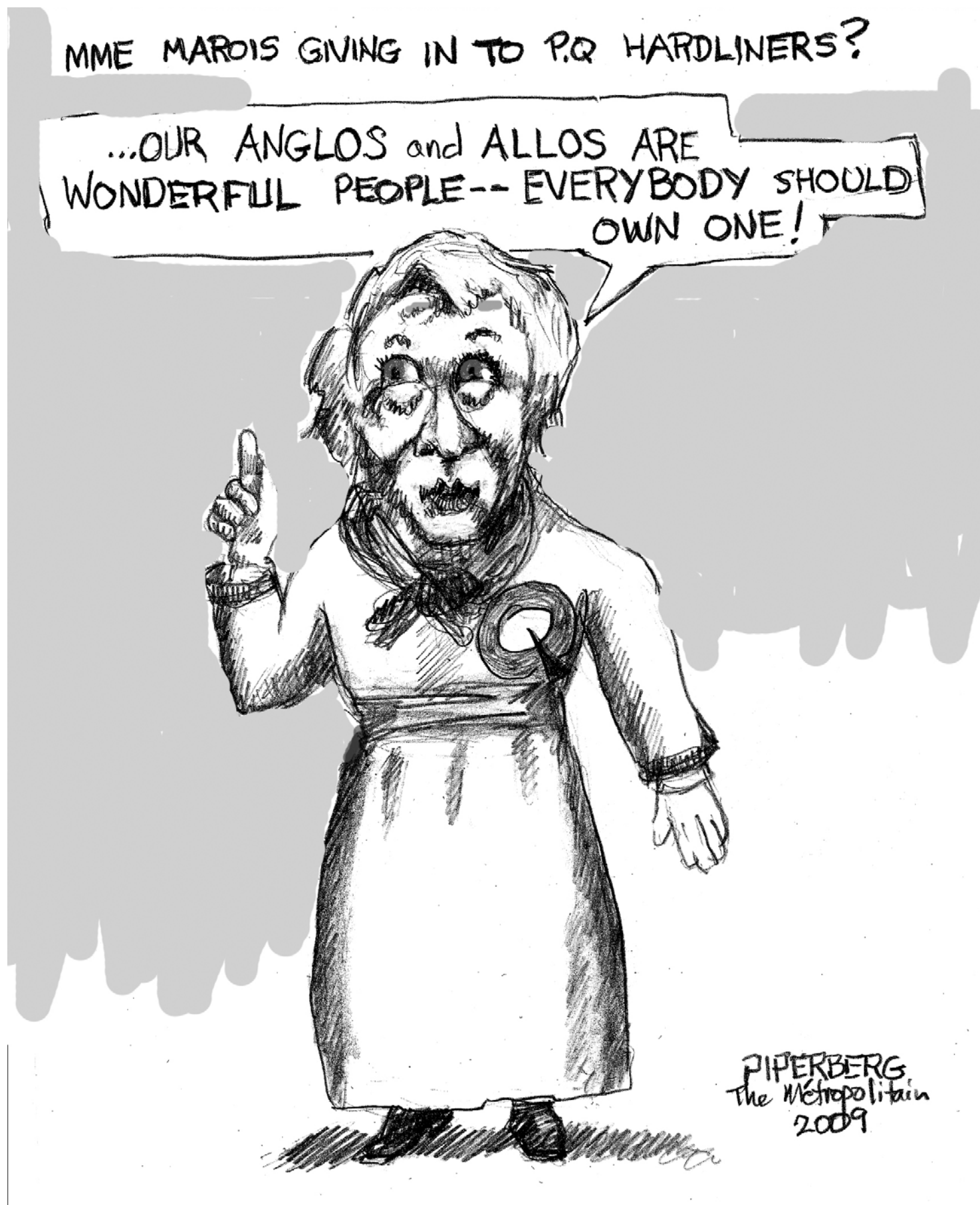
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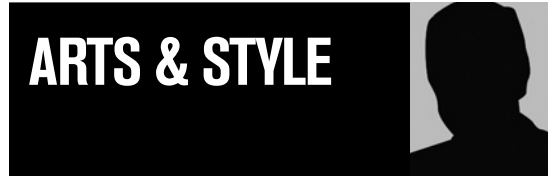
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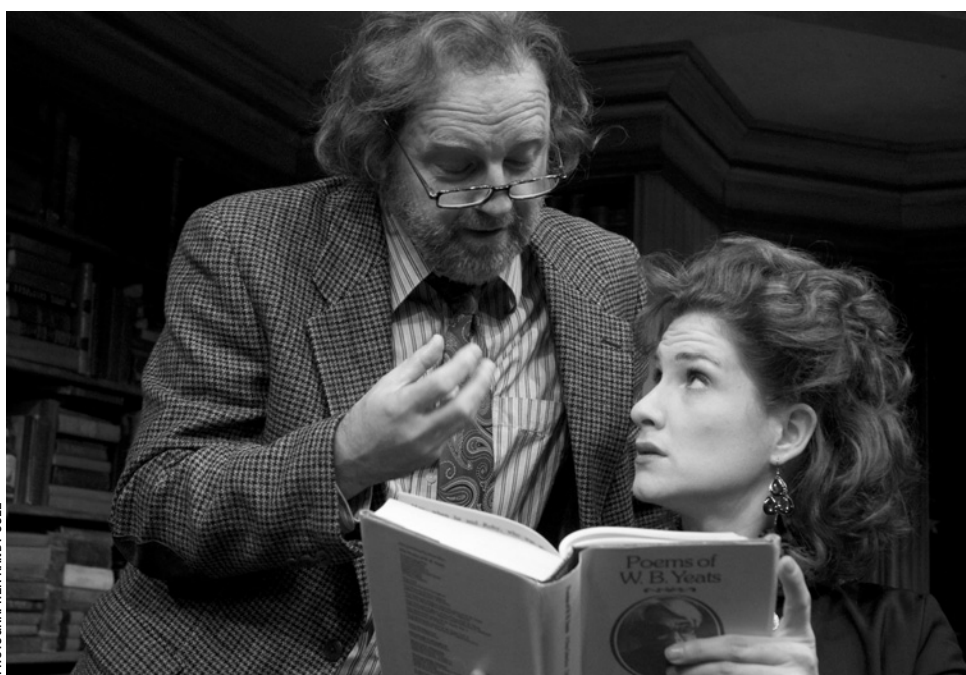
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A refreshing, educated Rita

Taking a cue from last year's successful Centaur Theatre production of Willy Russell's crowd pleasing Shirley Valentine, The Segal Centre at the Saidye has countered with an invigorating production of the author's one other popular play, Educating Rita.

In a word, the two hander character study that runs until Dec. 13, is a joy. It's the Pygmalion tale of a gritty working-class hair dresser from Liverpool (Carly Street) who, in spite of her husband's objections, decides to improve herself by going back to school. Her real name is Susan, but she thinks Rita is more refined so she adopts the name of her favourite author, the lesbian feminist mystery writer, Rita Mae Brown. As Rita, she enrolls in an Open University course taught by Frank Bryant, (Ric Reid,) a down-at-the-heels, alcoholic English professor.

Street, with her tight mini-skirted walk, heaping hair-do, and brassy eagerness to "learn everything," is sensational. Whether she's chiding Frank with wide-eyed irritating honesty, or parroting the plummy tones of the British upper crust Street is delightfully vivacious. Reid is superbly measured as the rumpled world-weary failed poet who stashes his booze behind the books. Not an actor to be easily upstaged, Reid proves to be equally riveting. As a matter of fact, you don't see either



Actors Ric Reid & Carly Street in Educating Rita at the Segal Centre.

of them act, you are swept along by their honest perception of the roles. In one especially touching moment, Rita explains why she declines invitation to dine with his friends for fear of being laughed at. It helps to be literate to enjoy the show. There are delicious puns on the gay English novelist E. M. Forster, ('Forced her to do what?') allusions to poet William Bulter Yeats, and references to William Blake and

Shakespeare. Is that Macbeth or Romeo and Juliet that Rita is quoting?

As the play progresses the pair become dependent on each other; Rita acquires a growing sense of her own identity and self worth and when their student-teacher relationship ends, through her Frank regains his faith in himself. It's a bittersweet sociological study that flirts with class differences, romantic

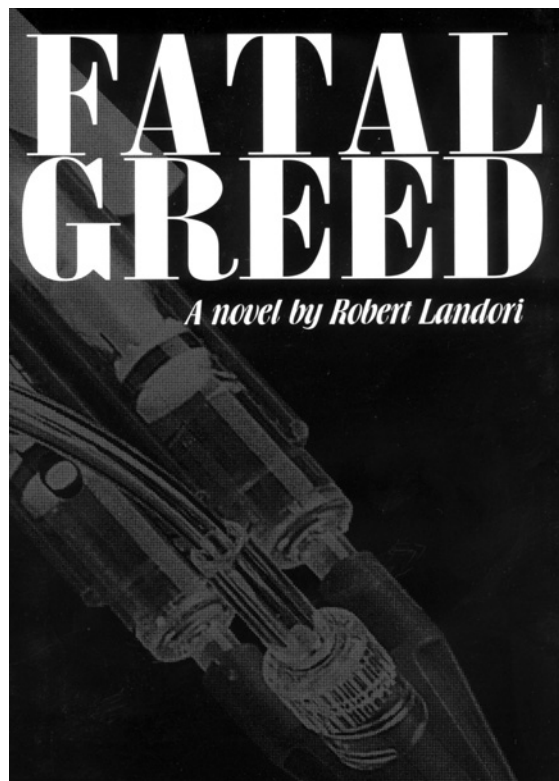
yearning, and grudging admiration.

Director Kash, who originated the role of Rita in Canada at Edmonton's Citadel Theatre in 1983, and has played it several times since, knows the nuances of the script inside out. She has directed with affection and with assured, scenic mobility.

What makes the Segal production so satisfying is how well matched the two actors are, and how they have found the chemistry to make the play their very own. They are so good they allow an audience to forget the movie version with Michael Caine and Julie Walters. Arguably, the play, when well done, is better than the movie version that was 'opened up' to include a number of peripheral characters. The Segal's version has been rewritten; references that were topical 30 years ago in the original script have been cut, lines have been added, and some scenes updated.

John Dinning's elaborate set, which is nicely lit by Spike Lyne, doesn't serve the play very well. It is not merely a professor's cluttered office, but a sprawling Tudor mansion complete with turrets and symmetrical walled gardens on either side that draws attention to itself. His costumes, on the other hand, are spot on, and with each change mirror Rita's evolving maturity.

It's one of those shows that deserves a longer run.



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Le monde est un théâtre. Agir !

Par un soir de novembre en 1998, je me trouvais dans un bar du Lac Saint-Jean avec mon mari Alex Ivanovici. Sur les écrans géants, on diffusait un combat de boxe : un anglophone affrontait un francophone. C'était un bar un peu rude, dans un bastion souverainiste; en tant que Montréalaise bilingue mais résolument anglophone, j'avoue m'être sentie nerveuse. Je voulais partir au plus vite. Mais, de retour à notre gîte, nous étions songeurs. Qu'est-ce qui nous faisait si peur? La tension politique dans le bar? Le risque d'avoir à débattre, que les choses dégénèrent?

Je suis dramaturge, à l'époque j'étais au Lac Saint-Jean pour préparer ma pièce Novembre, sur la politique québécoise. Le théâtre, et l'art en général, se nourrit du conflit. Ce jour-là, mon mari et moi avons compris que nous allions laisser s'échapper une occasion en or si nous restions à l'abri dans notre chambre. Nous avons donc repris le chemin du bar. Formés dans la tradition du théâtre documentaire, nous avions nos magnétophones à portée de main. Question d'arrêter de faire l'autruche, nous avons décidé d'interroger les gens à propos de leurs convictions politiques. Le sujet était dans l'air du temps. Les médias n'en avaient que pour l'élection qui battait son plein. Les experts parlaient d'une lutte sans merci entre les deux poids lourds, Lucien Bouchard et Jean Charest. Mais ce que les clients du bar nous racontaient ce soir-là n'avait pas grand-chose à voir avec ce qui se disait dans les journaux, à la télévision ou à la radio. L'élection ne déchaînait pas les passions. Plusieurs nous parlaient de distance, d'aliénation et d'indifférence devant le système politique. Malgré tout, ils se préoccupaient sincèrement des différents enjeux qui affectent leur vie.

Dix années ont passé depuis cette soirée, mais la rupture entre les grands partis politiques, les médias et la société civile n'a fait que

s'accentuer. Il y a quelques semaines, nous avons eu droit aux élections municipales les plus étroitement surveillées depuis des années. Cette fois-ci, pas moyen de faire l'autruche : la corruption était

Depuis la fin de l'élection, j'ai discuté des résultats avec de nombreux Montréalais et je constate que le cynisme est partout. La plupart des lettres de citoyens publiées dans les journaux, dont celle-ci, abondent dans le même sens. Les gens sont convaincus que leur vote ne peut rien changer.

étalée au grand jour. Les allégations se multipliaient de part et d'autre, déferlant sur le Québec comme une tempête hivernale. L'épicentre de cette dernière crise, Montréal, a fait la couverture du magazine Maclean's, avec comme titre sensationnaliste : « Montreal is a corrupt, crumbling, mob-ridden disgrace » (Montréal est une ville corrompue, en ruines et contrôlée par la mafia).

Mais seulement 39 % des Montréalais inscrits ont choisi d'exercer leur droit de vote le 1er novembre. Et c'est la même histoire partout au Québec. Qu'est-ce qui se passe? Si notre système politique était si corrompu, pourquoi si peu d'électeurs se sont-ils présenté aux urnes?

Depuis la fin de l'élection, j'ai discuté des résultats avec de nombreux Montréalais et je constate que le cynisme est partout. La plupart des lettres de citoyens publiées dans les journaux, dont celle-ci, abondent dans le même sens. Les gens sont convaincus que leur vote ne peut rien changer. Et les politiciens qui non seulement promettent le changement, mais livrent la marchandise, qu'on les aime ou non, ne semblent plus exister. Pas de Trudeau ni de Lévesque – pas même un Bouchard – n'ont émergé ici depuis longtemps.

Mais les problèmes auxquels nous faisons face en tant que Montréalais, Québécois et citoyens du monde, n'ont jamais paru si inquiétants. Nos

rues se détériorent à vue d'œil. Des vies ont été perdues à la suite d'accidents causés par nos infrastructures défectueuses. De vastes changements sont nécessaires, on s'en rend bien compte. Les gigantesques structures

de ciment sur lesquelles nous circulons chaque jour par milliers ont besoin de réparation — voir d'être remplacées — et les coûts seront exorbitants. L'infrastructure n'est qu'un des nombreux problèmes complexes auxquels nous devons faire face collectivement, comme société. Les soins de santé et l'environnement viennent bien sûr à l'esprit.

J'avancerais que les arts – et plus spécifiquement ma discipline de

choix, le théâtre documentaire – ont un rôle important à jouer pour nous sortir de notre marasme actuel. Une pièce documentaire est une expression, sous forme de narration, de conversations intimes qui ont eu lieu

entre le ou la dramaturge et une panoplie de citoyens, dont les voix se mesurent et s'affrontent dans une quête dramatique de vérité. En nouant ces voix sur scène, la pièce documentaire nous invite à laisser nos journaux et nos télévisions. Elle engendre ainsi un dialogue politique dans sa forme la plus pure - un dialogue social, pluriel, sincère (c'est-à-dire, sans rectitude politique) et personnel. La pièce documentaire injecte au dialogue politique ce dont

il a le plus besoin aujourd'hui – une bonne dose d'humanité, sans intermédiaires.

On ne peut se permettre de fuir face aux immenses problèmes qui se posent à nous. On ne peut pas, non

plus, laisser exclusivement à nos dirigeants le soin de trouver des solutions, même si on pense qu'ils sont à la hauteur du défi. Pour parler de ces enjeux, il faut que les citoyens de tous les parcours s'unissent – commis d'épicerie, avocats, travailleurs de la construction, médecins, syndicalistes – pour réappropriser le dialogue. Cette quête du discours commun est possible à travers le théâtre. J'en ai la conviction.



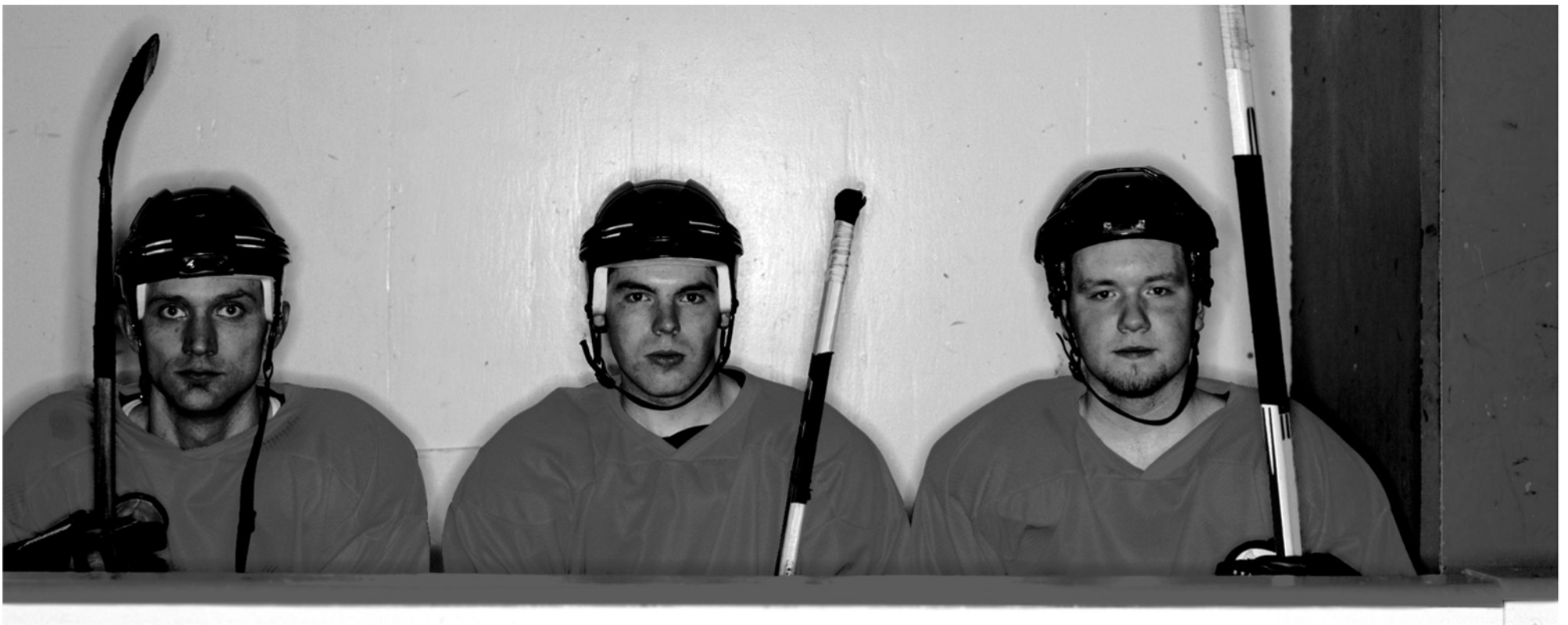
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La réalité des choses

Réfléchir à l'émergence des préoccupations culturelles dans l'arène publique, voilà ce que propose l'auteur Simon Brault avec son livre *FACTEUR C*. Dans ce vibrant plaidoyer pour « la culture pour tous », l'auteur interpelle tant les artistes, les entreprises culturelles, les gens d'affaires, les journalistes, les politiciens, que l'ensemble des citoyens, afin de réfléchir tous ensemble à l'importance de la culture.

L'avenir passe par la culture : ce constat est le fruit de plusieurs années d'expérience, d'observation et de réflexion de la part de l'auteur. La culture n'est plus cette maladie honteuse, dont la superficielle existence (et pertinence) avait, jadis, servis d'alibi à tous les gens

impermeables à sa beauté. En effet, nous assistons aujourd'hui au retour des esprits éclairés, capables d'associer la culture au capitalisme, sans pour autant la dénaturer dans sa nature essentielle. Le problème avec les préjugés, clichés et autres

Le livre de Simon Brault est un acte de courage, dans ce monde de fous, où il faut payer ou s'en aller.

clivages, c'est qu'ils rendent l'être humain incapable de penser librement et avec intelligence réelle. L'être humain ne devient purement et simplement qu'un tube digestif, ramenant tout à lui-même et à sa conception toute personnelle du monde. Dans cet esprit, le fumeux «

concept de réalité » est qu'il existe autant de réalités qu'il y a d'individus, ce qui est là, précisément, toute la beauté de l'affaire.

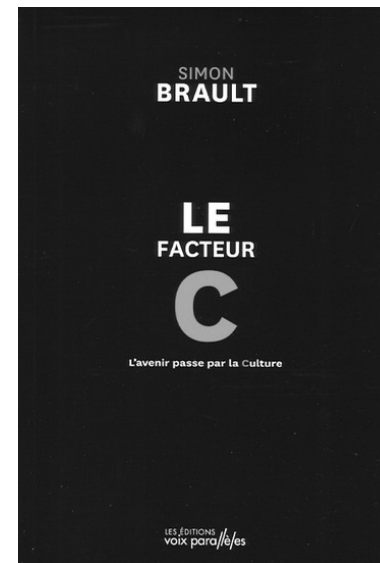
Aussi, Simon Brault pousse plus loin le raisonnement, en renvoyant la culture comme « projet commun ».

Ce n'est pas un hasard si Montréal se souhaite solidement « ville culturelle », si la place du « vivre ensemble » se loge au cœur de cette réinvention. Utopie ou pas, cela a le mérite d'allumer les esprits forts et de favoriser une ouverture digne de ce nom, pour le meilleur des deux

mondes, à l'intérieur d'un projet de société évolutif. En effet, le lien entre culture et économie n'est plus à faire. Il nous faut maintenant regarder le monde autrement, presque à l'envers. La culture rends plus fier, incapable de lâcheté ou de bassesses, fidèle à

ses idées, bref, elle n'a rien d'un assis. Au contraire, l'auteur met tout de suite le lecteur au parfum avec sa mise en garde sur la culture servant de « hameçonnage » aux produits de consommation.

L'art ne doit pas demeurer dans un au-delà désincarné, élitiste et ... il ne



gagne rien en nourrissant un tel sentiment d'exclusivité. En effet, blottie tout au fond de sa barque, en quoi la culture est-elle agent de changement, promoteur de la liberté? Le livre de Simon Brault est un acte de courage, dans ce monde de fous, où il faut payer ou s'en aller. Cet homme, on le sent presque partir en voyage, dans certains passages où il décrit, comme un paysage intérieur, cette chère culture comme l'incarnation de l'universalisme, opposé de ce fait au relativisme culturel. L'art, ce n'est pas payer cher, car payer cher c'est l'humiliation. Au contraire, la culture sert à donner du cœur, et des moyens, en se rendant accessible à tous, pour tous, et cela dans un souci d'éducation, afin d'agir, d'émouvoir, de construire. En effet, il est inhumain de mutiler les vivants et de les laisser se débattre dans leur impuissance.

La culture invite donc à « penser global », à s'attarder sur nos points communs, au lieu de s'acharner sur nos différences, à entendre de la musicalité dans nos dysharmonies, et surtout à se concevoir, se penser, se créer plus vivants, plus intelligents, et plus humains : un chemin quasi impossible à emprunter pour certains.

Bref, il est urgent d'amorcer le retour à la vie, par des discussions, des témoignages, et surtout, par une réelle participation collective : pas de place pour les « fractures socioculturelles », dans nos villes.

SIMON BRAULT : Facteur C, Montréal, éditions Voix Parallèles, 166 p.

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